

**EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

**HOUSING COMMITTEE – 8 SEPTEMBER 2004**

**PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

**Report by Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 The purpose of the report is to inform members of performance in relation to the Housing Statutory Key Performance indicators for the year from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2003 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004.

**2.0 INTRODUCTION**

2.1 Set out below are details of the Housing Statutory Key Performance Indicators for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2003 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004 and comments thereon. Performance for the financial year 2002/2003 is also provided for information.

**3.0 PERFORMANCE**

**3.1 INDICATOR 1 – RESPONSE REPAIRS**

- a) The target response time for each priority category set by the Council.
- b) The number of repairs carried out in each category.
- c) The percentage of repairs completed within the target response time for each priority category.
- d) The percentage of all repairs due to be completed within 24 hours that were completed within target.

01/04/03-31/03/04			
Category	Target	The no of repairs carried out	The % of repairs carried out
Emergency	24 hours	27951	88.9%
Urgent	3 days	19999	74.5%

01/04/03-31/03/04	
The percentage of all repairs due to be completed within 24 hours that were completed within target	88.9%

2002/2003			
Category	Target	The no of repairs carried out	The % of repairs carried out
Emergency	24 hours	33175	83%
Urgent	3 Days	18348	70%

2002/03	
<b>The percentage of all repairs due to be completed within 24 hours that were completed within target</b>	83%

3.2 Councils set their own target timescales for prioritisation of repairs. The 24 hour target for emergency repairs is reasonably standard. However, the three day timescale for Urgent repairs is one of the lower target timescales. The department has been seeking to increase the level of planned preventative maintenance carried out and has introduced programmes of work for gutters and stair-lighting. It is encouraging therefore to see that the level of emergency repairs has fallen and that this is reflected in an improved performance in this category. There has also been further work carried out in standardising repair instructions and enquiry routines to ensure accuracy in ordering. In the course of the year, a number of specialist contracts were incorporated into the multi trade contracts without any loss in performance levels. The main contractor has been developing the concept of imprest vans to ensure that adequate materials are available to complete jobs at first visit.

### 3.3 INDICATOR 2 - MANAGING TENANCY CHANGES

**The total annual rent loss due to voids expressed as a percentage of the total amount of rent due in the year.**

	2002/03	01/04/03-31/03/04
<b>Void rent loss</b>	3.9%	3.13%

3.4 This indicator reflects, to some extent, the improvements in re-let times noted in Indicator 3. There has also been a drive to return long term voids to the letting pool, and while this has adversely affected the average number of days to re-let (Indicator 3), this has been off-set by a significant improvement in Indicator 2. There have been a number of demolitions in the course of the year which also impacts favourably on this indicator. There has been Committee approval to invite Developer interest for some of the areas where there are a high number of voids. Voids in these areas can, therefore, be excluded from the figures. Scottish Executive funding for the implementation of the Homelessness Strategy has been utilised, in part, to return long term voids to the letting pool and to refurbish and re-decorate these to provide additional temporary accommodation. The Better Neighbourhoods Initiative has over the past two years provided funding for vacant house garden improvements and an environmental hit squad in some of the areas with higher levels of voids. There has also been a mobile security patrol, which has helped reduce the level of voids needing to be security shuttered. All of this has improved the visual amenity of these areas and consequently the refusal rate has reduced significantly in these areas. There remains an intractable problem of no demand in many areas in the south of the district. However, there are indications that demand in the north of the district has been picking

up and that this may be associated with the extension of the M77 to Kilmarnock. There has also been a drive to fully utilise the opportunities afforded by the Supporting People initiative and Short Scottish Secure Tenancies to sustain tenancies which might previously have failed thereby minimising voids arising.

### 3.5 INDICATOR 3 - RE-LET ANALYSIS

**The time taken by the council to re-let houses analysed by bands.**

Number of houses re-let	2002/03	01/04/03-31/03/04
< 2 Weeks	169	154
2-4 Weeks	720	728
> 4 Weeks	926	869

Percentage of houses re-let	2002/03	01/04/03-31/03/04
< 2 Weeks	9.3%	8.8%
2-4 Weeks	39.7%	41.6%
> 4 Weeks	51.0%	49.6%

	2002/03	01/04/03-31/03/04
Average time to re-let houses	69 days	73 days

3.6 There has been an overall reduction in the number of void houses in the past year for a variety of reasons, including the introduction of tenancy support and relaxations on restrictions to admissions to the Waiting List. Efforts have been made to re-introduce some of the longer term voids back into the letting pool, with a degree of success. This has had a detrimental effect on the average time to re-let houses. Lettable Standards have been rolled out across the district in the course of the year. This has had an adverse impact on the void period as more work is now being done pre-viewing. Notwithstanding this, there has still been an improvement in the number of houses let in less than 4 weeks due mainly to tighter allocations processes and applicant assessments being carried out earlier in the process. There has been some additional investment in void houses upgraded for use as temporary accommodation, financed from additional resources from Homelessness Strategy Funding. The housing market in Kilmarnock has been particularly buoyant in the last year and this may have had some effect on demand in the public sector for this area. Demand in the south part of the district remains generally low and in some parts there is little or no demand.

### 3.7 INDICATOR 4 – RENT ARREARS

- a) Current tenant arrears as a percentage of the net amount of rent due in the year.
- b) The percentage of current tenants owing more than 13 weeks rent at year-end, excluding those owing less than £250.

	2002/03	01/04/03-31/03/04
Current tenant arrears as a percentage of the net amount of rent due in the year.	7.8%	4.9%

	2002/03	01/04/03-31/03/04
<b>The percentage of current tenants owing more than 13 weeks rent at year end, excluding those owing less than £250</b>	4.8%	1.3%

- 3.8 There has been continuous improvement in this indicator since the introduction of the Orchard arrears module in April 2001. The more recent introduction of the Civica system for Housing Benefit has contributed significantly to accelerated processing of claims and improved management information. Ongoing training in welfare benefits for Housing staff has resulted in improved advice and assistance in caseload management. The introduction of Tenancy Support Workers across the district has also assisted in dealing with some new tenants and others with whom it can be difficult to engage. The Finance Department initiated an Evening Shift Housing Benefit Team which dealt with, among other things, new tenant applications. This has accelerated the processing of claims for this group. Consequently, less time has been spent by Housing Officers in dealing with these cases and more time has been spent on dealing with genuine arrears cases. There has been occasional overtime worked by Housing Officers to pick up on difficult to reach clients with out of hours telephone contact and visits. The department's investment in Outposted Benefits Assistants to progress Housing Officer enquiries has assisted in the accelerated processing of cases. The reduction in arrears has been a priority area for the department over a number of years and the continued improvement is due mainly to detailed management information along with rigorous caseload management at all levels within the service.
- 3.9 In past years, the improvement trends across indicators 4(a) and 4(b) have been broadly similar. However, this year there is a significantly greater reduction in 4b. Much of the continuous improvement in rent arrears figures over the past three years has been associated with tackling high level arrears and this has had a corresponding effect on the indicator. As most of the high level cases are now out of the system, dealing with the relatively lower levels makes a significant impact on the number of cases below the threshold for inclusion in the indicator. As with 4a, the Housing Benefit Evening Shift Team's dealing with new tenant claims has meant that many of the new tenant claims which may previously have come into this category are now being picked up much earlier. Similarly, overtime by Housing Officers targeted at difficult to contact cases has dealt with a number who would fall into this category. The department's strategy for dealing with rent arrears has targeted high level arrears and sought to concentrate on early intervention thereby not allowing arrears to build up to unmanageable levels. The significant improvement in this indicator is the result of pursuing this approach over a sustained period.
- 3.10 **INDICATOR 5 – HOUSE SALES**
- a) The percentage of house sales completed within 26 weeks.**  
**b) The average time for council house sales.**

	2002/03	01/04/03-31/03/04
<b>The percentage of house sales completed within 26 weeks</b>	69%	36%

	2002/03	01/04/03-31/03/04
<b>Average time for council house sales</b>	25 weeks	31.2 weeks

3.11 The introduction of the Orchard house sales module at the beginning of the financial year 2002/2003 has allowed, with the exception of a minimal number of earlier applications still being processed on the earlier system, for a co-ordinated approach to the processing of applications. Revised processes/policies have required to be developed in response to the legislative changes contained within the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. These legislative changes have required the allocation of additional resources within the Council's Finance Division and have had an impact of increased workload within both Housing and Legal Services. A backlog of applications received in the previous relevant financial period required to be processed in the current financial year with the net effect that although there was a reduction in the overall number of applications the total number of transactions proceeding to settlement out-turned slightly higher than 2002/2003. The Council is committed to improving its indicator performance within the financial year 2004/2005. Scheduled monthly meetings involving officers from all relative services to monitor the service have been established. Monthly settlement targets have been agreed which should allow for an improvement in indicator performance within the financial year

### 3.12 INDICATOR 6 – HOMELESSNESS

- a) **The number of households assessed as homeless or potentially homeless during the year.**
- b) **The average time between presentation and completion of duty by the council for those cases assessed as homeless or potentially homeless.**
- c) **The number of cases reassessed as homeless or potentially homeless within 12 months of a previous case being completed, as a proportion of all cases assessed as homeless or potentially homeless during the year.**

	01/04/03-31/03/04
<b>The number of households assessed as homeless or potentially homeless during the year</b>	762

	01/04/03-31/03/04
<b>The average time between presentation and completion of duty by the council for those cases assessed as homeless or potentially homeless</b>	6.3 weeks

	01/04/03-31/03/04
<b>The number of cases reassessed as homeless or potentially homeless within 12 months of a previous case being completed, as a proportion of all cases assessed as homeless or potentially homeless during the year</b>	23.0%

3.13 Internal target for time between presentation and completion of duty is 42 days. Procedures to ensure that every homeless person is offered a housing option seek to reduce repeat homelessness.

#### **4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no additional financial implications associated with this report

#### **5 LEGAL AUTHORITY/IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The Council requires to comply with Directions issued by the Accounts Commission in terms of the Local Government Act 1992 in respect of the publication of its statutory key performance indicators.

#### **6 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no additional policy implications associated with this report.

#### **7 RECOMMENDATIONS**

7.1 It is recommended that Members:

- (i) note service performance measured against the Housing Statutory Key Performance Indicators for the financial year 2003/2004.
- (ii) note that a report on performance for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2004 will be submitted to a future meeting of this committee.
- (iii) otherwise note the contents of the report.

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WS/CMCA/LA

#### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Nil

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