

Briefing Paper to the Park Area Committee**Wards: Marfleet, Southcoates
and Holderness**13th July 2022

Briefing Paper Park Area Housing Performance for the period ending May 2022

**Briefing Paper of the Assistant Director for Neighbourhoods and Housing
Manager.****1. Purpose of the Paper and Summary**

To brief the Park Area Committee on the performance of the Park Housing Team and the Housing Investment Team for the period up to and including 31st May 2022 as contained in Appendix (a) of the report.

2. Background

The Area and Neighbourhood agenda places responsibility for ensuring effective performance of Council services at a local level with Area Committees. The information at Appendix (a) captures the relevant information to enable the Area Committee to fulfil its monitoring role in relation to local delivery of Housing Services.

3. Issues for Consideration

3.1 Rent Collection – On page 2 of the report it shows the Park area has collected 93.06% up to the end of May 2022. Citywide rent collection for the year was 96.59%

Our focus continues to be around quality contacts, with officers receiving regular updates and training to assist them in their role. We are also actively working to improve our outputs in terms of those quality contacts to ensure we are offering as much support and advice as necessary for customers to sustain their tenancies and rent payments. Some of the work we do is detailed below:

- More focus on additional quality contacts
- Promotion of our 'rent advice' poster campaigns
- Promotion of Direct Debits, automated payments

- Promoted our digital offer with online payments and Housing Online accounts
- Automated texts to customers to remind them to pay their rent
- Adhoc texts regarding scheduled payments due

We continue to promote our service and the advice we can offer through our quarterly communication 'rent advice' campaigns with our most recent campaign promoting the different options customers have available for them to pay their rent, promoting online payments where possible. We will continue to work with customers to keep them up to date with their rent payments where possible and agree suitable payment arrangements for those with change of circumstances.

In terms of Former Tenant Arrears (FTAs), from the 31 ceased tenancies within the Park area so far this year, 23 of those tenancies had rent arrears outstanding. This equates to 74.2% of accounts and a monetary value of £8,413 with £6,864 being collected in the year so far. Currently we are reviewing the management systems in place to manage FTAs which will support with further improvements in this area of work.

There has been no eviction in the Park area up to 31st May 2022.

The team continue to work with tenants to sustain their tenancies giving support and advice should they fall into financial difficulties. We have robust processes in place to support customers struggling financially with support from our Tenancy Officers, Tenancy Sustainment Team and referrals to Citizens Advice when required. Our processes have also been strengthened in line with pre-court protocols to ensure we are offering the right level of advice to our customers affected by change in circumstances.

The number of new claims for Universal Credit for council tenants received has remained consistent, averaging between 40-50 new cases per week. This increase is alongside the reverification works of existing claims due to the rent increase.

As of 31st May 2022 a total of 8860 HCC tenants are in receipt of Universal Credit, of which 1458 are tenants within the Park area.

35.96% of these tenants citywide have alternative payment arrangements in place citywide, and 35.70% have an APA in the Park area, meaning their housing costs are paid direct to Hull City Council. Those on UC in the Park area have average arrears of £333.14 compared to average arrears of £299.00 for Park area tenants generally. The citywide average is £403.51 for those claiming UC.

We continue to monitor the long-term impact of the implementation of UC on council rent arrears overall with 68.5% of those in arrears currently claiming UC.

At this stage we are pleased that the range of measures in place to support tenants has ensured that relevant support is offered to our customers and we continue to be able to identify people that need assistance at the start of the claim process through the work of our Tenancy Sustainment Team.

Appendix (b) highlights some of the recent casework completed by the team for your information.

3.2 Average Relet Time – Information is included on page 3 of the report detailing the average number of days it takes from a set of keys being handed in from a tenant to the date a new tenancy is created. Up to the end of May 2022 the average relet time for properties within the Park area was 86 days compared with the citywide average of 80 days.

The area has relet 43 properties in the year and 291 citywide. The Park area as at the end of May 2022 had 1.98% rent loss through empty properties, which equates to £52,509. The citywide performance for the year so far was a rent loss of 2.58%, against target of 1.95%.

In terms of the average time taken by the contractor to repair properties completed within the month, the average number of days taken for the Park area was 59.1 days for routine and 75.2 for routine plus when looking at Hull City Council data. The target for the contractor to repair the properties and return them to the area team for re-letting is currently 19 for routine and 33 days for routine plus across the city. Citywide performance was 39.8 days for routine and 59.5 days for routine plus taken from Hull City Council statistics. It should however be noted that as part of new contractual arrangements that these figures are HCC performance measures and that joint figures are still to be agreed. As such there are discrepancies of around 9-10% in the void numbers.

The overall turnaround of properties is currently longer than expected at present due to the impact of covid-19.

A number of factors have impacted on void times due to the pandemic. For example the time taken for asbestos information to be provided has increased which has a knock on impact for works commencing to the property. Despite restrictions in the early part of this financial year the demand for resources has increased alongside a boom in the construction industry. This has resulted in both labour shortages (demand and absenteeism) and building material shortages (e.g. timber, glass, plaster and manufactured elements such as kitchen units). This has led to an increase of around 50-75% in the number of voids in repair system during the first half of 2021 and is continuing.

3.3 Empty Council Properties – as at the end of May 2022, the Park area had 45 empty properties within stock which equates to 1.3% of total stock as detailed on Page 4 of the report.

There were 12 properties in the Park area ready for relet with the area team. There were also 33 properties receiving repairs including 10 which were receiving major repairs. In addition to these 9 properties are currently being managed by Housing Strategy and Renewal team which includes 5 with the temporary homeless team, 1 property with the shared tenancy team, 2 with the regeneration team and 1 property receiving an option appraisal for the future use. This gives a total of 54 empty properties across the Park Area. This information is a snapshot of information as at the end of May 2022 and whilst they are showing

as empty on our systems, properties are allocated to applicants and are in the process of being signed up at this stage. There are no hard to let properties within the City at the present time.

3.4 Repairs Completed Right First Time – In terms of the percentage of repairs completed right first time, the report details information for the year on page 5. From the 20 returns up to 31st May 2022 in the Park area, 85% of repairs completed were completed right first time. Citywide the performance is at 90.5% for the year against a target of 85% therefore currently performing in line with the target. There have been 118 returns for the year citywide.

3.5 Gas Repairs – In respect to gas servicing, the Park area as at the end of May 2022 had 99.91% of properties with a valid gas safety certificate in place meaning 3 case is currently outside of our target. Citywide performance was 99.92% with a total of 17 cases without a valid gas safety certificate for those cases due at this stage of the year.

3.6 Anti-Social Behaviour – Page 7 of the report details performance information as generated by the Neighbourhood Nuisance team.

In terms of the response to service requests within the published timescale target of 100% all reports during the year were dealt with within target in the Park area. There have been 524 requests up to the end of May 2022 across the city, with 63 reports being made by residents living within the Park area.

Table 2 on page 7 of appendix (a) details the categories of those reports made with the highest reason for reports being either Noise nuisance, intimidation/harassment/verbal abuse, and thirdly Neighbour disputes.

3.7 Right To Buy Sales - Page 8 of the report includes information in respect to right to buy sales across the City. In the Park Area for this financial year, there have been 5 sales with 48 sales in total across the City.

3.8 Estate Management – In addition to the work included in the attached performance report, the team are also working on a number of schemes in the area to improve the neighbourhood for our residents. See below details of some of that work.

Community Hub Pilot

The Greatfield Estate has been identified as an area of the City where there are limited residents accessing Council Services either online or through face-to-face contacts with partner agencies, due to the lack of provision to deliver services in the local area. It has been agreed that the ground floor area at the Greatfield Information Point will become a pilot to deliver this partnership approach, bringing a wide range of partners together under one roof to provide a single point of access to meet customers' needs in terms of face to face contacts. Due to delays with the works being completed, consideration is being given to open the pilot within one of the vacant shop units on the parade to enable the pilot to progress. Additional information will be provided as the pilot progresses further.

Newtown Court – Balcony Refurbishments

Work has began to refurbish the Balconies at Newtown Court. The works are to resurface the existing balconies at Newtown Court, laying new asphalt and finishing with grey promenade tiles. Externally, rain water down pipes and grey water waste pipes shall be replaced, together with new wider gullies. The balustrades around balconies will be re-painted (black). KWL will access balconies from scaffold, are undertaking resident liaison duties to coordinate the day to day works. Estimated completion August/September 2022, weather depending.

4. Next steps

4.1 The Riverside Area Committee notes the performance and requests further information as it requires.

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Officer Interests: None

Background Documents: - Performance information produced by Housing and Neighbourhood Management Service