

**Bolsover District Council**

**Executive**

**1 February 2016**

**Housing & Community Safety Quarterly Update**

**Report of the Portfolio Holder for Housing and IT / Portfolio holder for Community Cohesion**

This report is public

**Purpose of the Report**

To update members on performance and issues within the Housing & Community Safety Service for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2015

This report should be read in conjunction with the statistical appendix.

**1 Report Details**

- 1.1 Rent arrears remain challenging largely as a result of welfare reform. However, historically, due to the cycle of rent free weeks and direct debit collection the rent arrears have peaked in December and reduce for the rest of the year.
- 1.2 All tenants, other than those who pay by direct debit, have been issued with payment cards. These are readable by the cash machines in the Contact Centres and avoid the need to type in reference numbers. These will continue to be issued to all new tenants. From 2016 Rent Cards will not be issued to tenants
- 1.3 The Money Advice worker has been successful in engaging with tenants who have previously been reluctant to engage. For example a tenant in rent arrears and suffering from severe agoraphobia was refusing to engage with any agency and was at risk of losing their home. The money advice worker was able to arrange a joint visit with the Social Worker. They managed to complete a HB claim, and collect various proofs. HB is now in place. Tenant is still engaging and monies are being paid on a weekly basis through DD payments
- 1.4 The repairs service continues to perform well with 100% of emergencies and 99.7% of appointed works being completed within target. This means that from almost 8,500 jobs only 19 were out of time. The majority of which were due to the need for follow on works for extra works and or materials to order. In the same period 693 abortive calls were made to tenants where we could not gain access to carry out the repair.

- 1.5 There has, been an issue with gas servicing at a small number of properties (6 number). These have been problems of tenants granting access to properties. However, following enforcement action access has now been gained to all properties and servicing completed. The systems will be further reviewed to ensure that actions being earlier against tenants who have been 'difficult'. The council will be seeking possession of one property where access was refused.
- 1.6 Members should be aware that there has been an incident where a repair operative fell from a step ladder which resulted in an investigation by the HSE. In response to this incident additional training and equipment will be provided. This will be reported in more detail to a future meeting of the Safety Committee.
- 1.7 The STAR satisfaction survey, which is completed every three years, has been completed with the results due in January. The outcomes of this will be reported in detail to a future meeting.
- 1.8 The Council has been successful in obtaining almost £2m of funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund for New Bolsover. More detailed reports will be presented to members
- 1.9 The B@home new build project has successfully launched with the start on site at Rogers Avenue, with other sites to be launched soon. The Council have been successful in obtaining HCA funding of over £150k towards Rogers Avenue, and will hopefully attract funding for future schemes.
- 1.10 The government have introduced a number of changes that have a significant detrimental impact on the Housing Service. The most obvious being the 1% rent reduction, but also including the mandatory pay to stay scheme, the enforced sale of high value assets, and the ending of lifetime tenancies. At time of writing there are no firm details of how these schemes will work (other than the rent reduction) but are likely to hit the department in terms of both loss in income and assets and also an additional administrative burden.
- 1.11 As agreed at a previous Executive, the Department have now purchased replacement equipment for Central Control. The Contractors (Jontek) are currently cleansing data prior to installing this on the new equipment, with a planned launch date of April 2016.
- 1.12 As members will be aware a PSPO was introduced for Shirebrook. Police and other partners have confirmed there has been a reduction in ASB since the order was introduced on 4<sup>th</sup> November 7 fixed penalty notices had been issued for breaches (up to 31 December)

## **2 Conclusions and Reasons for Recommendation**

- 2.1 That members note the issues raised in this report

### **3 Consultation and Equality Impact**

3.1 None directly

### **4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection**

4.1 None

### **5 Implications**

#### **5.1 Finance and Risk Implications**

Set out in statistical appendices and operating in existing budgets.

#### **5.2 Legal Implications including Data Protection**

None arising directly from this report

#### **5.3 Human Resources Implications**

None arising directly from this report

### **6 Recommendations**

6.1 That members note the contents of this report.

### **7 Decision Information**

<b>Is the decision a Key Decision?</b> (A Key Decision is one which results in income or expenditure to the Council of £50,000 or more or which has a significant impact on two or more District wards)	No
<b>District Wards Affected</b>	All
<b>Links to Corporate Plan priorities or Policy Framework</b>	G09, G13 C06, C07, C10, C12, C13, C14, C15, C16 H07, H08, H14, H15, H16 T06, T09, T10

8 **Document Information**

Appendix No	Title
	Statistical Report.
<b>Background Papers</b> (These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Cabinet (NEDDC) or Executive (BDC) you must provide copies of the background papers)	
Report Author	Contact Number
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Report Reference –