

Housing Service

Service Statement 2017 – 18

April 2017
Version V.07

Housing Service

Purpose:

To lead the Council's place shaping role in promoting housing growth across the region.

To manage, maintain and repair the dedicated housing stock for Council tenants and leaseholders.

To secure the provision of decent homes for all residents and to create sustainable communities across the County.

Primary functions - Strategic Housing.

- Housing Options and Homeless Service
- Private Sector Housing Initiatives
- Refugee and Asylum Seeker Service
- Policy & Strategy
- Management of Unauthorised Encampments
- Community-Led Housing

Primary functions - Housing Delivery.

- Estate Management
- Gypsy Roma Traveller Service
- Homefinder Service
- Leaseholder Management
- Resident Involvement
- Right to Buy Management
- Tenancy Management
- Voids and Allocations Management
- Welfare and Advice Service

Primary functions - Housing Maintenance.

- Responsive Repairs and Maintenance Service
- Emergency Out of Hours Service
- Annual gas and solid fuel statutory testing
- Management of planned work programmes

Service Parameters

Key Service Facts and Figures – Strategic Housing.

- Monitors long term empty homes throughout the County;
- Brought back to use 178 empty private properties in 2016/17
- Processed 275 Homelessness applications in 2016/17;
- Provided support to 208 people to be housed through the Homelessness service in 2016/17;

Key Service Facts and Figures – Housing Delivery.

- Manages the Council owned social housing portfolio consisting of 8,557 rented homes and 259 leaseholders;
- Manages 2 Gypsy Roma Traveller sites in Hartford Bridge and Lynemouth;
- Allocated 761 council properties in 2016/17;
- Processed 94 Right to Buy applications in 2016/17;
- Provided financial and tenancy sustainability advice to 200 Council tenants in 2016/17;
- Provides a variety of opportunities for Council tenants and Leaseholders to directly engage with the service via a dedicated Resident Involvement team;
- Collects and manages an annual rent debit of £32,000,000
- Provided support to 2,424 people to be housed through the Homefinder service in 2016/17;

Key Service Facts and Figures – Housing Maintenance.

- Undertook 39,000 responsive repairs to council properties in 2016/17
- Carried out 8,800 gas services to council properties in 2016/17
- Carried out 180 solid fuel services to council properties in 2016/17
- Completed external painting of 1500 council properties in 2016/17
- Provided out of hours callout service to council housing and public buildings
- Assisted strategic housing under EDMO (Empty Dwelling Management Order) to access 5 private rented properties in 2016/17
- Provided repairs and maintenance across two gypsy roma traveller sites in Hartford Bridge and Lyneburn Cottages
- Delivered 200 handyman service jobs for the elderly to council properties in 2016/17
- Inspected 260 tenant improvement requests in council properties in 2016/17

Summary of Service Resources at 1 April 2017

| Section Name | Number of FTE posts | Staffing Expenditure | Non Staffing Expenditure | Income | Capital investment |
|---------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|-------------|--------------------|
| Housing Services (GF) | 38.66 | £1,342,340 | £1,339,600 | £989,500 | £485,000 |
| Housing Management (HRA) | 52.99 | £1,805,300 | £20,789,870 | £32,682,080 | £9,916,330 |
| Housing Maintenance (HRA) | 116.23 | £3,949,200 | £3,489,760 | £181,090 | £0 |
| Total for Service | 207.88 | £7,096,840 | £25,619,230 | £33,852,670 | £10,401,330 |

External Validation

Inspections

There are no external inspections.

Customer perception

- **STAR Survey:**

A comprehensive survey of Council tenants' customer satisfaction was conducted in February 2014 by external consultants. The survey built on an earlier exercise undertaken in 2009 and 3,196 tenants actively participated (38%)

- **Tenant Involvement Framework:**

The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) is the regulator for all

housing providers.

It promotes a co-regulatory approach to service delivery which underpins the need for tenants to be involved and included in how the services they receive are monitored and scrutinised.

A dedicated Resident Involvement Team was set up in July 2015 to engage specifically with Council tenants and Leaseholders. Their remit is to develop and deliver an overarching framework of engagement opportunities for customers to get more involved with Housing Services.

- **Benchmarking**

Whilst Homes for Northumberland's membership to HouseMark ended in 2013 we continue to participate in informal benchmarking via the sharing of regular intelligence with other social housing providers throughout the North East.

Priorities for 2017 – 18

| Priority Area | Key Milestones |
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| Revise the existing Performance Framework to reflect the new Housing Service Structure | Redevelop the Corporate KPI's in line with the Housing Service Statement 2017-18 [June 2017] Develop a suite of Satisfaction Surveys to complement these [December 2018] |
| Implement Northgate NPS Housing Management System [April 2018] | Complete solution design workshops and build new system utilising internal resources [July 2017] Identify and provide training to "module leads" [July 2017] Develop and implement testing and training protocols [September 2017] Migrate OHMS data Integrate Total Mobile by means of BARIS interface Go live April 2018 |

| Priority Area | Milestones |
|---|--|
| Develop Community engagement and social responsibility through partnership working. | <p>Continue to support and monitor the Newsham Community Matters Project.</p> <p>Continue to work with colleagues in the Youth Service and Adolescent Services in developing information for young tenants across the county, providing vital information in order to maximise sustainable tenancies</p> <p>In partnership , develop a community project based on the Newsham model, in the Alnwick Area</p> |
| Review of HFN's Tenancy Agreements in light of the introduction of fixed term tenancies | Revise HfN's Tenancy Agreement and its underpinning terms and conditions [March 2018] |
| Service review of Allocations Procedures | Complete Service review of HfN Void's process, Homefinder procedures and the Common Allocations processes [March 2018] |
| Complete service review of Estate Management Functions | <p>Develop neighbourhood profiles for every HfN area [October 2017]</p> <p>Develop an Estate Grading programme across all Council housing areas [March 2018]</p> |
| Complete service review of Sheltered Housing Accommodation | <p>Submission of interim progress report to Portfolio Holder in September 2017</p> <p>Work with Adult Services to identify the priorities for the provision of housing for older people.</p> <p>Submission of final report to Portfolio Holder in November 2017 and agree recommendations and next steps, including need or otherwise for pre-scrutiny and consideration by Cabinet</p> |
| Develop an Action Plan to mitigate the roll out of universal Credit | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an officer working group to review implementation and impact arising from further roll out of Universal Credit - July 2017 • Provide Portfolio Holder briefing setting out impact, next steps and proposed support to NCC tenants, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Offer I.T Support to tenants |

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| | <p>through partnership working</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Awareness campaign ● Review structure/resources - September 2017 ● Review policies and procedures i.e. rent and allocations September 2017 |
| Review of Leasehold policies and procedures | <p>Develop an Arrears Policy/process [June 2017]</p> <p>Develop an involvement mechanism for Leaseholders - November 2017</p> |
| Review all existing Housing Strategies to identify whether they are still fit for purpose and reflect the implications of new legislation including the Housing & Planning Act, Homeless Reduction Bill etc | <p>Refresh the Housing Strategy for Northumberland 2013 – 2018 [March 2018]</p> <p>Monitor the implementation and delivery of the Homelessness Strategy for Northumberland 2016 - 2021 Action Plan [March 2018]</p> <p>Monitor the implementation and delivery of the Private Sector Housing Strategy for Northumberland 2015 - 2020 Action Plan [March 2018]</p> <p>Update the Tenancy Strategy to reflect the requirements within the Housing & Planning Act for the implementation of flexible tenancies [October 2017]</p> |
| Improve & increase the temporary accommodation provision across the county. | <p>Complete the refurbishment of the council-owned temporary accommodation [December 2017]</p> <p>Complete the procurement of additional temporary accommodation bed spaces [October 2017]</p> |
| Implement a charging Policy for the management of unauthorised encampments on Third party land to more effectively and efficiently manage the process | <p>Develop a draft UE charging policy in partnership with Legal Services [June 2017]</p> <p>Produce a report to seek decision on policy framework - June 2017</p> <p>Communicate details of charging Policy to partners & stakeholders [July 2017]</p> |
| Implement a process for temporary stopping places for the GRT community | <p>Process to be agreed by Director and Portfolio Holder [June 2017]</p> |

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| <p>Selective Licensing proposal to be developed to support regeneration of specific areas where market failure is identified</p> | <p>Process for Selective Licensing to be determined and agreed [January 2018]</p> <p>Evidence to be collated and reviewed [September 2017]</p> <p>Agreement for implementation of Selective Licensing to be agreed through committee process [September 2018]</p> |
| <p>Completion of Lease and Repair and Acquisition and Repair scheme to be achieved</p> | <p>The application of the EDMO process for 25 properties to ensure the achievement of the Lease and Repair scheme in line with HCA funding requirements [March 2018]</p> <p>The acquisition of 5 properties to ensure the achievement of the Lease and Repair scheme in line with HCA funding requirements [March 2018]</p> |
| <p>Allocation of the Government grant to support Community-Led Housing across the county</p> | <p>Appointment of a Community Housing Officer to support the development and application of the scheme [May2017]</p> <p>Grant allocation to CAN to develop the Communities CAN organisation to support community-led project development.[April 2017]</p> <p>Communication of the availability of funding to town & parish councils, community groups to develop responses. [June 2017]</p> <p>Review in consultation with Director and Portfolio Holder the opportunities and options to support development through use of NCC land assets</p> <p>To work with Development Management to identify and encourage landowners/developers able to support provision of CLH either as part of larger or individual developments</p> <p>To work with Registered Providers to encourage and support provision of CLH either as part of larger or individual developments</p> |
| <p>Continue to implement the Council's offer to support the re-settlement of 48</p> | <p>Additional 6 families to be resettled in Northumberland by June 2017 (4 in April 2017</p> |

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| families under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme (SVPRS) | and 2 in June 2017) Further 4 families to arrive in Autumn 2017 and in Spring 2018 |
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Performance Framework

| Measure | Outturn | | | Target |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| | 2014/15 | 2015/16 | 2016/17 | 2017/18 |
| Current council tenant arrears as a % of the annual rent debit | 1.86 | 1.64 | 1.75 | 2.00 * |
| Former council tenant arrears as a % of the annual rent debit | 1.61 | 2.41 | 3.03 | 1.90 |
| % rent lost through vacant council housing | 1.25 | 1.26 | 1.36 | 1.00 |
| Average number of days to re-let Council housing | 33.03 | 32.25 | 33.53 | 30.00 |
| % of Homefinder applications registered within 10 days | 78.27 | 78.62 | TBD | 90.00 |
| Number of private sector dwellings vacant for more than 6 months returned into occupation | 191 | 193 | 181 | 160 |
| % of homeless applications processed within 28 days | N/A | 95.83 | 100 | 98.00 |
| % of priority unauthorised encampments moved on within 7 working days of arrival | N/A | N/A | 91.66 | 90.00 |
| % of solid fuel servicing certificates completed | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| % of gas servicing certificates completed | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| % of emergency repairs completed within 24 hours | 99.37 | 99.52 | 96.85 | 99.2 |
| % of routine repairs completed within 30 days | 96.82 | 95.28 | 96.15 | 97.00 |
| % of repairs fixed first time | 97.50 | 99.49 | 96.76 | 98.00 |

* The arrears target has been increased from 1.64% to 2% due to the introduction of Universal Credit . The 2016/17 result was £38,098 above the set target, however £45, 000 of arrears was directly attributed to the introduction of Universal Credit.