

Service Summary Sheet

Directorate	Housing and Community Services
Date	Quarter 3 performance reporting (as at quarter ended 31/12/2021)
Benchmarking (with local authorities/nearest neighbours)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housemark – all of our landlord services are benchmarked against peer groups with similar characteristics and regular reporting against the national picture. During Q3 we have received our 2020/21 Housemark report showing our outcomes compared to a group of other housing authorities: 	
	
 <p>Annual Performance Summary</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Midlands Income Group – rent arrears, evictions, direct debit and other relevant indicators reported and discussed with a range of Midlands housing authorities and housing associations. This group is focused on collaboration and discussion to support service improvement and sharing best practice, rather than competition and league tables. However, we do share key performance indicators and we compare very well on performance including arrears / tenant, %age arrears, %age rent collected of rent debit, evictions and direct debit takeup. The group includes housing authorities, ALMOs and housing associations, so we can learn from a range of providers, but numeric performance indicators must be seen in the context of different operating constraints as well as economies of scale, relative affluence / deprivation and other factors. A new Property Compliance Scorecard has been developed to give assurance at all levels that regulatory, statutory and legislative compliance is being achieved. This is now reported through Spectrum. All Duty Holders/Approved Persons are in place and the new bespoke Property Compliance Data Management System (C365) has been installed, populated and is supporting the management and monitoring of key items. We have consulted with Walsall Housing Group on their approach to carrying out home checks, customer relationship in neighbourhoods, estate inspections and their housing manager patch sizes. 	
Overview of Service Delivery (include any issues / risks)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There were 53 new affordable homes completed in Q3 bringing the cumulative total for 2021/22 to date to 133 new homes. There have been 147 new affordable homes started on site (cumulative) so far in 2021/22. 	

- In February, we opened our new supported living project to provide a specialist service for street homeless people until they are ready for an independent tenancy. Government funding was secured from the Government's Next Steps Accommodation Programme to convert a large property that would otherwise have been a very high cost void into a high quality five unit scheme including one unit suitable for wheelchair use.
- Over 3,850 council homes have received some form of capital improvement to end Q3, with over 7,250 components installed, including 225 kitchens, 254 new bathrooms, 1219 external doors and 100 roofs. Over 566 are energy related improvements.
- We have completed 178 major public sector adaptations, approved 361 private sector DFGs, with 255 schemes completed.
- Winter Warmth / DEAL (Dudley Energy Advice Line) have received almost 2,000 calls, 96% from residents most vulnerable to cold, with around 1,700 instances of advice around household behaviour to reduce bills and improve use of heating controls. Fuel switch referrals are low, at only 200, mainly because of high energy process and suppliers not providing fuel switch options.
- Remodelling of sheltered schemes at Jack Newell Court and Woodhouse Court commenced Q3 in a £13.6m project, supported by £4.8M Homes England Grant, and will complete end 2022.
- 32 new affordable council homes are on site, due to complete Q4, 42 new affordable homes achieved planning approval, 93 new homes were submitted for planning approval (see below).
- Feasibility works are ongoing for pipeline schemes, linking into strategic priority sites such as Enville St and Colley Lane.
- Homes England bids are being developed to financially support the new homes delivery programme, particularly around Netherton and Lower Valley Rd.
- Our revised 5 year capital programme was refreshed and will provide a £310m programme of improvements to our housing stock, and will be considered at Q4 Feb Cabinet and Full Council. However, this balanced programme will only maintain a basic Decency standard with around £170m of investment towards an estimated £270m investment need over that period.
- A new Interim Head of Service started full time from December and carried out a full set of introductory meetings engaging with internal colleagues, and with frontline staff through attended all team meetings and 4 "Patch" tours. Meetings held with some Members and attended DFTRA and Housing Board meetings.
- Backlog of Councillor & Member enquiries and complaints cleared with all responses brought up to date. This has raised levels of Member confidence.
- The Ark "Tenant Involvement & Empowerment Review" together with Implications of the Housing White Paper and changing regulatory approach was presented to SEB in December, and subsequently to Housing Board. Discussions are underway about future customer engagement approaches and forums which will inform a new Customer Engagement & Involvement Strategy for 2022/23.
- Good performance has again been maintained on rent collection, with arrears of £2.3m at the end of December. This compares to £2.7m at the end of the previous year, representing a 17% reduction in arrears. The number of accounts in arrears by more than £1000 has reduced by over 20%.
- 41% of tenants are paying their dwelling rent by direct debit and almost all tenants who have garages or insurance pay by direct debit. This is one of the highest rates in the Midlands.
- 36% of Universal Credit claimants pay by direct debit, with over 33% on managed payments. This means that we have a high level of certainty around income from UC claimants and are supporting many tenants to manage their rent payments.
- A key emerging issue is the increase in direct debit rejections: this is a normal factor post Christmas but is exacerbated this year by the increase in food and fuel inflation and the ending of the Covid furlough scheme in the autumn. We are keeping this under constant review.
- The Housing Fraud Team has been working on a new Counter Fraud Policy which will be ready for consideration and sign off in Q4. The PACE room at Harbour Building has also been fitted with a screen and CO2 monitoring device so that it can again be used for interviews under caution.

Workforce Metrics

Headcount & FTE as at 31/12/2021

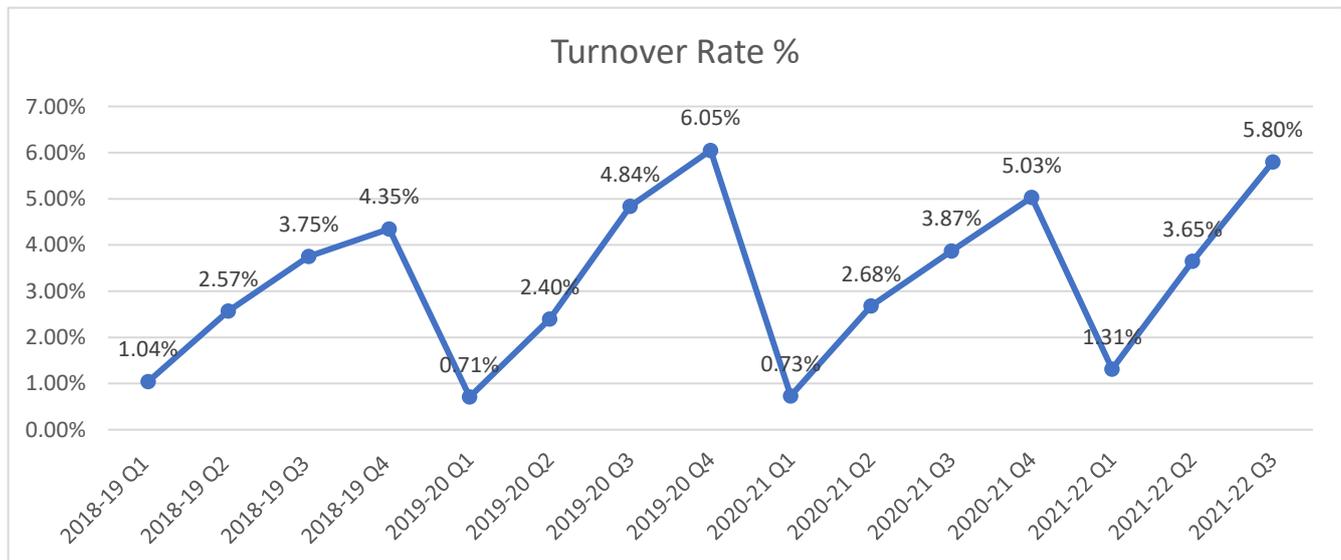
Division	Headcount Non Casual	Casual Headcount	Total Headcount	FTE
Management Team	0	0	0	0.00
Community Safety	2	0	2	1.81
Housing Asset Management & Development	89	3	92	81.99
Housing Estates & Communities	104	2	106	97.40
Housing Finance	68	3	71	55.95
Housing Maintenance	404	6	410	389.09
Housing Options & Support	157	4	161	142.64
Housing Strategy	23	1	24	22.63
PA Team	1	0	1	1.00
Grand Total	846	18	864	792.51

Ethnicity	Headcount	%
Ethnic Minority Group	90	10.6%
Undisclosed	30	3.5%
White	726	85.8%
Grand Total	846	100.0%

Disability	Headcount	%
Disabled	63	7.4%
Not Disabled	524	61.9%
Undisclosed	259	30.6%
Grand Total	846	100.0%

Gender	Headcount	%
Female	377	45%
Male	469	55%
Grand Total	846	100%

Quarter	Turnover rate %
2021-22 Q3	5.80%



Service Achievements (report of any external accreditation, nomination for awards, positive publicity, during the past quarter)

- 3 completed new build schemes have recently received external recognition:
- Winner of Homebuilder of the year (more than 16,000 homes) category in the UK Housing Awards 2021 – the Broadway, Norton.

- LABC Housing Excellence Awards - New Housing - Best small social housing development (up to 30 units) Stewarts Road, Halesowen, Dudley. Regional Winner, national finalist but unfortunately not a winner.
- LABC Housing Excellence Awards - New Housing - Best high volume new housing development (more than 30 units) Castle Court, Dudley. Regional Winner, national finalist but unfortunately not a winner.
- We have submitted a planning application for 75 new affordable homes at Netherton which includes a new sheltered scheme of 54 new homes, as well as a scheme to remodel an existing Council asset at New Swinford Hall into 18 new homes.
- We have successfully defended a Disrepair claim in court, and were awarded costs. Whilst this is not an achievement to 'win' in court per se, it does mean that we can spend our valuable resources on needed repairs, and not on solicitor fees.
- Staffing resource gaps in Tenancy & Estates and ASB Teams have eased with some successful recruitment through to permanent roles and temporary staff.
- The ASB Team have stabilised as new staff have found their feet and casework demand has lessened.
- Set up a new Tenants & Residents Association in Wollescote in October 2021

Opportunities for Improvement (*information relating to service complaints / compliments and learning from these.*)

- Consultation reports were received from Ark around our flatted estates work, and outcomes will be reported Q4 to assist our strategy for flatted developments, alongside opportunities that arise from the Levelling Up agenda and government funding.
- Conclude the SLA between ASB and Legal Services during Q4 and starting to use mandatory grounds for possession which will require a review and update review of the ASB Policy.
- Review our customer contact processes which include Member enquiries and complaints to provide a more efficient and speedy resolution, particularly on cross-team customer issues.
- Proposals for a new more targeted approach to carrying out Homechecks are drafted to be agreed by DMT in Q4 for implementation from April 2022

Any additional information relevant to Corporate Scrutiny

- The Pennington Choices 'Health Check' of property compliance (issued June 2020) that looked at DMBC adherence to the Regulatory requirements, has been closed out.