

Executive Briefing Introduction

“Executive Briefing” summarises the business of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive’s Board at its meeting on Wednesday 31st July 2013 at 10.00am in the Housing Centre, 2 Adelaide Street, Belfast. Further information on any matters in this document can be obtained from:

Mr Jonny Blease

Head of Corporate Communications and Secretariat

6th Floor

The Housing Centre

2, Adelaide Street

Belfast BT2 8PB

Telephone: 028 90240588 Extension 2700

Web Site: www.nihe.gov.uk

Email: info@nihe.gov.uk

Members Present: Professor Peter Roberts (Vice Chairman)

Mrs Edna Dunbar

Mr Ken Millar

Mrs Angela Coffey

Cllr Eamonn O’Neill

Cllr Jenny Palmer

Cllr Jim Speers

Cllr Sean Begley

Apologies: Mr Donald Hoodless (Chairman)

Mr Greg Lomax

INDEX

1.0 June Performance report for Landlord Services3

2.0 June Performance Report for Regional Services.....4

3.0 Quarterly Analysis of Income Collection and Rent Arrears5

4.0 4.0 Supporting People Programme Update5

5.0 Amendments to the Rules of the Housing Selection Scheme.....7

6.0 People Strategy July 2013.....7

7.0 Business Case for the Roll Out of Response Maintenance Mobile Working8

1.0 June Performance report for Landlord Services

1.1. The Board noted the performance of Landlord Services against the Corporate and Business Plan targets for June 2013.

- 1.2 All target profiles for key Performance indicators have now been confirmed by the Directors.
- 1.3 The Business Plan Monitor now includes Supporting People KPIs which will be reported on at the end of September. Good progress has been made in a number of areas with targets met or exceeded including energy efficiency targets, homelessness, regeneration, and housing benefit new claims and change of circumstances.
- 1.4 Of the KPIs that did not meet target, some are still expected to achieve overall targets. These are the new build starts and completions programme and registration of HMOs. Others are demand led, such as, approving private sector repair grants which is based on notices being issued by Councils, and approval of 1,300 grants adaptations. This will be monitored and a marketing strategy developed if required.
- 1.5 The People Strategy was submitted to the Board this month. The position of the salary budget and manpower plan will be clearer at the half year.
- 1.6 Below are some KPIs which did not meet targets and where further work has been proposed or implemented:
- Housing Benefit – reduce the level of fraud and error to 2.6% of annual benefit expenditure was not met at 4.6% with a performance of 23%. With the introduction of ATLAS, transactions significantly increased and work has been on-going to identify issues. In respect of customer error & fraud, earned income has been identified as a major concern and all claims are being reviewed.
 - Reply to 90% of complaints from customers within 15 days was outside target and is being monitored.
 - The prompt payment KPI, to pay 90% of invoices within 10 days is below target with a performance of 14.9%. However, the implementation of the new homelessness accounting system (scheduled for September) is expected to improve performance significantly.
 - Maximise staff availability/attendance at an average of 10.8 days is below target with an average of 13.8 days recorded (performance is 72%). Although there may be a number of factors behind the increase, it is not sustainable and an action plan is being prepared for submission to the Chief Executive's Business Committee.

2.0 June Performance Report for Regional Services

2.1. The Board noted the performance of Regional Housing Services against the Corporate and Business Plan targets for June 2013.

- 2.2 All target profiles for key Performance indicators have now been confirmed by the Directors.
- 2.3 The KPI to progress our goal to be a UK top quartile provider of landlord services will be reported annually.
- 2.4 KPIs relating to ECMs, kitchen replacement and double glazing have had no starts to date. The organisation has entered into a new planned maintenance contracting period. Consultants have been appointed to commence specifications but until the relevant procurement of contractors is completed, these programmes remain at risk. This also affects the target for thermal efficiency of Housing Executive properties.
- 2.5 Other KPIs that did not meet the year to date targets at the end of June 2013 are:
- Relet properties (not low demand) within 25 calendar days. The average was 29 days (performance of 84%). The change in contractors in a number of areas has and will continue to impact on relet times.
 - Provide financial inclusion money advice service with 600 debt advice referrals. This was below target at the end of the first quarter with 79 referrals against a target of 150.
 - Arrears increased by £98k overall in June. Whilst the income collection target of 99.6% was 99.26%, this still represents a significant collection level considering there was a 3.6% increase in rent charges since April 2013. Both of these targets are being closely monitored. A quarterly analysis of income collection and rent arrears is submitted to the Board.
- 2.6 Other programmes which are progressing in the first quarter are:
- Heating installations are on target;
 - Stock transfer KPIs are on target;
 - Adaptations to NIHE stock are meeting targets for installation of showers and lifts and just below target for heating installations. However the target for extensions remains challenging;
 - Community safety, cohesion and involvement are on target, although the community safety strategy implementation has been postponed until the Autumn to allow for restructuring;
 - Customer KPIs are on target although Welfare Reform is unlikely to be introduced before spring 2014.

- 2.7 A separate detailed report on response maintenance **performance** is submitted to Board each month.

3.0 Quarterly Analysis of Income Collection and Rent Arrears

- 3.1. **The Board noted the analysis of the income collected from rent and rates during the first quarter of the 2013/2014 financial year. Information in relation to arrears for current and former tenant debtors for domestic dwellings and detached garages was also noted.**

3.2 Income Collected

- a) Net collectable income for the quarter for domestic dwellings and garages was £78,555k.
- b) Income collected during the quarter less advance refunds of £400k was £77,960k.
- c) Income received including benefit as a percentage of net collectable income is 99.3%. The target collection rate for 2013/14 is 99.6%.

3.3 Arrears Performance

At the end of June 2013 total arrears were £14,806k, representing an increase of £202k from the reported March 2013 position.

- 3.4 Current tenant arrears at 30th June 2013 are £11,424k, representing an increase of £194k. Meanwhile former tenant arrears are £3,382k representing an increase of £8k during the reporting period.

- 3.5 At the end of the quarter the current arrears indicator is 3.57% against the 2013 NIHE target of 3.43%.

3.6 Current Tenant Debtor Analysis

During the first quarter there was an increase in both the overall number of tenants in arrears (+812 No.) and the overall value of debt associated with current tenancies (+£194k).

- 3.7 At the end of June 2013, 28.27% (24,478 No.) of current domestic tenants were in arrears compared to 27.38% (23,650 No.) at the end of March 2013.

4.0 Supporting People Programme Update

- 4.1. **The Board noted the update on the Supporting People (SP) Programme.**

- 4.2 Supporting People is the Government programme for housing related support administered in Northern Ireland by the Housing Executive to help vulnerable people live as independently as possible in the community. The programme established the means to manage accommodation on a partnership basis and to strategically commission housing related support services that aim to tackle social exclusion by preventing crisis and more costly interventions.
- 4.3 SP is a key contributor in the delivery of a range of national and local strategies and programmes relating to homelessness, health, criminal justice and social inclusion.
- 4.4 In 2012-13, SP funded 101 organisations to provide 901 housing support services at a cost of £67.5 million. At any given time, these services can support up to 17,000; with a throughput of an additional 6,000-8,000 people annually.
- 4.5 During 2012-13, SP was involved in the following business activity:
- Development and consultation in relation to new Strategy for Housing Related Support 2012-15;
 - Service development in line with national and regional priorities, resulting in 20 new services comprising 163 units of accommodation;
 - Remodelling and restructuring of a number of existing services to improve access and/or increase capacity;
 - Contract management activity with 186 contract groups to monitor and review services to ensure that they continue to meet strategic aims and objectives, meet minimum quality standards and remain eligible for SP funding;
 - Continued to administer a rolling programme of accreditation and financial monitoring and review to ensure that providers of SP services are fit for purpose and financially viable.
- 4.6 Key actions for 2013-14 have been established, including:
- Working with DSD to develop an action plan to delivery against the new SP Strategy for Housing Related Support 2012-15;
 - Continued monitoring and review of services through the contract management framework and associated action to remodel/realign services where necessary;
 - Carry out an independent review of accreditation and contract management processes in conjunction with DSD;
 - Continued joint working with partners in health and in the voluntary and community sector and health to identify opportunities for collaborative working and promote innovation and capacity in the sector.

5.0 Amendments to the Rules of the Housing Selection Scheme

5.1. The Board approved the amendments to the rules of the Housing Selection Scheme.

5.2 The amendments to the Rules of the Housing Selection Scheme are as follows:

- Removal of Rules 80-82 relating to the HOMES Mobility Scheme which is now redundant as the mobility scheme is now defunct.
- Amendment to Rule 83 of the Scheme which relates to a Homeswap scheme for tenants. The new rule states:

“Secure tenants of the Landlord who wish to move outside of Northern Ireland to permanent self – contained accommodation held by social sector tenants elsewhere in Great Britain may use a housing mobility scheme [as approved by the Landlord] to do so. Both tenants involved in a proposed exchange must have the written permission of their respective landlords.”

5.3 These amendments form part of the proposed changes to the Housing Selection Scheme which was consulted on recently. While most of the proposed changes to the Housing Selection Scheme are predicated on the Welfare Reform Bill, these particular amendments are not and can proceed regardless of the introduction of the Welfare Reform Bill in Northern Ireland.

5.4 Respondents to the Housing Selection Scheme consultation had expressed universal support for the proposed changes to remove the redundant Rules 80-82 and to reword Rule 83 to ensure that the scheme continued to provide a means of further enabling tenant exchange across the UK and the participation in mobility options and initiatives as an alternative means of finding suitable accommodation.

6.0 People Strategy July 2013

6.1. The Board approved the revised People Strategy.

6.2 The People Strategy sets out the arrangements currently in place for the effective management of people; and outlines how the Housing Executive intends to improve on existing policies and processes in order to create, and sustain, an organisational environment which enables staff to realise their full potential, and to give of their best in order to achieve organisational objectives.

6.3 The People Strategy is being ‘rolled-on’ against a backdrop of impending change and uncertainty for the Housing Executive and its people. The objectives for the year ahead reflect this, and include a number of

activities aimed at preparing the organisation and its people for the anticipated changes in structure and staffing which lie ahead.

7.0 Business Case for the Roll Out of Response Maintenance Mobile Working

7.1. The Board approved the business case for the roll out of mobile working for response maintenance staff.

7.2 A mobile working pilot was run for a 12 month period and completed in December 2012. Two possible options were brought forward for full evaluation following the pilot completion:

- Option 1 – Do nothing (status quo). This option is to keep the paper based system of inspection that exists in all Area maintenance units.
- Option 3 – with some further development by BT/Orchard to roll out a mobile tablet device configured to provide each maintenance officer with the ability to carry out the full range of inspection and job creation duties while on site.

7.3 The capital costs for option 3 will be incurred up front in year 1 of the project. There are a number of expected non monetary benefits:

- Agile and flexible working patterns, reduced travel;
- First time capture of information;
- Increased processing speed;
- Reduced printing of job inspections;
- Job specification – viewable on site.

7.4 To maintain the status quo would provide little opportunity to improve the process which in turn would deliver less benefit to the organisation.

7.5 BT/Orchard having developed the mobile working pilot have the expertise required to provide a mobile solution that will deliver against the organisation's requirements leading to more agile and flexible working patterns.