

Briefing Paper to the Riverside Area Committee12th January 2022**Wards: Drypool, Gypsyville,
Newington, St Andrews &
Docklands**

Briefing Paper Riverside Housing Performance for the period ending November 2021

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

To brief the Riverside Area Committee on the performance of the Riverside Housing Team and the Housing Investment Team for the period up to and including 30th November 2021 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 Riverside area has collected 95.18% up to the end of November 2021. Citywide rent collection for the year was 94.79%

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 279 ceased tenancies within the Riverside area so far this year, 165 of those tenancies had rent arrears outstanding. This equates to 59.1% of accounts and a monetary value of £94,663 with £47,938 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 have been 3 evictions in the Riverside area up to 30th November 2021.

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 is currently lower than previous months, averaging between 40-50 new cases per week.

As of 30th November 2021 a total of 8170 HCC tenants are in receipt of Universal Credit, of which 1368 are tenants within the Riverside area.

32.38% of these tenants have alternative payment arrangements in place, so their housing costs are paid direct to Hull City Council. Those on UC in the Riverside area have average arrears of £443.40 compared to average arrears of £377 for Riverside area tenants generally. The citywide average is £451.09 for those claiming UC.

We continue to monitor the long-term impact of the implementation of UC on council rent arrears overall with 70% 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 November 2021 the average relet time for properties within the Riverside area was 78 days compared with the citywide average of 80 days.

The area has relet 152 properties in the year compared to 993 citywide. The Riverside area as at the end of November 2021 had 2.68% rent loss through empty properties, which equates to £298,682. The citywide performance for the year so far was a rent loss of 2.83%, 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 Riverside area was 52.3 days for routine and 73.5 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 55.4 days for routine and 74.3 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 2022 and is continuing.

3.3 Empty Council Properties – as at the end of November 2021, the Riverside area had 90 empty properties within stock which equates to 2.4% of total stock as detailed on Page 4 of the report.

There were 111 properties ready for relet with the area team, 25 properties receiving repairs including 65 receiving major repairs. In addition to these 21 properties are currently being managed by Housing Strategy and Renewal team which includes 7 with the temporary homeless team, 3 properties with the shared tenancy team, and 7 properties receiving option appraisals for their future use. This gives a total of 111 empty properties across the Riverside Area. This information is a snapshot of information as at the end of November 2021 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 170 returns up to 30th November 2021 in the Riverside area, 82.5% of repairs completed were completed right first time. Citywide the performance is at 86.6% for the year against a target of 85% therefore currently performing slightly lower than the target. There have been 762 returns for the year citywide.

3.5 Gas Repairs – In respect to gas servicing, the Riverside area as at the end of November 2021 had 99.93% of properties with a valid gas safety certificate in place meaning 2 cases are currently outside of our target. Citywide performance was 99.96% with a total of 8 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 98.9% all reports during the year were dealt with within target, there have been 1955 requests up to the end of November 2021 across the city, with 360 reports being made by residents living within the Riverside area.

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

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 Riverside Area for this financial year, there have been 24 sales with 151 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.

Patch walks - The team have completed patch walks on identified areas on the estate with ongoing work to improve the area.

This includes:

- Painting of MSF (HIS) – Melville Street and New Michael Street – now completed with all scaffolding recently removed from Melville Streets
- Re-lining of carparks – Melville Street and New Michael Street – this has been an area spend project – Melville Street is now completed, but we are having issues with New Michael Street in the fact that the residents are not moving their cars to allow for the re-lining to take place.
- Coniston/Kendall House - barriers are being installed and expected to be up and running in January 2022 – this again is an area based spend project – consultation has been carried out by the Tenant Participation Team.

- Cavill Place – managed by area team, with regular patch walks being carried out to try and resolve ongoing issues within the area
- New mugger area on Walker Street – old one been replaced with new fencing and relined court – this has been organised by the NC's
- New barriers down Convent Lane – paid for by area team
- Green space at back of Coniston/Kendall House – consideration was being given to create a playground on the area however the trees are in a conservation area so we are unable to do so. Some work is being carried out to prune and tidy up the area – work being led by the Neighbourhood Co-ordinator.
- Sheds on Melville Street and New Michael Street – currently due to be repainted, and repaired (Housing Investment Services are the lead) – area team supporting with the establishing of who has which sheds, prior to the project commencing

Sirius/Bethune – due to a number of issues with fly tipping in these area our team have been working with NPS to look at solutions, including fitting new locks to gates and providing keys to shops/residents for access.

Partnership working with Love Your Street

The teams are working with the Love Your Street Team to assist with education regards to bins and recycling in the local area. The team are also working with the Love your Street team to look to improve gardens within the local area.

4. Next steps

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

Nic Harne, Assistant Director for Neighbourhoods and Housing Manager

Contact Officer: Jayne Braimbridge

Telephone No: (01482) 612233

Officer Interests: None

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