

Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee
Tuesday 13 March 2018
Item No: 5.2

Customer and Housing Services

Performance Report Quarter Three 2017/18

Midlothian 

Progress in delivery of strategic outcomes

Undertaking a performance management approach on what is expected, clear performance measures and outcomes for success. Committed to measuring customer satisfaction across all service functions to ensure these are effective and efficient. In addition to specific consultation exercises, planning and service development is routinely undertaken with tenants, service users and stakeholders. Data gathered has helped formulate the Council's Customer Service Strategy, which has completed customer profiling and insight into knowing who our customers are and shaping the services they need.

1. Housing

Midlothian's Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2018/19 – 2022/23 was approved at Council on 7 November 2017 and details the priorities for the investment in new affordable housing in Midlothian and sets out the Council's approach to promoting affordable housing investment and meeting housing supply targets through our resources bid towards the continued social housing new build programme.

Specific needs provision is included to ensure the design guide addresses recent developments in care provision and the rising number of dementia sufferers and those with bariatric conditions living at home.

With our history of delivery in development we expect a favourable outcome in the RPA – Resource Planning Assumption for grant funding to buy land and build housing.

The Private Housing (Tenancies) (Scotland) Act 2016 came into force in Scotland from the beginning of December providing new tenancy agreements for the Private Rented Sector. Changes have been made to make tenancy agreements more flexible, easier to understand for landlords and their tenants, as well as increased clarity and security for both parties. The changes apply to all new private sector tenancies beginning on or after 1 December 2017 to include; new pre-tenancy information and documentation; restrictions on ending a lease; no end date or duration; rent increase only once a year; new appeal and arbitration procedures and a set of mandatory and options lease terms. This development provides a more secure housing option in private renting.

Rent pressure zones from 1 December 2017, local councils can apply to Scottish Ministers to have an area designated as a 'rent pressure zone' (RPZ) if they can prove that: rents in the area are rising too much; the rent rises are causing problems for the tenants; the local council is coming under pressure to provide housing or subsidise the cost of housing as a result.

A rent pressure zone will only apply to rent increases for tenants with a private residential tenancy. Rent increases for tenants with a short assured or assured tenancy will not be affected. If an area is designated as an RPZ, it means a cap (maximum limit) is set on how much rents are allowed to increase for existing tenants with a private residential tenancy each year in that area. Scottish Ministers must consult landlords' and tenants' representatives before they make any area a rent pressure zone.

2. Revenues

The Rent Strategy 2018 consultation was approved by Council and options have been provided to survey tenants and housing applicants. A report on the canvassed responses will be provided to Elected Members which considers the affordability of council house rents and provides feedback on consultation regarding future rental charges for council housing to determine the level of investment and new build development in council housing beyond the current programme before a decision is taken on future rent charges for 2019/20 and thereafter.

3. Community Safety

The Strategic Assessment 2017 - 18 was completed with Community Safety Partners using evidenced based analysis, environmental scanning and risk assessment. This analysis informed the priorities across crime prevention, antisocial behaviour, drug and alcohol misuse, domestic abuse, road safety, fire safety and home safety; ensuring everyone has the right to live, work and visit in safe and secure communities, with a reduced incidence of crime. The high priorities of substance misuse (Focus on alcohol), gender based harm (including domestic abuse and adverse childhood experiences), crimes of dishonesty (including shoplifting), violent crime (focus on young people exposed to violence) and antisocial behaviour (youth focus) have been agreed for 2018-19.

The Midlothian Council funded police Community Action Team was reinstated in December to deter, disrupt and divert criminality and antisocial behaviour. The Midlothian Police and Fire & Rescue Board will monitor the teams performance outcomes.

4. Customer Services

Activity this period has focused on the CRM system (Customer Relationship Management) shared procurement arrangement with East Lothian Council and the start-up phase discussions on the Online Payments and Services (OPAS) project as there is a need to focus driving more customer activity onto the digital platform. A draft Mandate on joint procurement arrangements agreed for capital plan and Joint Directors approval.

Digital transformation will see more Council services become available on-line utilising a range of digital devices and platforms wherever possible. Further transformation is required to develop and promote digital by design to adopt a digital by decision approach for online customers.

Summary of the major challenges and actions to address them

Financial Strategy

Challenge

As a result of government funding cuts, the Midlothian Council budget gap will increase in future years and the Council needs to cut costs and change our service design and delivery model to make sure that we are able to deal with the future demands of a growing and ageing population.

Action

Customer and Housing Services have developed future year savings proposals and timescales for realising those identified in line with the corporate Financial Strategy 5 year plan and Change Programme.

Homelessness

Challenge

The funding shortfall in Welfare Reform particularly for young peoples' housing options is causing a significant pressure on the homelessness budget in general, as detailed in the Universal Credit report to Council in December 2017. An additional pressure this quarter has been a managing agent terminating a long standing contractual relationship for their privately rented properties and as a result the council has been relocating 30 households to alternative accommodation causing unplanned expenditure.

Action

Budget is in place for 36 bed and breakfast spaces, there are currently on average 69 spaces being utilised. Pentland House and the Polton Centre opened earlier this year to reuse the council buildings to provide an alternative to Bed and Breakfast accommodation for homeless households. The reuse of other council buildings as a more supportive accommodation option and also more cost effective for the local authority is planned.

A Scottish Government short term action group has been established to end rough sleeping and transform the use of temporary accommodation in Scotland. A "Ending Homelessness Together" fund has been announced to fund homeless prevention initiatives and Midlothian Council shall bid for resources once details of the scheme are available.

Welfare Reform

Challenge

As a Local Authority in Universal Credit Full service there are limitations to the information we receive from DWP regarding our tenant's eligibility and entitlement. DWP pay Housing costs and any arrears value monthly on a collective four weekly submission schedule. We are not notified of incoming 4 weekly payments until the payment file is processed.

As a landlord, Midlothian Council have no means or influence in monies collected by DWP as they communicate directly to their claimant via an online journal entry and the claimant has this responsibility to inform their landlord.

Any claimant may have variances due to part time working, non-dependant deductions, overpayments, payment advances, or sanctions etc. that can all influence DWP payment and ultimately any scheduled landlord payment without any notification to the landlord, or being made aware.

The Impact of Universal Credit Full Service on Council house rent collection has been severe.

At 3 April 2017 132 Midlothian Council tenants were claiming UC with total arrears of £97,808 and average arrears of £740.97. The average rent arrears at 3 April 2017 were £265.42 for those still in receipt of HB and £299.21 for those not receiving HB.

As at 6 November 2017 this had increased to 657 tenants with total arrears of £520,522 and average arrears of £792.27. At 3 April 2017 current tenant rent arrears were £1,167,625 comprising £1,106,626 for mainstream properties and £60,999 for temporary accommodation. As at 6 November current tenant arrears has increased to £1,472,222 comprising £1,283,124 for mainstream properties and £189,098 for temporary accommodation.

Increased demand for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) with £828,492 being paid in 2016/17 and £966,368 paid and committed in 2017/18 as at 31 October 2017.

Additional demand for Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) saw a 20% increase in Crisis grant applications in the 7 month period to 31 October 2017 compared with the same period last year. Recent regulations require councils to make decisions on crisis grant applications no later than the end of the next working day.

Action

Our staff aim to mitigate the effects and sign post to help and offer guidance, due to the complexity the changeover to UC brings, however, tenants have a responsibility to pay and maintain a clear rent account, and where Housing Cost assistance is eligible the tenant must make and maintain the conditions of their claim with DWP. Where Tenants are vulnerable they are encouraged to engage with the support service we provide for further assistance in making and maintaining their claim with DWP otherwise rent recovery action is progressed for tenants where rent arrears accrue on their account.

The UK Government has announced significant changes to Universal Credit in the Autumn Budget of 22 November, 2017. These include; legislating for stay in Temporary Accommodation to be paid through Housing Benefit. This change requires secondary legislation to be passed and is expected to be in place by April, 2018.

The initial seven day waiting period from assessment before a person can apply for Universal Credit is to be abolished and effective from February 2018 after legislative change which will reduce the total waiting time down from six weeks to five weeks.

A further change from April 2018 will be for a UC claimant who at the point of the claim receives support towards their housing costs, will be provided with a further two weeks of housing benefit to assist their transition to Universal Credit to address rent arrears.

Advance payment arrangements of Universal Credit have been announced by DWP, where an Advanced Payment can be made to claimants in 5 days if someone is in immediate need. This is deducted from subsequent payments. From January 2018, claimants will be able to access 100% of their estimated UC entitlement in the form of a loan which includes the housing costs, instead of the 50% value at present. The period of repayment has been extended to 12 months which will relieve some of the financial pressure experienced, especially where claimants have third party deductions. In addition from the Spring of 2018, claimants will be able to apply for an advance online, with payment expected within 5 days.

Revenues

Challenge

An Internal Audit of the Arrears Recovery procedure recommended the reporting of overpaid housing benefit debt and this will be included in the new financial year performance, the current year values are listed meantime. In the strategy for collecting this debt.

Total value of HB overpayments identified during the quarter Q1. £358,841 Q2. £518,794 Q3. £233,680

Total value of HB overpayments recovered during the quarter Q1. £228,769 Q2. £487,332 Q3. £298,568

Total value of HB overpayments written off during the quarter Q1. £19,821 Q2. £30,564 Q3. £26,350

Action

In the strategy for collecting this debt, normally overpayment of Housing Benefit will be recovered direct from the tenant. However, if the tenant has an ongoing Housing Benefit award, any overpayment will be recovered by means of a standard weekly deduction from the current Housing Benefit award. The tenant is then required to pay this amount to their rent account. Failure to pay this amount will result in arrears accruing and their case likely proceeding through recovery.

Customer and Housing Services PI Summary 2017/18









Outcomes and Customer Feedback

Priority	Indicator	2016/17	Q3 2016/17	Q1 2017/18	Q2 2017/18	Q3 2017/18				Annual Target 2017/18	Feeder Data	Value
		Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Status	Note	Short Trend			
01. Provide an efficient complaints service	Number of complaints received (cumulative)	176	N/A	53	82	115		Q3 17/18: Data Only				
	Average time in working days to respond to complaints at stage 1	1.6	N/A	3.7	3.2	2.2		Q3 17/18: On Target		5	Number of complaints complete at Stage 1	108
											Number of working days for Stage 1 complaints to be Completed	237
	Average time in working days to respond to complaints at stage 2	6.1	N/A	0	14	13.4		Q3 17/18: On Target		20	Number of complaints complete at Stage 2	7
											Number of working days for Stage 2 complaints to be Completed	94
	Percentage of complaints at stage 1 complete within 5 working days	84.38 %	N/A	88.68 %	89.74 %	85.19 %		Q3 17/18: Off Target Service addressing issues		95%	Number of complaints complete at Stage 1	108
											Number of complaints at stage 1 responded to within 5 working days	92
	Percentage of complaints at stage 2 complete within 20 working days	60%	N/A	0%	100%	85.71 %		Q3 17/18: Off Target Service addressing issues.		95%	Number of complaints complete at Stage 2	7
											Number of complaints at stage 2 responded to within 20 working days	6



Making the Best Use of our Resources

Priority	Indicator	2016/17	Q3 2016/17	Q1 2017/18	Q2 2017/18	Q3 2017/18				Annual Target 2017/18	Feeder Data	Value
		Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Status	Note	Short Trend			
02. Manage budget effectively	Performance against revenue budget	£11.9 63m	£12.2 67m	£11.2 42m	£11.5 09m	£11.4 61m		Q3 17/18: Off Target Actions in place to address overspend		£11.3 80m		
03. Manage stress and absence	Average number of working days lost due to sickness absence (cumulative)	6.61	7.73	1.11	2.39	3.99		Q3 17/18: On Target		6.50	Number of days lost (cumulative)	658.38
											Average number of FTE in service (year to date)	164.98







Corporate Health






Priority	Indicator	2016/17	Q3 2016/17	Q1 2017/18	Q2 2017/18	Q3 2017/18				Annual Target 2017/18	Feeder Data	Value
		Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Status	Note	Short Trend			
04. Complete all service priorities	% of service priorities on target / completed, of the total number	83.33 %	83.33 %	83.33 %	75%	66.67 %		Q3 17/18: Off Target 8 out of 12 actions on target. Corrective actions contained in main report.		90%	Number of service & corporate priority actions	12
											Number of service & corporate priority actions on tgt/completed	8
05. Process invoices efficiently	% of invoices paid within 30 days of invoice receipt (cumulative)	94%	95%	98%	98%	97%		Q3 17/18: On Target		95%	Number received (cumulative)	5,081
											Number paid within 30 days (cumulative)	4,952
06. Improve PI performance	% of PIs that are on target/ have reached their target.	60%	40%	63.64 %	42.86 %	28.57 %		Q3 17/18: Off Target 2 out of 6 quarterly indicators on target. Detail contained in main report.		90%	Number on tgt/complete	2
											Total number of PI's	7
07. Control risk	% of high risks that have been reviewed in the last quarter	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%		Q3 17/18: On Target No High Risk classified in quarter. All service specific risks reviewed each quarter.		100%	Number of high risks reviewed in the last quarter	0
											Number of high risks	0


Improving for the Future

Priority	Indicator	2016/17	Q3 2016/17	Q1 2017/18	Q2 2017/18	Q3 2017/18				Annual Target 2017/18	Feeder Data	Value
		Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Status	Note	Short Trend			
08. Implement improvement plans	% of internal/external audit actions progressing on target	0%	50%	100%	100%	100%		Q3 17/18: On Target		90%	Number of internal/external audit actions on target or complete	10
											Number of internal/external audit actions in progress	10













Customer and Housing Services Action report 17/18



Service Priorities						
Code	Priority	Action	Due Date	Icon	Progress	Comment & Planned Improvement Action
CHS.S.01.03	01. Reduce alcohol and drug misuse	Encourage licensed premises to apply for the best bar none scheme	31-Mar-2019		60%	Q3 17/18: On Target Police Scotland is working with the 14 Best Bar None applicants who signed up to the scheme to support them throughout the process. Local Licencing Forum monitors the process and expressed an interest in pursuing that the applicants and award holders contribute towards the 5 licencing forum objectives covered by the updated legislation (Air Weapon and Licensing Act 2015).
M.CSJ.CHS.01.03		Undertake a range of proactive communication and engagement activity regarding responsible alcohol consumption	31-Mar-2018		70%	Q3 17/18: On Target CSJP contributes into the government consultation regarding minimum alcohol pricing. The Scottish Government plans to introduce Minimum Unit Pricing for alcohol on 1 May 2018. Before they introduce the Minimum Unit Price, the Scottish Ministers are having a public consultation to gather views from people, businesses, public bodies and interested parties about the Scottish Governments preferred price of 50 pence per unit of alcohol. CSJP and Police Scotland are making progress on "You're Asking for It" campaign focussing on the proxy purchasing of alcohol by adults for children supported by resources such as leaflets, posters and floor art.
CHS.S.02.01	02. Support people out of poverty and welfare dependency	Support financially vulnerable households in mitigating Welfare Reform impact.	31-Mar-2018		85%	Q3 17/18: On Target Awarded £1,069,781 in Discretionary Housing Payments to 1526 claimants to continue to mitigate the effects of Welfare Reform, including benefit cap and under occupancy charge.
CHS.S.02.02		Award Scottish Welfare Fund monies in line with set criteria, for Crisis Grants and Community Care Grants, to meet the need of vulnerable clients.	31-Mar-2018		85%	Q3 17/18: On Target Awarded £290,999 to 31 December 2017. £165,833 community care grants and £125,166 crisis grants within budget allocation year to date.
CHS.S.03.02	03. Deliver further affordable housing	Designate housing for particular needs within existing and new build stock	31-Mar-2018		100%	Q2 17/18: Complete Complex Care Housing development has now been completed at Teviot Court in Penicuik. Two wheelchair houses completed at Robert Franks Avenue/Gardens Gorebridge.
M.SG.CHS.03.01		Deliver more social housing in partnership between Council, Registered Social Landlords and private developers	31-Mar-2018		90%	Q3 17/18: On Target 112 new affordable units completed. 81 New build council houses have been built/acquired. A Strategic Housing Investment Plan for Midlothian has been submitted to the Scottish Government.

Code	Priority	Action	Due Date	Icon	Progress	Comment & Planned Improvement Action
M.CSJ.CHS.04.01	04. Reduce crimes of dishonesty	Target prolific house breakers and thieves through ASBOs and CRASBOs, working in partnership with the ASBVO group.	31-Mar-2018		90%	Q3 17/18: On Target Police enforcement efforts and preventative work by the Community Safety Partnership through public information road shows and the Lock Down Crime Campaign has led to a downward trend in crimes of housebreaking. In December 1 ASBO has been obtained, 1 ASBO is in the interim stage for house breaking and shoplifting and 1 applied for - awaiting decision from Sheriff Court. Case conference is organised for a prolific house breaker.
M.CSJ.CHS.04.02		Raise public awareness of crime prevention through campaigns and crime prevention initiatives	31-Mar-2018		90%	Q3 17/18: On Target A number of Lock Down Crime roadshow events have taken place and home security kits (containing a property marking DNA kit and a shed alarm) are available to purchase from Police Scotland at the roadshows. These can also be ordered online and are promoted by CBOs at local surgeries and by social media. Further road shows are planned for 2018 with an aim to have at least one road show per month. Straiton Retail Park initiative is now established. Shop Watch Radio scheme is being progressed. As part of the crime prevention initiative Straiton had an investment of CCTV cameras and fencing to the back of the retail park to reduce opportunities for business housebreaking, shoplifting and fires.
CHS.S.06.01	05. Homelessness has reduced and people threatened with homelessness can access advice and support services	Prevent homelessness through the delivery of an education programme	31-Mar-2018		90%	Q3 17/18: Off Target The housing education programme is required to match the school timetable and priorities across term time, with delivery consequently straddling across financial years. Housing staff have commenced the current series of sessions in East Midlothian, with West Midlothian in the following weeks. In this present programme new materials for schools produced by Shelter Scotland complementing our local materials will be developed with our local materials for schools lesson plans taking the lead in conversations about housing and homelessness, then the Housing Services Youth Homeless Team offering specialist support.
CHS.S.06.02		Improve access to homelessness advice & assistance.	31-Mar-2018		80%	Q3 17/18: Off Target Despite the prevention and housing option services, there has been a continued slight increase in homeless applications, both from families and single person households. Continue to monitor.
CHS.S.06.03		Minimise re-let timescales for mainstream housing.	31-Mar-2018		80%	Q3 17/18: Off Target An improvement in performance from previous quarter. Small number of properties delayed due to issues with structural repairs, condition of 2 properties due to damage outgoing tenant capital works and external utilities providers.

Code	Priority	Action	Due Date	Icon	Progress	Comment & Planned Improvement Action
CHS.S.06.04	05. Homelessness has reduced and people threatened with homelessness can access advice and support services	Minimise re-let timescales for temporary accommodation.	31-Mar-2018		80%	Q3 17/18: Off Target Small number of properties delayed due to issues with structural repairs, condition of 2 properties due to damage outgoing tenant capital works and external utilities providers. Significant delay letting 2 properties due to length of time to detect and resolve hot water system and decant tenant to undertake repair work.

Customer and Housing Services PI Report 17/18

Service Priorities												
PI Code	Priority	PI	2016/17	Q3 2016/17	Q1 2017/18	Q2 2017/18	Q3 2017/18				Annual Target 2017/18	Benchmark
			Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Status	Short Trend	Note		
CHS.S.02.01d	02. Support people out of poverty and welfare dependency	Average processing time for new claims (internally calculated)	19 days	18 days	31 days	24 days	21 days			Q3 17/18: Off Target Year to date 26 days.	19 days	2015/16 Scottish Average - 23 days
CHS.S.02.01e		Average processing time for change of circumstances (internally calculated)	7 days	10 days	9 days	10 days	8 days			Q3 17/18: Off Target Year to date 9 days. Anticipated improvement in Q4.	7 days	2015/16 Scottish Average - 7 days
CHS.S.03.02a	03. Deliver further affordable housing	Number of housing units provided for particular needs with existing and new build stock.	1	1	12	14	14			Q3 17/18: On Target A total of 14 particular needs units provided during Q1/2/3.	10	
M.SG.CHS.03.01a		Number of social housing completions	66	46	10	41	81			Q3 17/18: On Target 81 new build council homes and 5 open market purchases.	100	
CHS.S.06.01a	05. Homelessness has reduced and people threatened with homelessness can access advice and support services	Number of school homeless prevention presentations undertaken	100	N/A	8	0	11			Q3 17/18: Off Target Q3 has been a slow period for housing education. Impacted by individual school timetabling and school priorities. Also affecting performance is the academic year straddling two financial years.	80	
CHS.S.06.02a		Number of customers accessing advice and assistance service	820	171	210	234	184			Q3 17/18: Data Only		

PI Code	Priority	PI	2016/17	Q3 2016/17	Q1 2017/18	Q2 2017/18	Q3 2017/18				Annual Target 2017/18	Benchmark
			Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Status	Short Trend	Note		
CHS.S.06.04a	05. Homelessness has reduced and people threatened with homelessness can access advice and support services	Re-let time temporary accommodation properties	31	29	32	36	37			Q3 17/18: Off Target A small number of properties delayed due to issues with structural repairs, condition of 2 properties due to damage outgoing tenant capital works and external utilities providers. Significant delay letting 2 properties due to length of time to detect and resolve hot water system and decant tenant to undertake repair work.	35	

Published Local Government Benchmarking Framework - Customer and Housing Services



Corporate Services

Code	Title	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	External Comparison
		Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	
CORP4	Corporate Indicator - Cost of collecting council tax per dwelling (LGBF)	£14.08	£13.65	£14.23	£14.09	£10.65	£10.94	£9.62	16/17 Rank 19 (Third Quartile). 15/16 Rank 21 (Third Quartile). 14/15 Rank 17 (Third Quartile).
CORP7	Corporate Indicator - Percentage of income due from council tax received by the end of the year %	93.0%	93.6%	93.9%	93.5%	93.8%	94.4%	94.5%	16/17 Rank 29 (Bottom Quartile). 15/16 Rank 29 (Bottom Quartile). 14/15 Rank 31 (Bottom Quartile).

Culture and Leisure

Code	Title	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	External Comparison
		Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	
C&L2	Corporate Indicator - NET Cost per library visit (LGBF)	£2.96	£3.01	£2.53	£2.66	£2.46	£1.67	£1.06	16/17 Rank 3 (TOP Quartile). 15/16 Rank 5 (TOP Quartile). 14/15 Rank 11 (Second Quartile).
C&L5a	Corporate Indicator - Percentage of adults satisfied with libraries (LGBF)	82.8%		78%	80.6%	77%	68.33%	66.67%	16/17 Rank 31 (Bottom Quartile). 15/16 Rank 31 (Bottom Quartile). 14/15 Rank 25 (Bottom Quartile).

Housing Services

Code	Title	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	External Comparison
		Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	
HSN1b	Gross rent arrears (all tenants) as at 31 March each year as a percentage of rent due for the reporting year				4.3%	6.57%	6.85%	6.39%	16/17 Rank 13 (Second Quartile). 15/16 Rank 16 (Second Quartile). 14/15 Rank 18 (Third Quartile).
HSN2	Percentage of rent due in the year that was lost due to voids	1.4%	1.3%	1.6%	1.6%	0.6%	0.8%	0.5%	16/17 Rank 4 (TOP Quartile). 15/16 Rank 12 (Second Quartile). 14/15 Rank 4 (TOP Quartile).