CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL	**Cabinet** 8 July 2020

Report title	Housing Managing Agents Performance Monitoring Report – Quarter Four January to March 2020	
Decision designation	AMBER	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Jacqueline Sweetman City Assets and Housing	
Key decision	No	
In forward plan	Yes	
Wards affected	All Wards	
Accountable Director	Ross Cook, Director, City Environment	
Originating service	Housing	
Accountable employee	Lakhi Sahota	Housing Strategy and Development Support Officer
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Report to be/has been considered by	Not applicable	

Recommendation for decision:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Review and comment on the performance of Landlord Services, Homelessness Services and the Home Improvement Agency for Quarter Four 2019-2020, and any areas for improvement.

1.0 Purpose

1.1 The primary purpose of this report is to provide an evaluation of the following:

A. Performance of Wolverhampton Homes and the Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs) in managing and maintaining council owned dwellings during the 2019-2020 financial year;

B. Delivery of Homelessness Services by Wolverhampton Homes on behalf of City of Wolverhampton Council during the 2019-2020 financial year;

C. Delivery of the Home Improvement Agency by Wolverhampton Homes to support independent living of residents.

2.0 Background

2.1 This report assists in clarifying and highlighting areas of performance; where performance data suggests that intervention or revised working may be required or has been undertaken.

2.2 This report illustrates performance from quarter one 2018-2019 to quarter four 2019-2020 inclusively to allow comparison over the year.

2.3 This report is split into three areas of client relationship management by Housing Strategy: Landlord Services, Homelessness Services and Home Improvement Agency.

3.0 Landlord Services

3.1 The performance for each of the managing agents is grouped under three headings:

a) Rent Management;

b) Repairs Management;

c) Voids and Allocations.

3.2 Wolverhampton Homes additionally reports on Business Planning, satisfaction with the handling and outcome of the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) process, Customer Care and Estate Services.

3.3 Tables indicate both the direction in which performance needs to move for improvement, and performance trends between the current and the previous quarter.

3.4 Additionally, performance is categorised as:

a) GREEN – where performance is in target and:
   (i) Was in target the previous quarter, or
   (ii) Was marked as Amber in the previous quarter.

b) AMBER – where performance is:
   (i) Off target this quarter and was marked as Green in the previous quarter, or
   (ii) In target this quarter and was marked as Red in the previous quarter.

c) RED – where performance is off target and,
   (i) Was marked as Amber in the previous quarter, or
   (ii) Was marked as Red in the previous quarter, or
   (iii) Gives clear cause for concern

4.0 Governance

4.1 The Housing Strategy Team continues to monitor the governance of the housing management organisations.

4.2 The Client Relationship Manager for Housing Strategy is invited to attend Wolverhampton Homes' board meetings as an observer. Wolverhampton Homes' board, committee and other minutes and papers are available on request to council employees.

4.3 The TMOs provide agendas, minutes and other documents from their regular meetings. Housing Services employees have observed TMO board and committee meetings where resources have permitted.

4.4 With all four quarters data now available, an annual review will be undertaken of the housing managing agents' performance across the year as well as an annual assessment of their governance and adherence to their management agreements.

5.0 Homelessness Services

5.1 Homelessness Services are delivered by Wolverhampton Homes on behalf of the Council, with residents provided with support in a number of ways to help ensure they keep their home.

5.2 The Housing Strategy team monitor Wolverhampton Homes' performance in the delivery of homelessness services as part of a service level agreement.

5.3 Performance is reviewed in average decision time taken, temporary accommodation usage, reasons for homelessness within Wolverhampton and prevention and relief work.

6.0 Home Improvement Agency

6.1 Disabled Facilities Grant, Affordable Warmth and Housing Assistance programmes have been delegated to Wolverhampton Homes to deliver on the Council's behalf. Together this assistance forms the Home Improvement Agency, which is under development and supports people to remain in their homes and communities, avoid unnecessary admission to hospital or return home from hospital to a safe place with access to support in the event of an emergency.

6.2 Performance for Home Improvement is grouped under three headings:

A. Affordable Warmth;

B. Housing Assistance;

C. Independent Living.

7.0 Evaluation of alternative options

7.1 As this is a monitoring report, there are no alternative options to evaluate.

8.0 Reasons for decision

8.1 To maintain oversight of Wolverhampton Homes and the Management of the Council's housing stock in accordance with the management agreements.

8.2 To comply with the Homelessness Reduction Act which came into force in April 2018.

9.0 Financial implications

9.1 The performance of the managing agent, and in particular Wolverhampton Homes, impacts on the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan. The financial impact is reflected in the quarterly financial monitoring of the HRA which is included as part of the quarterly corporate budget monitoring reports to Cabinet (Resources) Panel. [JM/16062020/M]

10.0 Legal implications

10.1 The services provided by the managing agents relates to the discharge of the Council's duties to its tenants. Failure to undertake relevant repairs to housing stock within a reasonable time following notice to the Council of disrepair can result in a tenant commencing proceedings in the civil courts against the Council for breach of repairing obligations under S11 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985.

10.2 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places new legal duties on local authorities so that anyone who is homeless or at risk of being made homeless will have access to help.

10.3 The Council is ultimately responsible for the discharge of these duties. It is therefore essential to have sufficient performance management arrangements in place. These arrangements are set out in detail in the respective management agreements. [DC/15062020/U]

11.0 Equalities implications

11.1 There are no direct equality implications arising from this report, however the delivery of housing management services has an impact on the accessibility of housing for residents in the city.

12.0 Environmental implications

12.1 There are no direct equality implications arising from this report, however the delivery of housing management services has an impact on the accessibility of housing for residents in the city.

13.0 Covid implications

13.1 As a result of measures taken to stop the spread of Covid-19, Wolverhampton Homes suspended all non-emergency repairs from 24 March 2020, carrying out emergency and statutory repairs and compliance checks only. All TMOs suspended non-emergency repairs from 19 March 2020 and from 24 March 2020 "In hours" emergency repairs service to both New Park Village TMC and Springfield Horseshoe TMO were provided by Wolverhampton Homes.

13.2 Bushbury Hill EMB, Dovecotes TMO and New Park Village TMC closed their offices with rental payments restricted to online payments only. Wolverhampton Homes restricted the number of people in One Stop Shops at any given time and Springfield Horseshoe TMO continued to operate from Low Hill Office.

13.3 All managing agents suspended adverts of properties available to let and suspended allocations. Only those applicants in temporary accommodation and urgent need of housing were assisted with accommodation during the first month of the lockdown.

13.4 The Homelessness Taskforce put provisions in place at the Redwings Hotel to provide suitable accommodation and services for rough sleepers and homeless individuals. Clients were moved into Redwings Hotel on 27 March 2020 with 67 clients accommodated by 1 April 2020.

13.5 Wolverhampton Homes were unable to deliver any Housing Improvement/DFG works due to Covid-19 restrictions.

14.0 Human resources implications

14.1 This report has no human resources implications.

15.0 Corporate Landlord implications

15.1 This report relates to the performance of the housing management agents and council housing stock and therefore has no corporate landlord implications.

16.0 Schedule of background papers

16.1 None

17.0 Appendices

17.1 Appendix 1: Client Relationship Managing Report, Quarter Four January to March 2020.