

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

HOUSING COMMITTEE – 7 SEPTEMBER 2005

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 Housing Service performance in relation to Statutory Key Performance indicators for the year from 1st April 2004 to 31st March 2005.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Set out below are details of the Housing Statutory Key Indicators for the period 1st April 2004 to 31st March 2005 and the performance for the financial years 2002/2003 and 2003/2004 are also provided for comparative information.

3. 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.

Emergency (24 Hours)	04/05	03/04	02/03
Number of repairs carried out	30305	27951	33175
The % of repairs completed in target	87.0%	88.9%	83.3%

Urgent (3 Days)	04/05	03/04	02/03
Number of repairs carried out	13647	19999	18348
The % of repairs completed in target	73.6%	74.5%	70.4%

	04/05	03/04	02/03
The % of repairs due to be completed within 24 hours that were completed within target	87.0%	88.9%	83.3%

Previously, the contract for the maintenance of the housing stock was split between the in-house service provider (Building and Works) and a private contractor. In the course of the year, Building and Works assumed responsibility for the maintenance of the entire housing stock. Whilst this transition has been relatively seamless in terms of continued service provision, there has been some negative impact on performance levels in those areas where the responsibility has transferred, while other areas have shown an increase in contractor performance. The timescale for second priority repairs is very short compared with other authorities where

timescales are commonly in the range of 5 to 10 days. The Housing Service has been seeking to return more long term voids to the letting pool and to increase the supply of temporary accommodation. Several of these have had a significant volume of repairs and have been resource intensive for the contractor. Members agreed previously to set up a Repairs Improvement Partnership with tenant representatives with a remit to explore ways of improving the repairs service and a report on its findings and recommendations for action will be submitted later this year.

3.2 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.

	04/05	03/04	02/03
Void rent loss	1.9%	3.1%	3.9%

There has been a significant improvement in this indicator as a number of initiatives have started to make a noticeable impact. The Void Management strategy which sought to achieve a closer balance between demand and supply has been progressing over the years. Demolition programmes and Area Regeneration Initiatives are tackling the problem of long term voids. The continuing improvement in void turnaround times and the return of long term voids to the letting pool have also had a positive effect on this indicator. Furniture Grant has been used to assist Homeless people in furnishing their houses with necessary items to sustain tenancies and this is having an impact on void turnover. Turn around times for void houses has continued to improve (see indicator 3) and this has also had a positive impact.

3.3 INDICATOR 3 - RE-LET ANALYSIS

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

Number of houses re-let	04/05	03/04	02/03
< 2 Weeks	201	154	169
2-4 Weeks	727	728	720
> 4 Weeks	654	869	926

Percentage of houses re-let	04/05	03/04	02/03
< 2 Weeks	12.7%	8.8%	9.3%
2-4 Weeks	46.0%	41.6%	39.7%
> 4 Weeks	41.3%	49.6%	51.0%

	04/05	03/04	02/03
Average time to re-let houses	64 days	73 days	69 days

Carrying out the full range of safety checks, clearing and cleaning of houses, checking for asbestos content in artex and arranging a power supply are all standard elements which can make the 2 week turnaround time difficult to achieve. However, we have continued to show improvement in this category and taken with the improvements in the 2-4 week category, the Council's overall performance in re-letting houses in less than 4 weeks compares favourably with other authorities.

There has been a significant reduction in the average days to re-let houses, however, this is still heavily influenced by the return of long term lets to the letting pool. Dedicated Voids Officers have been nominated from the existing pool of Housing Officers to inspect houses, arrange repairs and conduct viewings. This has assisted in streamlining communications processes with the contractor. The Council approved the introduction of Daily Lets which was introduced in the last quarter of the financial year. This Indicator will change in 2005/06 to take account of difficult to let houses which can significantly adversely affect average time to re-let.

3.4 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.

	04/05	03/04	02/03
Current tenant arrears as a percentage of the net amount of rent due in the year.	4.6%	4.9%	7.8%

	04/05	03/04	02/03
The percentage of current tenants owing more than 13 weeks rent at year end, excluding those owing less than £250	0.9%	1.3%	4.8%

The downward trend of recent years has continued albeit the rate of decline has slowed. The focus has steadily moved towards dealing with arrears at the earliest stages and this is proving successful. The very low level of arrears over 13 weeks demonstrates the success we have had in this area. Taking a firmer line on habitual arrears cases, where serial decrees are awarded has enabled staff to encourage habitual debtors to clear accounts before legal action stage. Daily Lettings was introduced towards the end of the year. The resultant changes in HB procedures was not fully bedded in by year end and had a negative impact on the arrears figure at year end. This has now been rectified.

3.5 INDICATOR 5 – HOUSE SALES

- a) The percentage of house sales completed within 26 weeks.
- b) The average time for council house sales.

	04/05	03/04	02/03
The percentage of house sales completed within 26 weeks	56%	36%	69%

	04/05	03/04	02/03
Average time for council house sales	28 weeks	31 weeks	25 weeks

The revised processes & procedures introduced in 2003/2004 in response to the legislative changes in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and ongoing monitoring & review of the Orchard Housing Management system to account for process

difficulties and monthly management monitoring meeting to review performance & targets has resulted in an overall improved performance in the financial year 2004/2005 and should allow for continued improvement within the year 2005/2006. The 2004/2005 improvement has been offset somewhat by the requirement to further revise the processes & procedures in response to the legislative changes introduced by the Abolition of Feudal Tenure (Scotland) Act 2000 and the Title Conditions (Scotland) Act 2003. In addition the Council's processes for dealing with the minimal number of transactions where funds received on the effective date of sale are held in trust pending resolution of title difficulties has had a negative impact on overall performance, however a review of these process in conjunction with the continued ongoing monitoring and review of processes linked to monthly management monitoring meetings should result in improved performance in 2005/2006.

3.6 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.**

	04/05	03/04	02/03
The number of households assessed as homeless or potentially homeless during the year	874	762	n/a

	04/05	03/04	02/03
The average time between presentation and completion of duty by the council for those cases assessed as homeless or potentially homeless	9.3 weeks	6.3 weeks	n/a

	04/05	03/04	02/03
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	20.3%	23.0%	n/a

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 imposed a duty on local authorities to provide accommodation to all homeless people, not only those in priority need. There was, generally, an expectation that this would, at least initially, lead to an increase in the number of homeless presentations. The Homeless Etc. (Scotland) Act 2003 imposed a further duty to accord priority need status on offenders leaving prison and others leaving institutional care and has further contributed to the increase in homeless presentations. The Council's Homeless Strategy commits the authority to provide a housing option for everyone presenting as homeless. Non-priority homeless applicants are housed from the Waiting List and will therefore require to wait until they attain a position at or near to the top of the list. This has pushed up the average time between presentation and completion of duty. The Council receives £486K

Homeless Strategy funding from the Scottish Executive. A significant portion of this money has been used to return long term vacancies to a condition where they can be used for temporary accommodation. The Council also receives £233K Furniture Grant which is designed to assist homeless people in setting up a home which is suitably furnished to sustain a tenancy. This has impacted positively on the repeat homelessness figure. The total number of void properties has reduced significantly over recent years and there is therefore greater demand for available properties. The Council has, in the course of the year, commenced clearance programmes in two of its Initiative Areas with the effect that there has been further pressure on available stock in the north of the district in the latter part of the year. This has adversely affected the average time between presentation and completion of duty. A coordinated approach to providing a network of suitable support to sustain tenancies in the longer term has contributed to the reduction in the number of repeat homeless cases. Proposals to amend the terms of the House Allocations Policy to help address some of the issues now being raised by the increase in homeless presentations are currently subject to consultation. The results of this exercise will be reported to members in due course.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Nil

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There is a statutory duty on Local Authorities to report on Key Performance Indicators.

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The Housing Service continues to make progress in delivering quality services in line with the Community Planning agenda and the aims of the Local Housing Strategy. Significant improvements continue to be made in a number of key activities but much work remains to be done both to sustain these improvements and to strengthen service areas where performance is not yet meeting expectations.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 It is recommended that the Committee

- (i) Note the contents of this report
- (ii) Note that a further report on the half year figures for April to September 2005 will be produced in due course.

William Stafford
Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

17 August 2005

CMCA/GD/LA

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

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