

# Edgbaston District Committee – 7<sup>th</sup> September 2016

## Feedback on Matters of Urgent Local Concern arising from the Edgbaston District Committee of 22 June 2016.

### 1. Minute No. 299 – 22 June 2016

**In relation to Councillor Bennett's enquiries concerning the Leasehold and Right to Buy information (page 7 of 77 of the report); homeless service allocation targets (page 8 of 77); and the capital works (page 12 of 77) the officers advised that these were other service areas within the Landlord Services. They undertook to contact the Service Manager concerning the information on the Leasehold and Right to Buy to provide members with the information requested.**

#### **Leasehold and Right to Buy information (page 7 of 77 of the report)**

There has been an increase in the complexity of the Right to Buy applications which are received by tenants, therefore even though the volume of applications is not increasing significantly, the amount of time taken to process them is longer as we need to gather additional information from other registered social landlords to ensure that discounts being given to tenants are correct. Tenants are also including parties on their applications who BCC have no record of, or have not kept their tenancy details up to date, i.e. because names or circumstances have changed and this again is impacting on the amount of time that an application takes to be processed.

In line with audit recommendations we also complete more robust social housing fraud checks to ensure that any parties included in a Right to Buy application have a legal status to be living at the property, are included in the tenancy, are not committing any kind of benefit fraud, or claiming single persons council tax allowance. Also working with colleagues in Legal Services and the Fraud Team the source of funding is checked so that particularly with cash payments the source of money is coming from a legitimate source. The legislation laid down by the government does not provide additional time for these checks to be made, however we need to ensure that we are only selling a housing asset to a tenant that legally qualifies to purchase the property, and that can legally demonstrate that there are no issues with the source of funding to buy the property.

There have also been some issues with obtaining information from Repairs Contractors to produce S125 Offers for tenants, particularly in the production of EPC certificates, however this is improving now that the new repairs contracts are becoming embedded.

To resolve the backlog issues we are working with other service areas to ensure that their part of the process is effective as possible, and the Home Ownership team as a whole, including both the Home Sales and Leasehold Teams are being consulted about a restructure to the service, to more effectively cope with the increased workloads. This is an ongoing process, and as soon as the appropriate resources are in place this will have a positive impact on the statutory timescales.

### **Homeless service allocation targets (page 8 of 77)**

The target for the use of Temporary Accommodation and B&B accommodation was forecast in relation to past performance and demand however the demand for the homeless service has increased significantly during 2015-16 and continues during the current financial year. Therefore we have seen a significant increase in the number of households living in temporary accommodation.

### **The capital works (page 12 of 77)**

For KPI CWO1 (as per contractor assessment the percentage of capital improvements completed within timescale) performance was 40.7% for quarter 4 which relates to works completed within timescale for:

- Doors
- Roofs
- Kitchens/bathrooms
- Windows
- Heating upgrades.

The poor period performance related to gas capital installations (upgrade to the heating within the property i.e. boilers or full system replacements) the reasons for this are below:

- BCC did not accept works from the contractor until a full joint audit of the installation had been carried out with the contractor; this could have been several days after the reported completion of the works due to the customer allowing access. Where systems were being replaced provisions would have been provided in terms of heating and hot water and as soon as practically possible the new installation would have been switched on a CP1 would have been left with the customer ensuring it is gas safe, in many cases this would have been prior to BCC carrying out the audit .
- The contractors were in the final few months of the contracts and progress of work had slowed down, these contractual issues were taken up directly with the contractors and as a result of this payments were withheld until full completion of works were carried out. This was generally around follow on trades that were required to ensure that the property was restored to its original state following installations i.e. plastering/carpentry/electrics. This had a direct impact on the reported completion of works as BCC would not accept the works until these works had been completed.

In the main customers were not willing to allow access once the heating system was up and running for follow on trades and audit and as a result this affected KPI CWO1.

**Councillor Gregson referred to the information on (page 9 of 77) of the report, where the targets for responding to Anti-social Behaviour (ASB) on the initial contact were not being met as the performance was lower than the target. Around voids and lettings, the number of days that it took to turn a property round was higher than the target. There was a whole series of statistics in the report where the trend was against what they would expect to see. A more detailed commentary about this would be helpful in the way that Councillor Bennett had described.**

The concern from Cllr Gregson about ASB is actually addressed in the report when it says The SLA for category C cases has been missed due to errors, it appears that on a couple of occasions cases/tickets were created in error, on other occasions customers had been contacted but this has not been properly recorded. The staffs making these errors have been given additional training and instructions by the ASB manager in the South quadrant.

Page 4 shows voids as having 1 red and 1 amber as a City. Average days to repair a void are amber and average Days to let a property from fit are red.

Page 9 gives the overview from Gary Nicholls again this is City wide

Page 39 gives the city total in the graph but at the bottom it gives the figure for Edgbaston. This is without the sheltered properties. This shows that Edgbaston did better than target with an average of 26.7 days against a target of 30 days. It is the second highest average in the city with Sutton being the highest managing an average of 29.8 days. These figures include the time taken to repair the property and also the time taken to let after the property is fit for let.

Page 40 gives the total average number of days including the sheltered properties. In this table it can be seen that Edgbaston's average turn round time increases to 33.3 days average. This is above target but within the standard. This increase is down to the length of time it has taken to let sheltered properties during the quarter adding an extra 3.5 days. This is a substantial increase caused by a relatively few properties hence the reason the sheltered properties are excluded in the one table as it is not a true reflection of the general performance.

Page 41 gives the sheltered housing average number of days to turn round the sheltered properties. It can be seen that the void turn round time has jumped to 71.8 days. This means that we have let a number of long term sheltered housing voids. You can see that most districts have higher average turn round times.

Page 42 this is to identify contractor performance in turning round a void from receipt of keys to making the property fit to let. For the quarter Edgbaston had the third best contractor turn round time and was better than the city target of 17 days.

Page 43 is the average time taken to let from the fit to let stage. The target is 10 days and the standard is 12 days Edgbaston managed 20.5 days against a City average of 14.8 days hence why this is red when the other parts of Void performance are showing green. This figure would include the sheltered properties.

Page 48 Number of current sheltered housing voids. This is good result as the number of empty voids has reduced from 122 in July 2014 to 91 in April 2016 (snap shot). Edgbaston is still high at 13 and this will impact on performance as these properties do take longer to allocate and let.

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