

Report of Corporate Director

WELLINGBOROUGH HOMES – PROGRESS AND MONITORING REPORT

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide a performance progress report on Wellingborough Homes to enable Members to track the promises made to tenants. This report relates to all the corporate priorities of PRIDE.

2 Executive Summary

The report appended informs members of the performance of Wellingborough Homes during the first quarter 2010/2011. This performance is measured against commitments given to tenants at the time of transfer. The report includes a general update on the activities of Wellingborough Homes over the last few months and a more detailed look at Wellingborough Homes approach to customer service.

3 Appendices

WH Progress and Monitoring report

WH Promises tracker table

4. Proposed Action:

4.1 The Committee is invited to RESOLVE to approve:

- i. The Progress and Monitoring report from Wellingborough Homes as appended;**
- ii. The ‘Promises Tracker’ report by Wellingborough Homes as appended.**

5 Background

- 5.1 On the 10th December 2007, the Borough Council of Wellingborough transferred the housing stock to Wellingborough Homes; a newly created Registered Social Landlord (RSL). The Council monitors performance of Wellingborough Homes and other Registered Social Landlords in the Borough. Reports are provided to the Community Committee on a quarterly basis with respect to the performance of Wellingborough Homes and compliance with the transfer agreement and ‘Promises’ included in the Tenants Consultation document.

6 Discussion

- 6.1 Appended is a Progress and Monitoring report from the Chief Executive of Wellingborough Homes with a general update on the activities at Wellingborough Homes. More detailed attention is given to the approach taken by Wellingborough Homes to customer service, and a specific Promises Tracker

report is appended. Further appendices include copies of promotional leaflets relating to the new 'Handy Hour' handyman service and the 'Well Supported' service for tenants aged over 50 years.

7 Legal Powers

7.1 The Council reserved to itself the right to monitor delivery of the promises by Wellingborough Homes under the Deed of Covenant which formed one of the agreements entered into under the Stock Transfer.

8 Financial and Value For Money Implications

8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

9 Risk Analysis

Nature of risk	Consequences if realised	Likelihood of occurrence	Control measures
Performance declines	The housing service would not deliver the requirements detailed in the promises document.	Unlikely due to the level of investment of Council and Housing Communities Agency monitoring.	Regular meetings and progress reports.

10 Implications for Resources

10.1 There are no resource implications arising directly from this report.

11 Implications for Stronger and Safer Communities

11.1 The performance of Wellingborough Homes impacts on the health improvement, community cohesion, and community safety of the Borough.

12 Implications for Equalities

12.1 The performance of Wellingborough Homes impacts on the Council's duty to design and evaluate the impact of its services, policies and activities on different groups of society to eliminate discrimination.

13 Author and Contact Officer

Ela Goodall
Housing Policy and Enabling Officer

14 Consultees

Steven Wood – Head of Built Environment
Vicki Jessop
Housing Strategy Manager
LSVT monitoring sub-group

15 Background Papers

None

Progress and monitoring report

Introduction

This report provides Members with an update on the progress of Wellingborough Homes (WH). The report is provided in three parts:

Section 1 – Provides a general update and a flavour of the activities that WH has been involved in over the past few months.

Section 2 – Provides a more detailed update on the Association's approach to customer service.

Section 3 – Is a copy of the promises tracker report in the format agreed with Officers of the Council.

Section 1 – General Update

Handyman Service

We have now launched our handyman service, branded 'Handy Hour' designed to help tenants aged 60 or over, or younger tenants who receive a disability living allowance.

Our handyperson can complete small 'DIY' jobs in your home for a flat rate charge of just £10. This covers the labour and is subsidised to make it affordable.

Well Supported

We have also launched a pilot of our 'Well Supported' service which provides a lifeline alarm unit and a call response service.

Fun for All

We will be holding our Annual Fun Day on September 18th from 10am to 3pm. The event will again make use of our Customer Service Centre at Thompson Court as well as the Tithe Barn.

The event, which has been a big success in the past, mixes fun whilst giving residents access to important information about the services we provide as well as other agencies in the Borough or County. It also plays an important part in our tenant engagement strategy giving us access to a captive audience to seek feedback and views on the services we provide.

We wish to encourage all Council members to join us on the day.

Staff Awayday

We are currently undertaking a comprehensive review of our tenant engagement strategy and in line with the requirements of our Regulator, the Tenant Services Authority we are working with tenants to develop our local offers.

On 2nd September all staff will be out on our estates knocking on doors and talking to tenants. Under the banner of 'Opportunities' this is about giving our tenants the chance to challenge what we do, suggest areas of service where we could offer more choice and to suggest things we could change to improve our service.

Wellingborough Homes on film

We have produced a small and simple video to promote our work and the things we have achieved since transfer. The video can be viewed through our web-site at <http://www.wellingboroughhomes.org/main.cfm?type=VIDEOS>.

Section 2 – Customer Services

Complaints

Responding to and learning from feedback provided by tenants is a key aspect of the Association's approach to service improvement and its assessment of Value for Money. Complaints in particular are an opportunity to identify faults within the service.

Our in-house Customer Feedback and Complaints system is now a year old and enables us to capture and track feedback.

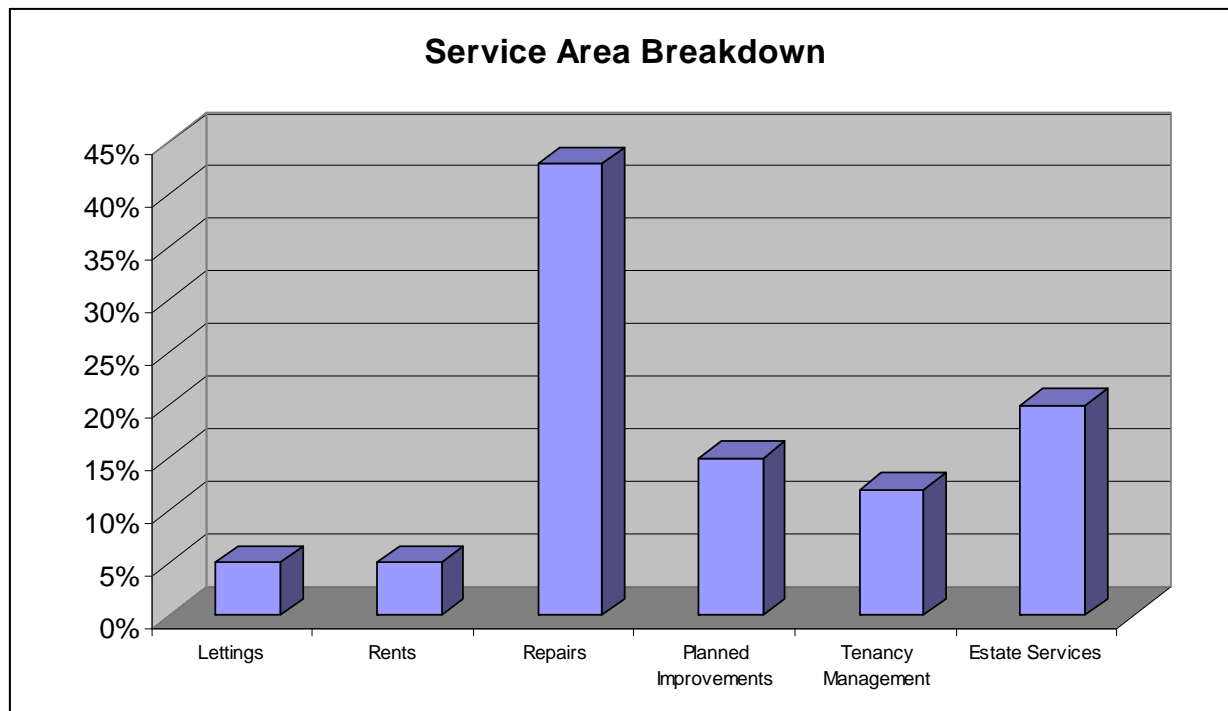
In 2009/10 we received:

- 151 complaints (this is a similar figure to our benchmarking peers)
- 11 informal complaints
- 41 Compliments
- 2 Suggestions

95% of complaints were dealt with within published timescales against a target of 90%. Of the 151 complaints, 145 were resolved at Stage One and the remainder at Stage Two. No complaints were reported to the Independent Housing Ombudsman Service.

The chart below shows what areas of service the complaints were related to:

Chart 1



The majority of complaints are repair related and this is in line with the benchmarking results of our peers. The 47 repair related complaints need to be seen in the context of the 22,700 repairs that were completed during the year.

Two primary issues relating to service delivery have been identified as a result of analysing the feedback. The first was the number of complaints that related to the quality of landscape maintenance and reflected the poor performance of the landscape maintenance contractor. As a result a new contractor has now been appointed.

Secondly, we received 20 complaints that related to staff attitude (Note that the results of our comprehensive satisfaction survey (discussed below) shows that 90% of general needs tenants described staff as being 'helpful'). We are therefore exploring options for the delivery of additional customer care training.

Satisfaction with the complaints service was 67% against perhaps an over ambitious target of 90% (revised to 80% for 2010-11). To improve on this changes have been made to the customer relationship process with increased levels of contact throughout. This has already shown encouraging results with satisfaction increasing to 88% in the first Quarter of 2010/11.

Customer Satisfaction

We have now completed our first major customer satisfaction survey (known as STATUS). The survey, carried out by BMG Research Ltd, was sent out to each of our 4,500 households towards the end of last year.

The results show how tenants feel about issues like the quality of their home and neighbourhood, whether their rent offers good value for money and the helpfulness of our staff.

The feedback is split across residents living in general needs housing and sheltered housing (for older and vulnerable people). Key results included:

- 82% satisfaction with the overall service (93% in sheltered housing)
- 82% satisfaction with quality of the home (94% in sheltered housing)
- 90% find staff helpful (95% in sheltered housing)
- 86% satisfied with the repair service (92% in sheltered housing)
- 76% satisfied that their rent offers value for money (90% for sheltered housing)
- 79% satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live (90% for sheltered housing).

The results of the survey also give us a clear steer about the priorities of tenants – the repairs service, customer service, their estate environment and anti-social behaviour.

Full copies of the survey results can be found on our web-site
www.wellingboroughhomes.org

Customer Service Team

We have recently been named a winner at the East Midlands Learn Direct Achievement Awards. The awards recognise and celebrate the positive impact that learning has on people and businesses. Our award follows a training programme which saw all 10 members of the customer services team complete an NVQ Level 3 in customer service.

Section 3 – Promises Tracker

A copy of the Promises Tracker report is attached as Appendix 1 to this report. The report shows progress to deliver the promises made to tenants as part of the transfer process. Appendix 2 shows spend on repairs and improvements since transfer together with the outputs from selected categories of works.

Recommendation

Members of the Community Committee are asked to note the report.

Wellingborough Homes Promises				
Promises - Description as per offer document	Section	Status	Evidence	Evidence
RENTS				
5 year guarantee that for each of the 5 years following transfer, the rent will not go up by more than the rate of inflation + 0.5% + £2.17 pw	B - p.12	G	Rent increase in each year since transfer has been in line with the 5 year guarantee. The 2010 rent review saw some tenants have their rents reduced due to a negative inflation rate in September 2009.	Rent Increase Letters
Support services would not be affected by transfer	B - p.14	G	No additional Support charges have been introduced.	Rent Increase Letters
No hidden service charges and no hidden increases	B - p.15	G	No additional service charges have been introduced except at new refurbished scheme (in consultation with BCW HB Team)	Rent Increase Letters
LOCAL SERVICES				
Introduce a new Housing Maintenance handyperson service within 2 years of transfer, (primarily for vulnerable people)	C - p.19	G	We have introduced a new 'handy hour' service where all tenants can have an hours worth of general work i.e. putting up shelves, for £10.00. A free session will also be made available to all new tenants	Commenced July 2010
Increase the number of estate caretakers to keep housing areas clean & tidy, remove fly tipping & graffiti & regularly inspect estates	C - p.19	G	We have 6 caretakers and a supervisor in place working on our estates. We are currently assessing their duties to increase the amount of community estate based duties.	Board Approved establishment
Have an appointments system for all repairs	C - p.18	G	We introduced a repairs appointment service in April 09 offering 3 different repairs time slots . All tenants are now offered an appointment day & time convenient to their needs for their repair to be carried out. During QTR1 2010 tenant satisfaction with the Repairs Service was 94.40% (Target 83%) and 97% of appointments (target 98%) were kept on time.	Tenant Satisfaction Surveys. Quarterly Performance Reports to Board
Provide faster response times for repairs	C - p.18	A	We have achieved the following performance for completion on time for our responsive repairs service during QTR 1 2010: emergency repairs 97.28%, urgent repairs 92.88% & routine repairs 94.38%. Two of the three categories were just below target by 2% & we are working to improve performance.	Quarterly Performance Reports to Board
Provide a debt counseling service	C - p.19	G	We have used funding from Barclays Bank Community Fund to fund the Community Law Service to run a surgery two days per week from our Thomson Court offices. From March -June 2010 they have provided benefits advice & casework to 157 tenants & helped to claim £268,862 of benefits.	Monitoring reports provided by the Community Law Service
Carry out "customer feedback surveys" for tenants	C - p.19	G	STATUS survey was completed in 2009 and results published in 2010 - full reports available on our web-site www.wellingboroughhomes.org. We are currently carrying out three surveys covering the development of local offers, choice of direct debit collection dates and customer access.	STATUS Survey
Budget £2.3 million over 5 years for environmental improvements	C - p.20 / D - p.24 / E - p.31	G	We have budgeted to spend £500,000 during 2010-11, some of land & roads affected in the ownership of BCW & the Highways Agency, we are awaiting authority before commencing works.	2010 Business Plan and 2010-11 Budget approved by Board

Aim to deal with complaints promptly	C - p.20	G	During QTR1 we received 75 complaints of which 100% were dealt with within published timescales. 88% of complainants were satisfied with how their complaint was processed. This has improved due a more personalised approach being undertaken with complainants who are telephoned to be updated about the progress of their complaint.	Monthly Operational Performance Report
ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AND CRIME PREVENTION				
Increase the number of anti-social behaviour officers	D - p.24	G	The service dealt with 113 new ASB cases in Qtr 1, resolving 79% within 28 days. 87% of service users were satisfied with how their ASB complaint had been dealt with.	Board Approved establishment. Quarterly Performance Reports to Board
Starter tenancies for 12 months for new tenants	D - p.25	G	All new tenants in the first quarter were given starter tenancies, the remainder were given assured tenancies due to being internal transfers.	CORE Data and Performance Reports to the Board.
IMPROVING AND REPAIRING YOUR HOME				
In the first 5 years we aim to spend £94.2 million on repairs & improvements up to silver standard		G	A total of £4.3m had been spent on day to day repairs, voids, gas servicing, cyclical repairs and improvements to 31/06/10.	Business Plan and Annual Accounts
Fit 3,800 new high quality kitchens - tenants consulted on choice of fittings	E - p.29	G	We have fitted 1030 new kitchens since transfer including 245 this quarter	Asset Management Database
Fit 1,500 bathrooms - tenants having choice of over bath shower/colour of flooring/additional wall tiles	E - p. 29	G	We have fitted 1135 new bathrooms since transfer, including 326 this quarter	Asset Management Database
Fit 4,200 new external doors - PVC d/glazed, high security - tenants given choice	E - p. 30	G	This programme is complete with the exception of doors to blocks of flats which are to be completed in the planned enveloping works to flats this financial year.	Asset Management Database
Spend over £0.8m on replacing / improving fences and gates	E - p. 30	G	This expenditure is contained within our Environmental work programme	2010 Business Plan and 2010-11 Budget approved by Board
Garages - spend - £1million on garages and hard standings	E - p. 32	G	This expenditure is contained within our Environmental work programme	2010 Business Plan and 2010-11 Budget approved by Board

Environmental improvements	C - p.20 D -p.24 E - p.33	G	We have commenced a new programme of Estate walkabouts, where tenants & local stakeholders have joined staff in identifying issues to help plan future environmental improvement work. This will include work to communal areas, removal of disused garage sites and improved security. We have carried out 11 walkabouts in the first quarter	2010 Corporate Plan and 2010-11 Budget approved by the Board.
Improve repairs service	E - p.34	G	Satisfaction with repairs service as at 31/6/10 was 94.40%	Quarterly Performance Reports to Board
Planned maintenance	E - p.34	G	As well as the bathroom & kitchen replacements we have installed to date 1,634 heating systems & new boilers and completed 834 electrical rewires.	Quarterly Performance Reports to Board
SERVICES FOR OLDER PEOPLE AND SHELTERED HOUSING SERVICE				
Better security measures incl. lighting, fencing, door entry systems, spy holes	F - p.36	G	We are upgrading security measures as part of our refurbishment works to the sheltered schemes. In the meantime we are monitoring any incidents that have taken place in our schemes to ascertain if we need to bring forward the implementation of security measures. A comprehensive scheme to upgrade the communal areas of flats including areas surrounding the flats is due to begin this year. We shall be consulting with tenants in each block to understand their individual preferences.	2010-11 Budget and Business Plan approved by the Board.
A new handy person service for small repair jobs	F - p.36	G	We have introduced a new 'handy hour' service where all tenants can have an hours worth of general work i.e. putting up shelves, for £10.00. A free session will also be made available to all new tenants	Commenced July 2010
Sheltered Housing - improve all schemes to convert bed-sit flats to one bedroom flats	E - p.30 F - p.38	G	We are on target refurbishing one scheme per annum. Perkins Court was completed in April 2008 and Hollowell Court in May 2009. The refurbishment of Barringers Court commenced in January 2010 & is on track for completion in October 2010.	Annual Report & Accounts. Quarterly Performance Reports to Board
Sheltered Housing improvements - refer to sheet 2	E - p.30 F - p.38	G	We have established a new sheltered gardening service with a gardener in post. The decoration service for older tenants is also continuing.	Board approved establishment

INVOLVING TENANTS

Publish good quality information about services and proposals	G - p.40	G	We produce 'Well briefed' our newsletter which is posted to all tenants every quarter. In addition we consult & share information with tenants about a variety of events through advertising on our display board outside Thompson Court, sending letters & writing articles on our website. Tenants are working alongside us this year to produce an Annual Tenants Report.	Information available to download from www.wellingboroughhomes.org
Actively seek tenants views and encourage participation including younger tenants and under represented groups	G - p.40	G	We are working with local schools & young people educating them about anti social behaviour and the impact it has on their communities. In the year to date we have worked with 7 classes in Sir Christopher Hatton School supporting 250 children, currently working with two other schools with talks in place to expand into another two. We run drop in sessions in the tenants resource centre with Woman's Aid, NHS health trainers & JobMAETS. We also run craft making sessions, mother & tots groups & half term activities. We plan to canvass tenants views as apt of our staff way day and annual tenants fun day in September 2010.	Reports to Board. Resident Involvement Impact Assessment
Include a budget in the business plan for tenant participation	G - p.40	G	A budget of £110k has been set aside for 2010/11.	Annual Budget
Involve tenants in the selection of contractors	G - p.40	G	We have established a tenants scrutinee committee to help us monitor the performance of our contractors.	Board reports on the selection of contractors
Involve tenants in performance monitoring	G - p.40	G	This year a group of tenants are working with us to scrutinise and produce a report on our performance in 2009/10. The tenants on our board receive quarterly performance monitoring reports & we are working on sharing performance data in our Thompson Court office & on our website. We have also established a tenant advisory panel training a group of tenants in techniques to help them monitoring our performance.	Annual tenants report. Quarterly Newsletters.
Carry out regular CSS to make sure that the service is meeting tenants needs	G - p.40	G	We carry out CSS telephone surveys every quarter to a random selection of tenants. We also send out CSS cards to all tenants who have recently had a repair carried out & we survey tenants who have are new tenants, have had major improvements & aids & adaptations carried out in their home and have used our ASB & complaints recording service. We have a customer survey group in place to look at our surveys ensuring we are asking the right questions to use customer feedback to improve our service delivery.	Quarterly Performance Reports to Board. STATUS survey reports

Total expenditure on repairs and improvements

Description	Notes	2007/08 £	2008/09 £	2009/10 £	2010/11 to 30/6/10 £	Cumulative Total £
Improvements						
Kitchens	Includes Extractor Fans and Electrical Work inc smoke & heat detectors	537,009	1,651,247	2,229,823	967,136	5,385,215
Bathrooms	Includes Over Bath Electric Showers	130,754	717,562	1,743,854	574,676	3,166,846
Heating & Hot Water	Includes Central Heating Systems	3,225	1,203,234	1,614,966	588,425	3,409,850
Roofs		1,146	303,116	268,524	265,460	838,246
Windows & External Doors		219,571	898,543	572,041	0	1,690,155
Environment	Includes fencing, gates, garages & hardstandings	0	86,450	501,494	0	587,944
Flats Ext & Comm areas****		0	0	0	17,155	17,155
Swedish Houses		0	0	0	0	0
Airey Houses		0	0	0	0	0
Sheltered Schemes		676,134	1,669,545	599,246	467,639	3,412,564
Jackson Lane Refurbishment		0	0	192,252	324,431	516,683
Disturbance Allowance		0	0	76,611	55,711	132,322
Electrical	Inc smoke & heat detectors	0	166,110	0	34,192	200,302
Digital TV Upgrade		11,461	105,745	0	0	117,206
Aids & Adaptations		134,730	458,738	575,357	175,605	1,344,430
Catch Up Repairs	Includes insulation work & major structural repairs	0	305,117	1,065,169	157,625	1,527,911
Fees		0	671,183	355,489	30,724	1,057,396
Total Improvements		1,714,030	8,236,590	9,794,826	3,658,778	23,404,224