



HOUSING, ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AGENDA

Monday, 15 May 2023 at 1.30 pm in the Bridges Room - Civic Centre

From the Chief Executive, Sheena Ramsey

Item	Business
1	Apologies for Absence
2	Minutes of the last meeting (Pages 3 - 6)
3	Housing Performance Qtr 4 (Pages 7 - 18) Report of the Deputy Chief Executive/Strategic Director of Housing, Environment and Healthier Communities
4	Building Safety Update / Housing Compliance Update (Pages 19 - 22) Report of the Deputy Chief Executive/Strategic Director of Housing, Environment and Healthier Communities
5	Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2022 (Pages 23 - 32) Report of the Deputy Chief Executive/Strategic Director of Housing, Environment and Healthier Communities
6	Customer Contact Scrutiny Review (Pages 33 - 46) Report of the Deputy Chief Executive/Strategic Director of Housing, Environment and Healthier Communities
7	Work Programme (Pages 47 - 50) Joint report of the Chief Executive and the Strategic Director of Corporate Services & Governance

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GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

HOUSING, ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, 13 March 2023

PRESENT: Councillor B Clelland (Chair)

Councillor(s): T Graham, D Burnett, H Weatherley,
J Turnbull, V Anderson, A Wintcher, S Gallagher, P Burns
and D Welsh

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor(s): J Adams

APOLOGIES: Councillor(s): A Geddes, F Geddes, H Kelly, J Reay,
K Dodds, R Waugh, S Dickie and P Maughan

CPL58 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED:

- (i) The minutes of the last meeting held on 30 January 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

CPL59 HEALTH CHECK OF COMMUNITY CENTRES

The Committee received a report providing an update on the current assessed 'health' of participating Community Centres further to the Council's review of community centres.

The Committee were reminded that the Council's review of Community Centres had saw a wholesale shift in responsibility from a network of buildings/centres previously managed or resourced by the Council towards a current network of 37 community centres/buildings now entirely managed/leased independently. It was noted that this shift reflects the level of efficiency savings experienced by the Council, numerous building reviews and a consequential and beneficial move towards greater independence for the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS).

It was reported that there is a need and desire to work with and retain an effective network of community buildings across the borough to provide flexible and accessible space for the community. It was stated that to achieve this Gateshead's VCS had been supported by the Council's Neighbourhood Management Team (NMT), Gateshead Voluntary Organisation Council (GVOC) and Connected Voice along with other partner organisations to take greater responsibility and sustain the Gateshead network.

A detailed breakdown from the health checks was appended to the report for information; it was highlighted that:

- Most community centres are performing well
- There is a need to increase volunteer numbers in some areas
- Health and safety and building compliances are a priority of the health checks

A comment was made from the committee that elderly/aging volunteers may struggle with the upkeep of community centres and could be given some leeway in terms of the standards they must meet as part of the health checks. Officers acknowledged this challenge; it was noted again that there are difficulties in recruiting and retaining new volunteers and that the existing cohort would undoubtedly struggle at times. It was further stated that health and safety regulations are applicable to both volunteers and employees and that whilst the community centres featured in the report are now independent, they can contact partners for additional support if needed.

The Committee agreed that the use of the word 'inspection' in the report was not appropriate; a comment was made stating that softer and more supportive terminology should be used. This feedback was noted by officers. The Committee also discussed the challenges faced by independent organisations in securing funding to support activities and upkeep of the centres; it was acknowledged that funding streams can be restrictive and difficult to acquire. The Committee also noted it's thanks to officers for their work in supporting community centres in Gateshead.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The Committee noted the report.

CPL60 CONSTRUCTION SERVICES UPDATE

The Committee received a report providing an update on Construction Services during its service review process.

The Committee noted that each area of Construction Services had undergone a review; it was reported that this had followed a 'form follows function' rationale that has informed recruitment and system needs. Attention was drawn to the update reported on recruitment; it was stated that the restructure began with 111 new posts to be recruited to but resulted in 164 vacancies due to various redesignation of roles and internal promotions.

It was further reported that 49 external appointments had been made alongside 47 internal promotions. The Committee also noted that 19 posts have been held for review as the service changes are implemented and that 49 posts remain vacant including 19 trades staff, 5 surveyors, 13 Customer Operations staff, 1 Service Manager and 1 Section Managers.

An update was provided on the backlog of Council House repairs; officers advised that good progress has been made since the previous report and that there are currently 850 repairs outstanding. The Committee were provided assurance that vulnerable tenants and emergency repairs were being prioritised.

From the report, it was noted that the empty homes repair team is now working to incrementally improve targets to reduce the number of void properties in Gateshead.

The Committee also received an update on damp, mould and condensation; officers advised that new and innovative solutions were being implemented where appropriate and that overall, the Council now has 1139 known cases of damp, mould and condensation that are in progress of resolution.

The Committee praised the work of Construction Services and acknowledged the difficulties faces by both internal and external factors. The Committee expressed concern that void properties continue to take too long to be made fit to let; this feedback was noted by officers who shared the concern and noted that void properties reduce income to the Council in terms of rent and council tax.

A question was asked regarding compensation for tenants who have their personal property damaged because of damp and mould. The Committee were advised that there is a comprehensive complaints and compensation process in place at the Council and that each case would be looked at on its own merits. The Committee noted that many properties in Gateshead suffer from damp, mould and condensation due to their construction and age and that it is not always a consequence of the tenants' lifestyle.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The Committee noted the update.

CPL61 THE FLOOD AND WATER MANAGEMENT ACT 2010: ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee received a report providing an update on progress in the implementation of the duties and responsibilities of Gateshead Council as lead flood authority.

There were no questions or comments made for this report.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The Committee noted the update.
- (ii) The Committee agreed to receive a further progress report in March 2024.

CPL62 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received the annual work programme report for 2022/23.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The Committee noted the information in the report and endorsed the provisional work programme.
- (ii) The Committee noted that further reports would be brought to the meeting to identify any additional issues which the Committee may be asked to consider.

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Housing Performance Report - Quarter 4 2022/23.

Purpose of the Report

1. To update members of the Housing, Environment and Healthy Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HEHC OSC) on Housing Performance results at the end of quarter 4, 2022/23, see appendix 1.

Background

2. A Performance Management Information Framework (PMIF) has been developed across the Council to support the achievement of the Thrive outcomes and performance measures have been developed in line with this new approach.
3. In addition, a separate suite of performance measures has been developed for the Housing, Environment and Healthier Communities (HEHC) directorate. These indicators have been developed to underpin delivery of the Council's strategic priorities across all tenures and not just limited to Council Housing.
4. The suite was presented and approved by HEHC Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) and the Strategic Housing Board (SHB) at its meeting on 30 September 2021.
5. There are also some important external drivers that inform our performance reporting approach:
 - Regulatory Requirements.
 - White Paper: The Charter for Social Housing Residents.
 - Building Safety Act 2022

Housing Performance Management Indicators Quarter 4

6. The performance results are colour coded, comparing performance against the targets for 2022/23. The Appendix shows those performance measures that are achieving target (green), not achieving target (red), not achieving target but improving on 2021/22 performance results (amber) and those performance measures that are not yet reported or baseline for 2022/23 (grey).
7. Narrative is provided for each performance measure that details performance progression, actions to be taken to improve future performance and, where appropriate, an explanation regarding performance indicators that are in development or that will be reported later in the financial year.

Key Performance Indicators Review for 2023/24

8. To ensure that the suite of HEHC KPI's remain relevant, a review will be undertaken of those KPI's to be monitored from 2023/24. This review will however reconfirm continued reporting on the Tenant Satisfaction Measures published by the Regulator of Social Housing. Any recommendations arising from the review will be reported at a future meeting of the Committee.

Recommendations

9. The views of HEHC OSC are sought on the Key Performance Indicator results at the end of the fourth quarter 2022/23.

Contact: Martin Poulter ext 5380.

			2021/22	Quarter 4 2022/23								
	Service Area	Performance Indicator	Year End Performance	Target	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Trend Against Previous Result	Traffic Light	Comments	
8	Customer and Support Services	% of tenants satisfied with the service provided by your housing Landlord, Gateshead Council	49.00					44.00	↓		Following the introduction of a new suite of Tenant Satisfaction Measures by the Regulator of Social Housing, it has been agreed that this KPI is retained. It is measured by the annual Customer Satisfaction Survey that was issued in December 2022. Overall satisfaction has declined from 49% in 2021 to 44% in 2022. The survey highlighted that the biggest drivers of overall satisfaction remain repairs and maintenance, antisocial behavior and environmental issues. Ease of contact is also emerging as a key driver of satisfaction.	
9	Customer and Support Services	% of tenants satisfied with the services provided by Gateshead Council (former tenants)							X		Following a review of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) it has been agreed by HEHC OSC that this indicator is changed from a KPI to a Management Performance Indicator 2023/24.	
10	Customer and Support Services	Number of formal step 2 complaints received	97.00		16.00	28.00	15.00	42.00			There were 42 step 2 complaints received in quarter 4. This number is an increase in the number of formal complaints registered in each of the previous 3 quarters. Of the 42 complaints received, 30 related to repairs and maintenance (71%). Numbers of formal complaints registered would still suggest under reporting. This in part was due to significant pressure on the repairs and maintenance service who dealt with a high proportion of complaints informally. A move to a two stage complaints process will simplify and make it easier for employees to log complaints. A process review will be undertaken with input from the repairs and maintenance service. This KPI will be replaced from 2023/24 with a new Tenant Satisfaction Measure “ Complaints relative to the size of the landlord”.	
11	Customer and Support Services	Number of stage 2 (Investigations) and stage 3 (Review) complaints responded to within the agreed timescale	51.00		11.00	15.00	20.00	38.00			In quarter 4, 31 out of 42 stage 2 complaints were responded to within the timescales specified within the Councils Complaints policy. There were 9 step 3 reviews and 7 were responded to within the timescale. From 1st April 2023, Gateshead Council have adopted the timescale for responding to formal complaints set out in the Housing Ombudsman's complaint handling code. This changed to 10 working days instead of 20 working days. Following the introduction of a new suite of Tenant Satisfaction Measures by the Regulator of Social Housing it has been agreed by HEHC OSC that this KPI is deleted. It will be replaced from 2023.24 with a new TSM “ Complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales”.	
12	Customer and Support Services	Number of investigations accepted by the Housing Ombudsman and following completion is upheld in the tenant's favour	0.00		0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00			During quarter 4 there were no investigations accepted by the Housing Ombudsman (HO) and following completion were upheld in the tenant's favour. Performance continues to reflect the longer-term trend of low numbers of complaints being escalated to the HO Service and when they are, upheld.	
13	Home Improvement	% of adaptations fitted to a client's home and which have made a positive difference to their life						100.00			Clients were asked, after the first 2 quarters of surveys “Do you consider the adaptations made to your home have made a positive difference to your life?” instead of “How satisfied with the service were you?”, and a very significant increase in returns of surveys came about. Whilst it is reassuring that clients are so positive when looking back on their adaptations, we recognise the need to keep making the service faster and easier for future users of the service and we will aim to do this during 2023/24.	

			2021/22	Quarter 4 2022/23					Trend Against Previous Result	Traffic Light	Comments
	Service Area	Performance Indicator	Year End Performance	Target	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4			
14	Homelessness	Total households initially assessed as owed a homelessness duty	1615.00	1650.00	363.00	721.00	1120.00	1588.00			In quarter 4 advice and assistance was offered to 3017 households who either presented or were referred as being homeless or at risk of homelessness, a slight increase compared to 3011 in the same period last year. There was a small decrease in the households which were assessed and initially owed a homeless duty (1690 households in 22/23 compared to 1615 for the same period last year). The Housing Solutions service has been providing an enhanced initial assessment in recent months which may be having an impact and reducing the need for formal homelessness assessments. Cost of Living impacts and/or trends are also being closely monitored however there have been no emerging themes to date.
15	Homelessness	Total households assessed and owed a duty where the reason for loss of last settled home at the time of assessment was domestic abuse	390.00	411.00	82.00	158.00	245.00	352.00			Of the 1588 households initially assessed as owed a duty 352 (22%) lost their last settled accommodation due to domestic abuse, a decrease on the same quarter last year (25%). Both figures are higher than the average for the North-East (14%) but consistent within Gateshead. Specialist domestic abuse and housing outreach workers offer support and advice to prevent or relieve the victim's homeless situation. The Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy includes several actions that we will carry out with partners to prevent and reduce homelessness due to domestic abuse. The Council are in the process of recommissioning supported accommodation for domestic abuse victims. The types of accommodation being commissioned fit with the need and demand profile of this client group and will provide both accommodation and appropriate support. It is envisaged that this will enable victims to successfully move on and reduce the number of repeat cases occurring in the borough.
16	Homelessness	Total households assessed and owed a homelessness duty who were sleeping rough at time of application	35.00		5.00	8.00	16.00	24.00			Only 24 of the 1588 households assessed as owed a duty (1.5%) were recorded as sleeping rough in the judgement of the assessor at the time of the assessment. This figure does not include households believed to be at risk of rough sleeping or those who frequently sleep rough. The Annual Rough Sleeper count in November 2022 recorded only one rough sleeper, which is consistent with previous years, however in March three rough sleepers were identified who all had connections to other local authorities. This will be closely monitored. The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy has a specific aim to have 'no-one sleeping rough or in unsuitable accommodation'. The recommissioning of supported accommodation for homeless people in Gateshead, including those with who are rough sleeping or have multiple and complex needs will directly address this aim and ensure that suitable placements can be made in supported accommodation which meets people's needs.
17	Homelessness	Number of households in nightly-booked temporary accommodation	325.00		100.00	202.00	305.00	461.00			Nightly accommodation is used to respond to emergency situations and prevent rough sleeping until appropriate accommodation becomes available. In Gateshead there are four bedspaces for single males available as 24/7 direct access emergency accommodation. The upward trend has continued in quarter 4 which saw 461 households placed in nightly accommodation, this is a increase in comparison to 325 households in the same period last year. The average stay in nightly booked accommodation for single households was 15 nights (7 nights for households with children). The length of stay in B&B accommodation has increased for families from 4 days for this period in 2021/2022 to 7 & from 10 nights for singles to 15 nights. Approval processes for placing into B&B are currently being reviewed. We are continuing to face challenges in managing demand for temporary accommodation due to a number of issues including system pressures and move on options. We are meeting with the voids team each week to discuss priorities and direct letting. There is a review of Temporary Accommodation underway and findings and recommendations will be shared when they are available.

			2021/22	Quarter 4 2022/23							Comments
	Service Area	Performance Indicator	Year End Performance	Target	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Trend Against Previous Result	Traffic Light	
18	Homelessness	Number in nightly-booked accommodation who are households with children	31.00		17.00	39.00	54.00	86.00			Of the 461 households placed into nightly booked accommodation, 86 (18%) had children, an increase in comparison to 10% of placements in the same quarter last year. It is anticipated that the recommissioning of supported accommodation will improve this situation by providing more suitable accommodation options and enabling increased throughput. The temporary accommodation review which is underway will also identify findings and recommendations which will be relevant to this performance measure.
19	Homelessness	% of households where homelessness prevention duty ended that maintained or secured accommodation for 6+mths. And % of those that remained in existing accommodation	51.00		57.00	52.00	49.00	47.00	↓		In quarter 4, 1609 households were assessed. Of those, 1588 were owed an initial duty (1225 were owed a prevention duty and 363 a relief duty, nine were deemed not to be homeless within 56 days). Of the 1195 households where prevention duty ended, the service prevented 563 households (47%) from becoming homeless by securing current or new accommodation for at least 6 months. Of those, 95 (17%) remained in existing accommodation. The Homelessness and Allocations review has considered how to best support people to sustain their tenancies and prevent homelessness. This includes securing the most appropriate accommodation and support offer at the outset. The recommissioning of supported accommodation will ensure that people can be placed in an accommodation and support solution which meets their needs and moved on successfully to other accommodation when it is appropriate to do so.
20	Homelessness	Households with dependent children owed a duty under the Homelessness Reduction Act Child and Maternal Health							X		This is a new indicator for 2022/23 and will be monitored to establish any patterns or trends.
21	HomeRepairs	% of repairs completed right first time	73.37		70.64	70.97	71.37	71.60	↑		The repairs service continues to go through a change process to streamline the initial repair reporting process. Changes have been made to ensure correct diagnosis of repairs at first point of contact which will have an impact on repairs being completed right first time. During quarter 3 it was anticipated an improvement would be realised in quarter 4 and this is evident from the data and figures provided. We expect to see further improvements as we move into the new financial year.
22	HomeRepairs	Appointments kept as a percentage of appointments made	89.49		91.36	91.45	91.91	92.70	↑		Total number of appointments raised 47824, of these appointments 44331 were kept. Emergency and urgent 21648 raised, 20270 kept- 93.63%. Routine 26176 raised, 24061 kept- 91.92%.
23	HomeRepairs	% of emergency, urgent and routine repairs completed within timescale	82.21		78.65	79.80	78.20	77.80	↓		Of the 58154 repairs, 45239 were completed within target with an overall performance of 77.8%. The overall performance is made up of the following priorities. Emergency and urgent- 30803 completed, 25660 in target= 83.3%. Routine – 27351 completed, 19579 in target = 71.6%. The performance for routine orders has decreased in quarter 4 as we had to utilise these appointments for higher priority emergency appointments following boiler breakdowns over the winter period.
24	HomeRepairs	% of tenants satisfied with their most recent transaction (repairs)	73.56		70.95	74.58	83.48	83.58	↑		Of 9793 surveys carried out, 1178 customers were dissatisfied, 8185 were satisfied and 430 were neither satisfied or dissatisfied with their repair. Overall 83.58% of customers were satisfied with their repair.

			2021/22	Quarter 4 2022/23							
	Service Area	Performance Indicator	Year End Performance	Target	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Trend Against Previous Result	Traffic Light	Comments
25	Housing Services	% of residents satisfied with how their anti-social behaviour case is handled	79.06			50.00	56.36	54.55	↓		In April 2022 a new procedure was introduced to capture customer satisfaction via automated text facility. During 2022/23 there were 290 customers to survey and we received 80 responses: 10 customers opted out; four blank responses received and 66 completed the survey. Of the 66, 36 (54.55%) customers were very satisfied or fairly satisfied, 7 customers said they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. A review of the remaining 23 cases has been undertaken by the NRT Manager and Housing Managers; in 20 of these cases all relevant actions had been taken and dissatisfaction related to expectations and communication. These themes have been shared with officers and will also be used to inform our ASB training going forward. The remaining 3 cases required further action to resolve the issues.
26	Investment	% of residents satisfied with planned/investment works	90.79	97.00	91.67	96.88	91.53	94.87	↑		At the end of quarter 4, 120 customers had returned a satisfaction survey following Capital Improvements to their home. Of the surveys returned, 117 responded to the question asking how satisfied they were with improvements completed. Of these, 111 were satisfied. No expressions of dissatisfaction were returned during quarter 4. However, one customer responded that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with works done, therefore, as 2 neither/nor responses were received during the year, these have affected the year end score, which would have been 96.58% if these were not counted as a dissatisfaction. Overall, 4 customers were dissatisfied with the overall improvements during the year. These were detailed in quarters 1 and 3. All expressions of dissatisfaction are investigated, and discussions held with relevant officers regarding any service improvements that can be made, where necessary.
27	Lettings	No. of under-occupied council tenants that have downsized	64.00		17.00	27.00	34.00	35.00			The property types released as a result of tenants downsizing into smaller properties were: 1 x 3 bed bungalow (which very rarely become available). 1 x 4 bed house. 18 x 3 bed houses. 6 x 2 bed houses. 1 x 3 bed flat. 5 x 2 bed flats. 2 x 1 bed flats, this freed up high demand 1 bed properties with people downsizing to bedsits. 1 x 2 bed maisonette.
28	Lettings	No. of overcrowded households that have been assisted to relieve their overcrowding	98.00		19.00	37.00	56.00	73.00			20 applicants have been rehoused from the Urgent Need category (Band 2). 53 applicants have been rehoused from the Substantive Need category (Band 3).

			2021/22	Quarter 4 2022/23					Trend Against Previous Result	Traffic Light	Comments
	Service Area	Performance Indicator	Year End Performance	Target	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4			
29	Neighbourhood Services	% of tenancies terminated in the first 12 months	0.72		0.20	0.35	0.44	0.57	↑		<p>The total cumulative number of tenancies terminated in the first 12 months of tenancy was 105 – (0.57%), as a total number of 18289 housing stock. This represents 9.4% of total number of all tenancies terminated for this period.</p> <p>The main termination reasons for tenancies terminated in the first 12 months of tenancy are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Dislike estate/property/street – 22 (21%) - down from 32% this time last year. •Deceased – 20 (19%). •Move closer to family/friends/work/school – 11 (10%). •Medical condition – 10 (10%). •Unable to afford / manage property / tenancy – 9 (9%). •Anti-social behaviour – 8 (8%) - down from 13% this time last year. •Other – 25 (24%). <p>Whilst ASB is recorded as the main termination reason by eight outgoing tenants only one reported any problems with ASB prior to ending their tenancy. It should also be noted that three of the outgoing tenants (including the one that reported ASB) had been investigated as alleged perpetrators of ASB.</p> <p>Following the pilot (quarter 3) and rollout (quarter 4) of the updated termination procedure (including termination reasons) a cross service group will meet from quarter 1 next year to review the data with a view to improving tenancy sustainment.</p>
30	Neighbourhood Services	% tenancies audited within 12 months									<p>A process has been developed which includes employee guidance/training documentation. NEC Housing System development is underway to ensure that visits (including outcomes) can be effectively recorded and reported. This will also involve a refreshed approach to managing introductory tenancies with programmed visits to ensure all relevant support is offered and there are no tenancy breaches before we convert to a secure tenancy. Whilst the overarching "tenancy audits" programme will now begin in 2023/24, 773 tenancy audits have taken place in 2022/23 as part of the tenancy change and pre termination inspection processes.</p>
31	Neighbourhood Services	% exit interviews completed									<p>70 (out of a possible 175) exit surveys were completed during quarter 4.</p> <p>58.5% of respondents were very or fairly satisfied with the financial support offered to maintain their tenancy/rent payments.</p> <p>55.7% were very or fairly satisfied with other/general support to help maintain their tenancy.</p> <p>For those dissatisfied with financial or general support no detail was given in relation to their dissatisfaction.</p> <p>For those moving to another landlord the top three factors were: 1) Medical/health - 27%, 2) Better area - 15.2%, 3) Closer to support - 11.9%.</p> <p>41.4% of respondents stated that we could have done more to make their stay more positive.</p> <p>The main reasons related to resolving issues with: 1) Repairs - 34.3%, 2) ASB - 15.7%.</p> <p>Only one respondent indicated that they wanted us to consider ways to help them remain with us. When further contact was made to discuss this they chose not to pursue further help and the tenancy was terminated.</p>

			2021/22	Quarter 4 2022/23					Trend Against Previous Result	Traffic Light	Comments
	Service Area	Performance Indicator	Year End Performance	Target	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4			
32	Private Sector Housing	The total number of private dwellings that have been identified as having a Category 1 hazard and of these the number that had this hazard removed	87.00					82.00			In 2022/23, 132 properties were identified as having a Category 1 Hazard, and 82 of these had Category 1 Hazards removed by the Council intervention. 50 case are ongoing and will be resolved in the next financial year. The Council as Local Housing Authority has a duty under the Housing Act 2004 when it becomes aware that housing may be affected by any deficiencies that could result in hazards to the health or safety of the occupier or any other person, to carry out an inspection in accordance with the Housing Health and Safety Rating System. The Council becomes aware that housing may be affected by hazards in a range of ways; requests for help from private tenants about the failure by their landlord to carry out repairs, neighbour nuisance complaints, or proactive theme or geographically targeted schemes such as Selective Landlord Licensing. Where the Council identifies a Category 1 Hazard (the most serious), the Council has a duty to take action in relation to the hazard.
33	Property and Assets	% stock with a negative Net Property Value (NPV)	13.10					10.40	↑		<p>The dataset for the end of the year indicates that 10.4% of the housing stock has a negative NPV. This figure includes properties that have already been identified in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Asset Strategy as targets for options appraisal, but excludes properties where a decision has been made to decommission a property or building.</p> <p>The Net Present Value (NPV) of Council owned homes is the value of future rents and income, less the projected costs to manage and maintain those properties over the 30 years of the HRA Business Plan. Properties with expected management and maintenance costs in excess of their projected total income will have a negative NPV rating.</p> <p>Flat accommodation is significantly the highest archetype with a negative NPV. Flats form around 24% of the housing portfolio, but account for 92.2% of the stock with a negative NPV. Of the 10.4% of stock with a Negative NPV 9.6% is made up flats.</p> <p>Within the flat archetype multi storey properties are the variant that have the highest proportion of negative NPV at 67%. Lower demand with high turnover and greater investment and cyclical maintenance cost significantly impact on the performance of these properties.</p> <p>Within the HRA capital programme work is planned to update the building management & security systems and improve energy efficiency and affordability of multi storey blocks.</p> <p>Targeted investment in sustainable blocks will help improve NPV by reducing repairs associated with vandalism, promote tenancy stability, and reduce the amount of income lost through voids.</p> <p>The performance reported at year-end is baseline and will be used to target improvements as well as further options appraisals.</p>
34	Property and Assets	% of planned repairs						48.80			<p>It is best practice to have a higher proportion of work planned, than responsive. The split at year end 2022/23 is 48.4% of work was delivered in a planned way and 51.6% responsively.</p> <p>The proportion of planned work being delivered responsively is high due to a number of factors. The exercise to complete the repair backlog, the work to reduce void properties and the increase in Housing Condition Claims - have all increased the proportion of work that has been delivered responsively in year.</p> <p>The development of the 5 year HRA capital programme, additional support in capital for voids and work to reduce the number of Housing Condition Claims will lower the proportion of repairs delivered in a responsive way.</p> <p>An new asset referral process, alongside live monitoring of repair trends and quarterly reviews will allow for the quick identification of emerging priorities. This will allow for works that could become responsive to be quickly identified and picked up as planned activity.</p>

			2021/22	Quarter 4 2022/23					Trend Against Previous Result	Traffic Light	Comments
	Service Area	Performance Indicator	Year End Performance	Target	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4			
35	Rent and Income	Rent collected from tenants as a percentage of rent due to date in the financial year (excluding arrears brought forward)	98.85	98.00	95.77	97.42	97.25	97.79	↑		£84,704,909 rent was collected during the year out of a total of £86,620,958 charged to tenants. The collection rate of 97.79% is down compared to the previous year (98.85%). The cost of living and energy cost increases have had an impact on tenants' ability to pay rent, leading to increased demand for debt advice, and support on issues such as emergency top-ups for prepayment meters. 6,878 tenants are in receipt of Universal Credit (UC) as at the end of the financial year (compared to 6,440 a year ago), and 3,029 of these have an Alternative Payment Arrangement in place either because of their vulnerability or a history of debt/arrears. 1,108 tenants are known to have benefit reductions for under-occupation and 126 are affected by the benefit cap. There were no evictions for rent arrears during the year.
36	Rent and Income	Rent lost due to empty properties as a % of rent due	2.82	3.50	2.79	2.90	2.92	2.98	↓		Void loss totalled £2,664,794 at year end (compared to £2,430,506 in the previous year). Void levels increased in quarters 1 & 2, but levelled off in quarters 3 & 4. The improvement plan to reduce void loss involves reducing the number of vacant properties undergoing repair in the first 2 quarters of the new financial year 2023/24. This will increase the number of properties available to let and when let will increase rent collection.
37	Rent and Income	Current tenant arrears as a % of rent due (excluding voids)	6.00	4.50	6.90	6.99	6.23	6.91	↓		Rent arrears of current tenants increased by £954,157 during the year (19% increase) from £5,029,634 to £5,983,791. The 6,878 tenants receiving UC owe £3,888,561 (65% of the total arrears for all tenants). Rent arrears are expected to increase as more tenants move onto UC in future. All tenants at risk of arrears are offered advice and support and we always try to ensure that repayment plans are affordable. The team delivered approximately £1.7million of financial gains for tenants during the year.
38	Rent and Income	Rent arrears of former tenants as a % of rent due (excluding voids)	3.58	3.50	3.57	3.85	3.99	3.77	↑		At the end of the year former tenant rent arrears stood at £3,264,800 (£2,997,291 at same point in the previous year). £440,508 was collected from former tenants during the year (£305,977 previous year), and new debt of £854,028 has been created (£708,666 previous year). A net total of £227,999 former tenant debt was written off during the year (£195,396 previous year).
39	Spatial Planning and Environment	Number of new homes built against annual housing requirement	373.00		373.00				X		The measure is an annual requirement published by the government and links to the Housing Delivery Test. Data reported is based on Council Tax records detailing when homes are occupied. The government's calculation of the requirement is published in arrears therefore, this Performance Indicator (PI) for current reporting financial year 2022/23 will not be reported until 2023/24. This measure will be reported annually. There is no specific target for this measure.
40	Spatial Planning and Environment	% of new homes built that are affordable by the council	3.00		4.00				X		This measure is monitored in parallel with annual reporting of Local Plan Policy which requires the provision of 15% affordable homes on all developments of 15 or more dwellings. This Performance Indicator (PI) for current reporting financial year 2022/23 will not be reported until 2023/24. This measure will be reported annually. There is no specific target for this measure.
41	Spatial Planning and Environment	% of new homes built that are affordable by RP's	47.00		69.00				X		As above.
42	Spatial Planning and Environment	% of new homes built that are affordable by developers	18.00		27.00				X		As above.

			2021/22	Quarter 4 2022/23					Trend Against Previous Result	Traffic Light	Comments
	Service Area	Performance Indicator	Year End Performance	Target	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4			
43	Strategic Housing and Residential Growth	Total CPP of housing management	346.56					363.23	↓		Data is sourced from the HouseMark Annual Benchmarking collection for the previous financial year (2021/22) .Total Cost Per Property (CPP) encompasses all the financial elements to provide the housing management service. This measure shows the overall cost to the organisation of the direct activity for housing management. This includes non-pay costs (operating costs incurred by housing management) and pay costs (time apportionment exercise for 'front-line' housing management employees). This measure also includes overheads. Allocated overheads include the proportion of the IT & communications costs, office premises costs, finance costs, HR costs and central overheads costs to enable the housing management service to function.
44	Strategic Housing and Residential Growth	Total CPP of responsive repairs and void works	1218.49					1382.12	↓		Data is sourced from the HouseMark Annual Benchmarking collection for the previous financial year (2021/22) .Total Cost Per Property (CPP) encompasses all the financial elements to provide the housing management service. This measure shows the overall cost to the organisation of the direct activity for housing management. This includes non-pay costs (operating costs incurred by housing management) and pay costs (time apportionment exercise for 'front-line' housing management employees). This measure also includes overheads. Allocated overheads include the proportion of the IT & communications costs, office premises costs, finance costs, HR costs and central overheads costs to enable the housing management service to function.
45	Strategic Housing and Residential Growth	Total CPP of void works (management)	64.87					62.80	↑		Data is sourced from the HouseMark Annual Benchmarking collection for the previous financial year (2021/22) .Total Cost Per Property (CPP) encompasses all the financial elements to provide the housing management service. This measure shows the overall cost to the organisation of the direct activity for housing management. This includes non-pay costs (operating costs incurred by housing management) and pay costs (time apportionment exercise for 'front-line' housing management employees). This measure also includes overheads. Allocated overheads include the proportion of the IT & communications costs, office premises costs, finance costs, HR costs and central overheads costs to enable the housing management service to function.
46	Strategic Housing and Residential Growth	Total CPP of void works (service provision)	461.80					472.33	↓		Data is sourced from the HouseMark Annual Benchmarking collection for the previous financial year (2021/22) .Total Cost Per Property (CPP) encompasses all the financial elements to provide the housing management service. This measure shows the overall cost to the organisation of the direct activity for housing management. This includes non-pay costs (operating costs incurred by housing management) and pay costs (time apportionment exercise for 'front-line' housing management employees). This measure also includes overheads. Allocated overheads include the proportion of the IT & communications costs, office premises costs, finance costs, HR costs and central overheads costs to enable the housing management service to function.
47	Vacant Properties	Percentage of council homes empty for 6 months or more	0.32		0.30	0.54	0.63	0.73	↓		570 council properties were vacant at year end, from a total property stock of 18288. Of these, 134 had been vacant for 6 months or more: - 29 were held vacant because of property condition/need for structural repairs. - 55 were undergoing repair. - 50 were in the process of being let.

			2021/22	Quarter 4 2022/23					Trend Against Previous Result	Traffic Light	Comments
	Service Area	Performance Indicator	Year End Performance	Target	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4			
48	Vacant Properties	Percentage of homes (remaining tenures) empty for 6 months or more							X		This performance measure was new for 2021/2022, however it is duplicated as is available through the Local Index of Need (IT system) data which is updated on an annual basis in March. The current data shows a rate of 4% across the Borough, however it is mapped at the Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) level (deep dive using the IT system above) to give more detailed local information via Gateshead Maps - L10N21. This uses data taken from Council tax records where properties are vacant for more than 6 months and includes non-Council properties including owner occupiers, privately owned, and registered social landlords (RSL). Empty properties can attract anti-social behaviour, impact on the neighbourhood and local residents. Prompt action on empty homes can enhance the local area, neighbourhood and community safety. Year end 2022/23 data will be reported in Quarter 1, 2023/24 once Council Tax data has been verified and incorporated on to L10N.
49	Void Properties and Lettings	Average days to let a home from VOID to RTL and RTL to Let	113.00		111.00	106.00	105.00	109.00	↓		The average time to let has reduced slightly from 113 days in 2021/22 to 109 in 2022/23. This is still very high and improvements are a priority. Properties undergoing major repair work are not included in this performance indicator. - Average 81 days from Void date to Ready to Let (81 previous year). - Average 28 days from Ready to Let to Let (32 previous year). The improvement plan includes carrying out void repairs more quickly, thus reducing the number of properties undergoing work and increasing the number available for letting. It also includes providing accurate target dates for repair completion to facilitate earlier advertising and this in turn will reduce the time taken to let a property.

15 May 2023

TITLE OF REPORT: Building Safety Update

Purpose of Summary

1. To provide an update on the current position of Building Safety performance.

Background

2. The operational part of the Building Safety Team was brought into Construction Services last summer as part of the Service Improvement Plan. This is to enable closer working between teams and more effective delivery of operations.

Key Areas

Fire Risk Assessments

3. All high-rise block fire risk assessments are within their required completion timescales. Two midrise block fire risk assessments are out of time awaiting completion, but fire safety visits have been carried out as an interim measure.
4. 242 low risk remedial actions are awaiting completion. A Building Maintenance Team has been formed within Construction Services and will take control of these from June 2023.
5. Public Building fire risk assessments are within their required completion timescales, including all maintained schools.
6. There have been some delays in the roll out of the NEC (Northgate) fire risk assessment software. This is expected to be resolved by June and in the interim the team continue to use a combination of standalone software solutions.

Fire Safety

7. In line with the Building Safety Act 2022 and the amendments to fire regulations from the Fire Safety Act 2021 external wall surveys are in progress throughout the high-rise domestic buildings.
8. The programme is on target with 12 of 24 blocks completed to date. Whilst third party assessment and certification are required the team has made significant savings using internal fire engineer resource.
9. The cost of the external wall programmes is £30k to date with a further projected spend of £80k in the current financial year. This is less than the £400k quotes provided by external contractors.
10. Significant fire safety work has been completed to Angel Court to remedy inherent defects due to poor quality construction at a cost of £370k.

11. Fire strategies have been completed at no additional cost using inhouse resource to make significant savings against contractor estimates of £120k or £5k per high rise block.
12. Gateshead Council joined a Building Safety Case pilot programme with the Health and Safety Executive last year. The first Building Safety Case reports are expected to be ready for submission to the Building Safety Regulator in May 2023. The cost of this is expected to be £1500 per block.
13. The Building Safety Act 2022 requires all buildings above 7 storeys / 18m with at least two residential units to have an ongoing safety case that details fire and structural safety information. The Regulator will regularly request and audit these reports to ensure ongoing compliance.
14. In accordance with new Building Safety legislation all high-rise blocks will be registered with the Building Safety Regulator in April 2023 at a cost of £251 per block. A building assessment certificate will be issued following audit of each safety case report which permits ongoing occupation of the building. Full roll out of certificates may take up to five years.
15. The team continue to provide fire safety visits across the Council property portfolio including schools, care homes and public buildings, and to community asset transfers and non-domestic lettings.

Asbestos

16. The rolling programme of asbestos surveys and inspections is on target.
17. Key risks found to date include asbestos containing materials in poor condition found during invasive fire risk assessments in the basement of Melbourne and St Cuthberts Court high-rise blocks. The areas have been restricted until remedial action is completed.
18. Work to investigate potential unsafe asbestos containing materials in the roof spaces of 403 butterfly properties are in progress. A design commission was raised for sealing off the lofts in early 2022. Whole house destructive testing and stripping out has been completed on a pilot property. This has informed a wider design commission that will reduce the risks associated with the asbestos, support the delivery of future major investment work, and reduce disruption to residents through repeat visits. A revised commission and design will be completed in Quarter 1 of 2023/24 with work starting later in the year, with programming aligned to the phasing of future major investment work.

Electrical Safety

19. 98% of 18,796 domestic properties have a fixed wire testing certificate. This is inline with the Council's five-year rolling programme. We are currently in year five.
20. 456 properties have certification that is over the recommended five years. These properties are within the current year programme and include 200 multiple no access addresses.
21. Communal area fixed wire testing is now with the Building Maintenance Team for a planned programme.

22. A programme of works is awaited for all resulting remedial actions. Any urgent repairs are carried out at the point of the inspection.

Gas Safety

23. At the end of March all Council owned domestic properties had a valid gas service record.
24. 972 gas repairs had been completed, 926 new boilers installed, and 134 gas fires removed.
25. All solid fuel heated properties had received their annual service.
26. 136 low priority remedial actions are in progress of being set up as an NEC work programme. These relate to associated electrical upgrades.
27. Changes to operational gas safety practices have been implemented in all teams. Six incidents have been prevented due to this. Training is being delivered to all Site Managers and contractors to ensure the new practices are in place.

Lifts

28. Lifts are currently a risk due to late servicing or data from contractors not updated on the NEC system.
29. 1 of 64 passenger lifts was serviced late during March. This is under review with Kone.
30. Domestic lift servicing is under review with contractors due to inconsistent use of the NEC portal and persistent access refusal by residents. Confirmed data reports: stairlifts 611 of 639 completed, hoists 56 of 70 completed, bath lifts 9 of 10 completed and platform lifts 24 of 38 completed.

Water Safety

31. A risk assessment programme is in place for domestic buildings but is not yet in progress other than to medium risk properties – there are no high risk properties in the Council portfolio. The Council has been unable to attract external contractors or recruit to internal vacancies. Recruitment has entered its eighth round of adverts.
32. Properties that have water tank fed systems have had water samples tested to confirm that there are no uncontrolled hazards. Empty properties have had water samples tested to confirm that they continue to be of low risk.
33. Schools and public buildings, along with Community Asset transfers are within a reactive programme. A full review of existing SLAs and servicing programmes is planned for the second quarter of the new financial year.

Damp Mould and Condensation

34. In line with the Council commitment to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up a new process is in place that involves repairs teams, asset management, housing management and external support resources.

35. Overall, the Council has 1712 known cases of damp mould and condensation that are in progress of resolution. 1228 have been reported since November 2022. 1143 cases have been resolved to date. 525 mould wash downs have been raised as an interim measure with 366 completed.
36. At the end of March ten positive input ventilation units had been installed into properties with persistent mould. We are procuring additional stock to instal into our empty properties as part of the completed works specification.
37. A PIV continuously draws fresh air through a filter into a property to dilute moisture laden air and reduce the levels of mould spores and condensation.

Recommendation

38. To consider this report and provide any questions and comments.

Contact: Ian McLackland, Service Director, Repairs and Building Maintenance
Tel No: (0191) 433 5313

Tenant Satisfaction Survey Results 2022

Purpose of the Report

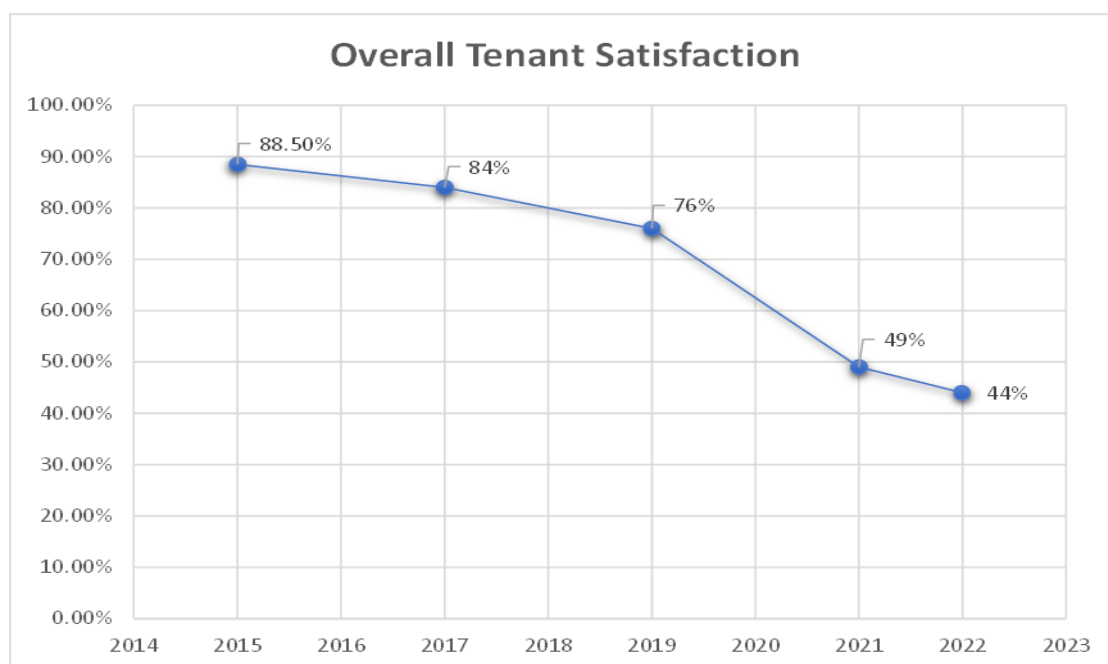
1. To advise the Housing, Environment and Healthy Communities OSC on the results of the Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2022.
2. To confirm the key actions already underway in response to the Survey findings.

Background

3. Since 2021 overall tenant satisfaction has been collected through an annual perception survey. Prior to this, the survey was carried out on a biennial basis. In November 2022 the survey was sent to all tenants who we hold an e-mail address for and completed via the Council's online consultation portal. To ensure that we that we received a sufficient response from older tenants the Older Persons team distributed and collected paper surveys from a sample of tenants.
4. The survey questions reflected the final set Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) published in September 2022 by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH). This will provide an early understanding of how we are performing ahead of formal reporting to the RSH of 2023/24 results. An additional question: satisfaction with how easy as a landlord we are to deal with, was retained from the 2021 survey as this has been identified as a key driver of overall satisfaction.
5. The survey comprised of 13 questions in total, although some were only answerable if the tenant has received the service. After each question the respondent was provided space to leave a comment in relation to the level of satisfaction they had expressed.
6. The RSH has set a requirement that the TSM's are measured by a perception survey rather than transactional surveys that some social housing providers have previously used. Transactional surveys involve the landlord carrying out a survey only after it interacts with a tenant, for example after a repair. Perception surveys involve a sample of tenants or a full census.
7. It should also be noted that the method by which a perception survey is carried out will impact on the results. HouseMark have reported that surveys carried out online typically produce results around 15 percentage points lower than had the survey been carried out by telephone. Larger urban landlords with a high proportion of high-rise units also typically report lower satisfaction scores.

Summary of Results

8. A total of 1086 tenants responded to the first overall satisfaction question. The response rate then varied with each question as respondents were able to skip those questions they didn't wish to answer or wasn't relevant.
9. The full results for each question are included in the Appendix 1.
10. The headline results show that overall satisfaction with the services provided by Gateshead Council is 44%.
11. Overall satisfaction with Housing services in Gateshead has been declining since 2015 – see graph below. This reflects a social housing sector wide trend with the benchmarking organisation HouseMark reporting members seeing a reduction in overall satisfaction particularly those with large urban stock.



12. A closer analysis of this year's results shows that the older the survey respondent the higher the level of overall satisfaction expressed. For example, tenants aged 65 – 74 are expressing almost 50% satisfaction and those over 75, 60%.

Drivers of Satisfaction

13. We know from previous satisfaction surveys that repairs and maintenance, tackling anti-social behaviour and environmental issues are key drivers of satisfaction. It is also becoming clear that how easy a landlord is to deal with, is also a key driver of satisfaction.

- Repairs and Maintenance

14. An analysis of the comments left by respondents who expressed dissatisfaction against questions relating to repairs and maintenance show that the most common factors driving dissatisfaction were:

- Ease of reporting a repair
- Time taken to complete a repair
- Right first time
- Customer service

15. An extensive review of how we deliver the repairs and maintenance service has been carried out which has included learning from customer feedback. A number of changes have been made in response that aim to provide a better, more efficient, and effective customer experience. This has included:

- Recruiting more employees across a wide range of trades and job roles to ensure we have sufficient capacity and capability to deliver a good service.
- Significantly reducing the backlog of repairs, from 6250 to less than 400
- Completing more repairs within target time.
- Putting a focus on fixing repairs at the first visit wherever possible and appointments made and kept. Performance has improved significantly over a 12-month period.

	March 2022	March 2023
First time fix	36%	74%
Appointments made and kept	50%	91%
Repairs completed within target	50%	83%

- Introduction of evening appointments
- Carrying out an upgrade to the online reporting of repairs.
- Reviewing and implementing a new approach to tackling damp and mould in homes.

16. The above are in addition to the introduction of a new customer promise last year that sets out clearly the standards of service that tenants should expect from the Repairs and Maintenance service.

17. Satisfaction with the service will be monitored going forward via transactional surveys carried out after a repair is completed in a tenants home.

- **Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour**

18. Comments left by respondents dissatisfied with our approach to tackling anti-social behavior (ASB) referred to:

- Youth disorder, drug misuse, and motorcycles – key drivers of ASB
- Process for responding to and tackling ASB takes too long
- Customer Service

19. A review of Anti-Social Behaviour services in Gateshead has been undertaken which has involved working with partners and stakeholders including the Police and Environmental Health as well as seeking detailed feedback from victims and perpetrators of ASB. This informed the design of a new approach to tackling ASB that has been piloted successfully for six months. The review was considered by the Community Safety Board in March 2023 and its key recommendations of implementing a single 'front door' and establishment of a multi-disciplinary

investigation unit for all ASB reports regardless of where the ASB is taking place, or where the perpetrator lives, was supported by the Board.

20. The next stage is to develop the proposals in detail and ensure implementation of the new service model by the Autumn 2023. There will also be further engagement with tenants and residents to co-design a customer promise that sets out clearly our commitments to how Anti-Social Behaviour will be dealt with across all tenures in Gateshead.

- Environmental Issues

21. In response to the questions asking how satisfied respondents were with Gateshead Council's contribution to Neighborhoods and Communal areas a wide range of comments were made by respondents expressing dissatisfaction. This included:
 - Comments about specific localities
 - Maintenance of paths
 - Litter and street cleaning
 - Maintenance of grassed areas and trees/shrubs.
 - Maintenance of fencing.
22. In response to this and previous feedback, including feedback from Members, an additional £2m has been identified through the Council's budget setting arrangements and will be invested in environmental services provision from April 2023. A meeting for all Members has been arranged to consider how this additional budget provision will be utilized and to consider the anticipated outcomes.
23. We will also continue to deliver our Estate Walkabouts programme that provides the opportunity for customers to accompany officers on inspections of their estates to identify any issues that need addressing. Members will be advised of the programme and be able to participate.

- Customer Contact

24. A question was added to the survey that asked how satisfied are you that your landlord Gateshead Council is easy to deal with. Key themes identified from the comments left by respondents included the importance of:
 - Getting through on the telephone – still the most commonly used contact method.
 - Resolution at first point of contact
 - Prompt follow up to an enquiry if required
 - Good customer service skills
25. In addition to the satisfaction survey the Resident Influence Panel commissioned a scrutiny review of customer contact last year and that is now complete. The results and recommendations will be shared at this meeting in a separate report.
26. The feedback and insight from both the Tenant Satisfaction survey and the Scrutiny Review will help to inform a Customer Contact Improvement project. This project will involve working with tenants, leaseholders, and other stakeholders to co-design

an approach to customer contact that provides a more efficient and effective service.

27. The first stage will be to act now to address some of the issues raised in both the Tenant Satisfaction Survey and Customer scrutiny review. We will introduce the set of contact service standards developed last year by customers and officers. This will aim to provide a clear and consistent customer experience across existing communication channels. This will be supported by a programme of training and support for customer facing employees.
28. A second stage will be to review and redesign with customers of our approach to contact, potentially moving to a single customer service 'centre' for housing enquiries. This will deal with contact across all communication channels and deal wherever possible with enquiries at first point of contact. This proposal will be taken forward alongside consideration of any implications for the Council's wider customer contact arrangements, such as out of hours and digital services offer.

Next Steps

29. Later in May we will publish the results of the survey on our website and send a newsletter to all tenants setting out our response to the results and the actions we are taking. The newsletter will be part of a Communications plan developed for the next 2 years that will maximise the opportunities to provide feedback on our progress implementing change and improving the customer experience to reflect customer feedback.
30. A series of engagement events will also take place across local communities over the summer that will provide an opportunity for informal feedback on our response to the survey results. Insight from these sessions will be shared with Housing Transformation lead officers.
31. An update will be provided for elected members in May ahead of the results being published more widely.
32. A series of employee sessions will be hosted at the end of May. These will provide an opportunity to brief the wider workforce on the survey results and our response.
33. We will review the approach taken in 2022 to deliver the tenant satisfaction survey to maximise feedback and ensure compliance with the requirements of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures. The results of this survey will be submitted to RSH and published nationally.

Recommendations

34. The Housing, Environment and Healthy Communities OSC is asked to comment on the results of the Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2022 and our response.

Contact: Martin Poulter martinpoulter@gateshead.gov.uk ext5380

APPENDIX 1

1. Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service provided by your landlord, Gateshead Council?

Response	Number of Respondents	% of respondents	Total % satisfied
Very Satisfied	191	18	44%
Fairly satisfied	277	26	
Neither/Nor	152	14	
Fairly Dissatisfied	186	17	
Very Dissatisfied	280	25	
Total	1086	100%	

2. Has Your landlord, Gateshead Council, carried out a repair to your home in the last 12 months. If Yes proceed to question 3 if No, please proceed to question 5
3. If yes how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall repairs service.

Response	Number of Respondents	% of respondents	Total % satisfied
Very Satisfied	135	16	52%
Fairly satisfied	307	36	
Neither/Nor	90	11	
Fairly Dissatisfied	132	15	
Very Dissatisfied	183	22	
Total	847	100%	

4. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the time taken to complete your most recent repair after you reported it?

Response	Number of Respondents	% of respondents	Total % satisfied
Very Satisfied	165	23	42%
Fairly satisfied	133	19	
Neither/Nor	71	10	
Fairly Dissatisfied	89	13	
Very Dissatisfied	248	35	
Total	706	100%	

5. How Satisfied or dissatisfied are you that your landlord Gateshead Council, provides a home that is well maintained?

Response	Number of Respondents	% of respondents	Total % satisfied
Very Satisfied	159	15	36%
Fairly satisfied	225	21	
Neither/Nor	166	16	
Fairly Dissatisfied	225	21	
Very Dissatisfied	279	27	
Total	1054	100%	

6. Thinking about the condition of the property or building you live in, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you that your landlord Gateshead Council provides a home that is safe.

Response	Number of Respondents	% of respondents	Total % Satisfied
Very Satisfied	243	25	51%
Fairly satisfied	247	26	
Neither/Nor	160	17	
Fairly Dissatisfied	97	10	
Very Dissatisfied	217	22	
Total	964	100%	

7. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that your landlord, Gateshead Council listens to your views and acts upon them?

Response	Number of Respondents	% of respondents	Total % Satisfied
Very Satisfied	113	13	29%
Fairly satisfied	142	16	
Neither/Nor	209	23	
Fairly Dissatisfied	114	13	
Very Dissatisfied	324	35	
Total	902	100%	

8. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that your landlord, Gateshead Council keeps you informed about the things that matter most to you.

Response	Number of Respondents	% of respondents	Total % Satisfied.
Very Satisfied	210	22.5	45.5%
Fairly satisfied	212	23	
Neither/Nor	223	24	
Fairly Dissatisfied	78	8	
Very Dissatisfied	210	22.5	
Total	933	100%	

9. To what extent do you agree with the following "My landlord, Gateshead Council treats me fairly and with respect"

Response	Number of Respondents	% of respondents	Total % Satisfied
Very Satisfied	184	20	47%
Fairly satisfied	253	27	
Neither/Nor	264	29	
Fairly Dissatisfied	84	9	
Very Dissatisfied	141	15	
Total	926	100%	

10. Have you made a complaint to your landlord Gateshead Council in the last 12 months? If Yes proceed to Q11 If No proceed to Q12.
11. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your landlord, Gateshead Council's approach to complaint handling?

Response	Number of Respondents	% of respondents	Total % Satisfied
Very Satisfied	37	9	21%
Fairly satisfied	51	12	
Neither/Nor	70	17	
Fairly Dissatisfied	79	19	
Very Dissatisfied	185	43	
Total	422	100%	

12. Do you live in a building with communal areas, either inside or outside that your landlord Gateshead Council is responsible for maintaining.

If Yes proceed to question 13. If No proceed to question 14.

13. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that your landlord, Gateshead Council keeps these communal areas clean and well maintained.

Response	Number of Respondents	% of respondents	Total % Satisfied
Very Satisfied	105	32	55%
Fairly satisfied	73	23	
Neither/Nor	57	18	
Fairly Dissatisfied	37	11	
Very Dissatisfied	53	16	
Total	325	100%	

14. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that your landlord, Gateshead Council makes a positive contribution to your neighbourhood?

Response	Number of Respondents	% of respondents	Total % satisfied
Very Satisfied	105	13	34%
Fairly satisfied	171	21	
Neither/Nor	249	30	
Fairly Dissatisfied	121	15	
Very Dissatisfied	179	21	
Total	825	100%	

15. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your landlord, Gateshead Council's approach to handling anti-social behaviour.

Response	Number of Respondents	% of respondents	Total % Satisfied
Very Satisfied	108	14	31%
Fairly satisfied	131	17	
Neither/Nor	246	33	
Fairly Dissatisfied	82	11	
Very Dissatisfied	185	25	
Total	752	100%	

16. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that your landlord, Gateshead Council is easy to deal with?

Response	Number of Respondents	% of respondents	Total % Satisfied
Very Satisfied	184	20	44%
Fairly satisfied	226	24	
Neither/Nor	210	23	
Fairly Dissatisfied	117	13	
Very Dissatisfied	181	20	
Total	918	100%	

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Customer Contact Scrutiny Review

Purpose of the Report

1. To update and seek the views of the Housing, Environment and Healthy Communities OSC on the outcome and recommendations from the recently completed customer contact scrutiny review.

Background

2. A scrutiny review is a tool used widely across the social housing sector to give tenants the opportunity and power to hold their landlord to account for decisions and performance. It is also a mechanism for building in influence to decision making and provides an opportunity for a reality check on service delivery.
3. This report is the conclusion of a scrutiny review commissioned by the Resident Influence Panel in September last year and carried out by a group of tenant and leaseholder volunteers with support from the Customer Involvement team.
4. The reasons for the review are set out in page 1 of the accompanying report, along with methodology, results, and recommendations. The report will be co-presented by two of the volunteers who carried out the review with support from Helen Watson from the Customer Involvement team

Next Steps

5. The results and recommendations of this report should be viewed alongside the feedback and insight from the Tenant Satisfaction Survey and supports the case for re-designing our approach to dealing with customer contact. A separate report on the results of the Tenant Satisfaction Survey and next steps will be presented at this meeting.

Recommendations

6. The Housing, Environment and Healthy Communities OSC is asked to provide comment on the report and recommendations.

Contact: Martin Poulter martinpoulter@gateshead.gov.uk ext5380.

Scrutiny Review of Customer Contact

1. Introduction

There has been a build-up of evidence over a long period of time from tenants and leaseholders that customers receive an inconsistent and sometimes poor customer contact experience. This includes insight from tenant satisfaction surveys, and complaints.

The Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2021 told us that only 52% of tenants were satisfied that Gateshead Council as a landlord is easy to deal with. This has reduced to 44% in the survey conducted in November 2022.

A customer focus group met in 2022 to discuss the development of a consistent set of contact service standards. They identified what was important to them as customers when they contact Housing services and how they want that contact to be handled (see Appendix 1)

In response to this build-up of evidence, the Resident Influence Panel (RIP) commissioned a scrutiny review of customer contact in September 2022. The aim of the scrutiny review was to test and evaluate the customer experience when contacting different housing services using a range of methods including telephone, email, webform, text and Facebook Messenger. The review involved gathering evidence and then making recommendations.

It was agreed that on this occasion the Repairs and Maintenance service wouldn't be included in this review as they have recently undergone an in-depth review and are currently implementing a service improvement plan.

This review was carried out between June 2022 and December 2023 by Fadi Ekhdair, David Chambers, Flo Wood, Pauline Bedford, Ian McKenzie, Neil Atkinson and Alan Guest.

Officer support was provided by Simon Hand and Lisa Stewart from the Involvement team.

2. Methodology

Contact Standards Focus Group

The group reviewed the set of proposed contact service standards drafted by the focus group in 2022.

Mystery Shopping

A series of customer questions and scenarios were drafted to test the customer experience. The group discussed and agreed what they wanted to assess when making contact. Scenarios were general queries that each service may receive. The exercise was also designed to test the draft services standards reflected reality.

The group then carried out the mystery shopping exercise testing different contact channels over a number of weeks recording the responses.

Employee Focus Group

The final activity was to hold a focus group with employees from the Rent and Income, Neighbourhood Services, Older Persons, Multi-Storey, Neighbourhood Relations and Lettings teams. The purpose of this focus group was to understand from an employee perspective how they felt customer contact was delivered and suggestions for improvement. These service areas were chosen as their contact details are listed on our website and had also been subject to the mystery shopping exercise.

3. Summary of Findings

Mystery Shopping

Webform (making contact via the Housing webpage)

- Customers advised that the webform was generally easy to locate on the website and to complete.
- Some contact via this form received an automated response, but not all. Customers also noted the wording on the auto responses differed depending on the team you contacted.
- Two queries remained unanswered: Anti-Social Behaviour and Lettings.
- Those contacts answered included the employee's name, email signature and contact details, which was seen as a positive.
- Although initial response times were good (same day – 3 days), if a further question was asked the response time was slower, (one recorded as 14 days).

Text: Neighbourhood Housing

- It was initially fed back that it was difficult to locate the text number on the website. Details had to be supplied by employees supporting the group.
- When an enquiry was sent through, an immediate response was recorded advising error.
- A second attempt was made, asking when rent counters will be re-opening in the Civic Centre. No error message came through, but no answer came through either.
- Customers felt more use could be made of the text facility. At present there is only a number listed under Neighbourhood Housing Teams contact details. Text should be available for all services.

Phone:

- Some customers found it straight forward to locate on the website the phone numbers required for the team they were attempting to contact. However some customers who were not familiar with the website noted numbers for the Multi-Storey and Lettings teams were not easy to find. Not consistent how numbers are published on the website
- Answering time for calls ranged from 30 seconds to 3 minutes 38 seconds.
- For each call answered, employees all stated Good Morning / Afternoon and introduced themselves appropriately.
- Comfort message playing whilst on hold.
- On one occasion a call to the Multi Storey was directed to a voicemail. No follow up response was received by the customer.
- Mystery shoppers advised that for those calls answered, the customer service offered was good and that they felt listened to.

Email:

- Customers advised that they found all required email addresses on the website quite easily.
- Sometimes - Of the automated responses received, customers noted inconsistencies with the wording being different for each team.
- An enquiry sent to the email homechoice@gateshead.gov.uk, received no response. When this was followed by another e-mail, a response was received with an apology that stated the Lettings Team had received the enquiry but had not had time to respond yet.
- All those that received a response to their initial enquiry felt they offered a good level of customer service and that the tone of the emails was good.

Facebook Messenger

- Of the four questions asked, three received a response.
- Of the enquiries responded to, one was received the same day, the others the next day.
- Customers advised that all enquiries responded to answered their queries in full.
- Customers felt that there should be more information on the website to advise you can contact us via social media platforms.

4. Employee Focus Group

Customers wanted to hear from employees first hand as to how customer contact was handled from those dealing with queries on a daily basis. They also wanted to hear employee's feedback as to how customer service could be improved.

Can you give an overview of how (and who) deals with customer contact in your team?

- Lettings – One employee answers incoming phone calls, with the option to leave a voicemail message after five minutes. Voicemails are picked up by another employee who then filters queries to relevant section within the team.
- Rent – There are three dedicated teams set up to answer queries including Advice & Support, New Tenancy and Secure Tenancy teams. There is also an option to leave a voicemail. Mixture of office based and home workers are in the incoming call loop.
- Multi-Storey – Dedicated admin officer deals with range of tasks including answering calls and emails.
- Older Persons – Dedicated admin officer answers calls which are then filtered out to the relevant mobile/sheltered officer.
- Neighbourhood Service - Dedicated employees answering calls and emails.

Observation:

- Teams appear to have arrangements in place to answer customer queries, but there are inconsistencies in approaches.

When a customer contacts you do you record that contact anywhere?

- Some teams use NEC (Northgate) to log customer contact, although not all contact is logged.
- Lettings have a time limit to log contact information between each call, once the time limit is reached, they need to move onto the next call. Resulting in not all information recorded from calls.

- Employees seemed confused as to the correct approach to contact logging on NEC, i.e. who logs this, the person taking the enquiry or the person who the enquiry is forwarded to?

Observation

- Not everyone uses NEC all the time and if a query comes through it can take a while to login and bring up relevant information on NEC.
- Rent and NRT teams use a different section in NEC to log customer contact. This creates a barrier as not all employees have access to this.
- Confusion about whose responsibility it is to log enquiries.
- The Council's Customer Services team use their own system which can't be viewed by Housing teams.
- Different ways of logging customer contact reported, as information is stored in different places, not everyone knew how to add or read notes.
- Not always long enough between calls to log contacts.

If you can't answer the query yourself, where would you seek advice from, or where can you look to find the information required?

- Managers and supervisors provide support and advice
- Other team members with more knowledge and skills can help.
- Contact others in different teams for help (if they are available).
- Customers can mention several issues at one time which would need dealing with via different services.

Observations

- When trying to establish contact information for colleagues the internal telephone directory is not user friendly, causing delays trying to find contact details for employee or team required.
- Staff turnover can impact on knowing who to go to.
- Difficult finding email addresses for teams via Microsoft Outlook. Can be difficult to search for team email addresses using the search facility on Outlook.
- Not all employees have contact numbers listed or phones aren't switched on.

Are you aware of any service standards that apply to customer contact in your service such as a corporate greeting or a target time to answer the phone?

- NRT have strict targets in place due to the nature of support they offer e.g., Hate crime and domestic violence.
- Multi-Storey team ensure cover is in place to cover absence, so queries are still picked up.
- Neighbourhood Services employees advised a corporate greeting is in place when answering phone calls.
- Rent Team Leaders monitor incoming calls to ensure there is sufficient cover so any adjustments can be made.

Observation

- There are no consistent service standards for customer contact.
- Neighbourhood Services and Rent Teams are able to monitor call statistics and see how many calls are coming in at one time. Can all teams do this?
- No standard for automated messages for emails or webform enquiry. Some teams have them set up, however they don't always state how long to expect a response by or details of who to contact in an emergency e.g. NRT

If a customer contacted you, whose first language is not English how would you deal with that? What guidance have you received/is available on how to deal with such a situation?

- Difference in knowledge of where to find this information.
- Employees advised that there used to be training on this subject, but it hasn't been carried out for a while.

Observation

- Customers expressed concern. All employees, particularly in customer facing roles, should be able to access translation services.

When sending a response to customers, would you add your own contact details onto this – or would you place your team's email address and phone number?

- Different approaches adopted for different teams, some would add both, others would only add their own.

Observation

- For those only adding their own contact details, what happens if a customer emails or phones if they are away from office due to sickness or holiday, would this be picked up?

Do you ever receive enquires that are meant for other teams? If so, what are they most frequently about? How do you deal with them?

- Employees advised that calls come through to them for Repairs and Lettings when their lines are busy.
- In most cases they are unable to help customers who are already frustrated, and can only offer to email enquiry over. Also, unable to offer a timeframe for response.

Observation

- Customers already frustrated about not being able to access service required are trying to get through using different contact numbers. Employees are unable to offer real support.

If you have to pass a query on, how do you know if this is followed up and the customer is contacted with a response?

- Some employees will respond to let you know they have made contact, but not all.
- Before transferring queries over, some employees will give their contact information to customers, asking them to make contact again if they do not receive an answer from forwarded team.

Observation

- How many queries are passed on and not responded to if not recorded at first point of contact?
- How many employees know that you can update NEC once you have handled a referred query or know how to do this?

Do you ever encounter any specific difficulties when dealing with a customer contact?

- Employees often receive calls from customers regarding repairs related queries. They are often frustrated about not being able to make contact or gain answers

from issues they are experiencing. They often vent their frustrations on employees who are unable to answer their queries.

- The internal telephone directory is not kept updated, there is a lack of knowledge of email addresses for teams within the Council, no set timeframe for responses to customers, no access to notes via NEC for certain teams (Lettings, Rent, Council Customer Services).

In your current role what would make things easier for you when dealing with customer contact?

- More user-friendly internal telephone directory.
- Being able to view notes from all teams on NEC.
- System/dashboard in place to provide an overview of contact on NEC Housing.
- More understanding about other teams and what they do e.g., invite to Wednesday training sessions (Neighbourhood Services).
- Training to explain procedures for new staff before they start in their roles.
- Internal contact number for repairs to pass on customer queries, especially in emergency situations.
- Improved signal for mobile telephones – hot desks / ground floor office.
- Automated messages to provide timeframes to manage the customer's expectation (email / webform).

Observation

- Employees appear to be trying their best to offer a good level of customer service but are being hindered by an inconsistent use of IT systems.

Again, in your current role, what training/support have you received to help you deal with difficult situations? e.g an aggressive customer.

- Training available via learning hub – (Conflict Management), but this is more online based.
- Supervisors provide support and advice when dealing with difficult situations.
- Safety always considered when visiting customers' properties. NEC will flag up customers not to visit alone.

Observation

- Training approach does not appear consistent and mainly seems to be carried out online, not always best approach. This also puts more pressure on employees to get the course done as quickly as possible to fit around their day jobs.
- No focussed Customer Service training appears to be in place.

Thinking about everything that has been discussed today do you personally think Gateshead Council offers a good level of customer service?

- Yes, by providing a wide range of services and dealing with many different enquiries. We provide a service by going above and beyond our roles. Many frustrations come from barriers and restrictions which prevent us from not delivering/responding as quickly as we would like.

Observation: Customers felt reassured that employees want to deliver excellent customer service, but other factors such as the barriers noted above are hindering delivery of a better service.

Additional Comments

- Many experienced employees are leaving the business taking a wealth of knowledge with them
- Recruitment – Employees feel this process takes too long and puts increased pressure on understaffed teams.
- Repairs and Letting Teams – Customers are becoming increasingly frustrated when attempting to contact these busy departments, often trying other avenues to get through, adding to pressures on other services.

5. Summary of Findings

Following the mystery shopping exercise and discussions with employees, it has been found that officers try their best to offer a high level of customer service at all times, however, this can often be hindered by technology and lack of appropriate training opportunities.

Customers concluded:

- Service Standards – There are no consistent set of service standards in place when dealing with customers and the approach is different for each team. This results in a very inconsistent customer experience.
- NEC – Not all employees know how or the correct way to use NEC including logging contact. Contact is being recorded by some, but not all employees/teams, plus notes were being recorded in different locations within the database that not everyone knew how or had access to. These inconsistencies need addressing.
- Training – There does not appear to have been any carried out for a long time on NEC, it is largely carried out by colleagues or self-taught. Very little customer service training appears to be carried out and where it is i.e., dealing with difficult situations it is delivered online which is not the best approach for all.

6. Recommendations

The following are a list of recommendations based on the findings:

- Take steps to develop and deliver a more consistent customer contact experience. A co-design approach in the development of this should be adopted with employees and customers working together.
- Develop and introduce a single customer service team that will manage all Housing related contacts across different contact channels.
- Implement a clear set of service standards that will help support the delivery of a consistent service that reflects customers' requirements.
- Review and deliver customer service training for all employees who deal directly with customers, with refresher training being built into the programme.
- Provide appropriate training on how to use NEC, including the CRM element and contact logging.
- Provide training in mental health awareness.
- More targeted work in our communities to enable customers to speak with Council employees more freely.

- Provide refresher training to employees on how to access translation services for customers who require this. This should be mandatory for all new starters.
- Review with customers their preferred methods of contact and ensure we offer a range of contact channels including text, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, Twitter and Live Chat.
- Carry out a project to encourage customers to advise of their profile information and preferred method of contact. This will enable a more tailored approach.

Appendix 1

Customer Contact Service Standards Focus Group

To ensure that standards were co-designed from the outset we asked a group of tenants to share their views in an informal one-off focus group about what matters to them when they contact us.

Nine tenants along with six officers took part in the focus group. The officers represented the Repairs Reporting, Neighbourhood Services and Rent and Income Teams. Officers were invited as part of the co-design principal and asked to join the discussion, listen to what the tenants were saying and think about what they would need in their roles to be able to deliver the customer's requirements.

The attendees were split into three small groups of tenants and officers and asked to talk about what forms a good experience for them when they contact an organisation by the following methods:

- Telephone
- Email
- Face to Face
- Letter

Considering the customer journey of each contact method in turn, the groups were asked to write down their important elements (either as a group consensus or individually) on post-it notes and stick them to the wall under the corresponding headings. This avoided any expectation on attendees to feed back their findings to the wider group and helped to keep the event informal and relaxed.

From this exercise the group came together and drafted a set of service standards. Further discussion and agreement are required on timescales stated in each service standard.

Draft Service Standards

Key principles:

- We aim to provide a consistently good customer experience across all contact channels defined by customers.
- We will clearly define and promote the service offer for each contact channel
- We will set organisation – wide culture standards & methods for customer interaction which eliminates no/low value activity from the customer viewpoint
- We will consider how digital methods can reduce avoidable contacts rather than how IT can just streamline existing processes
- Going forward individual Services must seek approval to make any changes to ensure they align with these principles

General Standards

We will:

- Introduce ourselves by name and provide proof of identity when entering your home
- Provide you with a positive customer experience
- Be friendly, helpful and welcoming
- Be realistic and not make promises to you that we cannot keep
- Be patient and ask relevant questions to establish facts

- Demonstrate empathy, compassion and professionalism
- Maintain the confidentiality of all information you give us and not disclose it to others without your permission unless required to do so by law
- Treat you fairly and according to your needs whatever your age, nationality, ethnic origin, disability, gender or sexual orientation
- Provide a translator, signer, or information in other formats such as audio, large print, Braille etc. if required
- Provide you with personal information that we hold about you if you request it
- Use written and spoken language that is clear, jargon free and easy to understand
- Offer you a home visit if you are unable to come to our offices
- Contact you if we are unable to keep an appointment as soon as we can to re-arrange it
- Use performance data and customer feedback to continuously improve the customer experience

1. When you telephone us, we will...

- Answer your call within X seconds
- Greet you with Good morning / Good afternoon
- Inform you that you have reached Gateshead Council and identify the Service
- Tell you the name of the person you are speaking to
- Use security questions to confirm who you are and protect your identity
- Know who you are and why you have contacted us previously if you have done business with us in the past
- Actively listen to you to ensure we understand your enquiry
- Make sure we either deal with your request or put you through to the most appropriate person, providing you with their name and contact number
- Answer your questions immediately, or if this is not possible, call you back at a convenient time with a response
- Phone you back using our line if you would prefer and if it is appropriate
- Ask if there is anything else we can help you with before ending the call
- Inform you about any other service that needs to talk to you and offer to transfer you
- Provide an answer phone service where appropriate, and get back to you within 1 working day
- Use comfort messaging to provide you with up-to-date information about out of hours services and call waiting times

2. When you visit us, we will...

- Deal with your enquiry at enquiry counters within X minutes
- Ensure all offices are easily accessible
- Provide rooms where you can discuss things with us in private
- Provide information about our services that is clearly visible and up to date
- Provide adequate seating for customers, and toys for children
- Provide a free-phone telephone so that you can contact services within Gateshead Council.

3. When you send us an email, we will...

- Acknowledge your email X working days, providing a full response if possible
- Provide a full response within X working days
- Make sure our responses are clear and easy to understand
- Use security questions to confirm who you are and protect your identity

- Copy you in if we have to forward your email to someone else
- Provide an instant automated response to your emails

4. When you write to us, we will...

- Acknowledge your letter within X working days
- Reply to your email or letter within X working days
- Make sure our responses are clear and easy to understand
- Give you the contact details of the person dealing with your query

5. When we meet with you, we will...

- Arrange a mutually convenient appointment
- Make sure you know you can bring someone to an interview to support you
- Meet with you on time if you have made an appointment
- Offer you an appointment for a same sex interview if you require it
- Leave a calling card with a clear name and contact number if you are not in
- Speak to you in private if you wish

What we ask in return

- Treat us with respect
- Be considerate and polite to other customers
- Keep up to date with your rent payments
- Be on time for appointments
- Supply us with more information if we ask you to

You can also help us by:

- Giving us the information, we need to help you
- Letting us know if you have any individual requirements
- Telling us how we can improve our service
- Asking us to explain anything you're not sure about

What you can expect as an employee

- A clear set of customer service standards
- The training you need to deal with customer contact including:
 - Customer Service
 - Systems Training
 - Dealing with difficult situations
- Easy access to up-to-date knowledge
- The right software and hardware to enable you to do your job effectively.
- Systems that allow me to get 'one view of the customer' that enables me to give professional effective customer service.
- Support from all housing colleagues who ensure info around all customer interactions and other relevant updates are entered onto our systems in a timely fashion, creating a joined-up customer experience.
- Support from management to protect your wellbeing, prevent feelings of isolation and combat empathy fatigue.

- A zero-tolerance approach to abusive customers.
- Commitment from all services that they will always be available and will take responsibility for customer contacts being transferred to them.
- A performance management culture which looks to make Gateshead Council 'easy to do business with'.
- The data you record through contact logging will be continuously reviewed and used to reduce avoidable contact and improve CRM.

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TITLE OF REPORT: **Annual Work Programme**

REPORT OF: **Sheena Ramsey, Chief Executive**
 Mike Barker, Strategic Director, Corporate Services and
 Governance

Summary

The report sets out the provisional work programme for the Housing, Environment and Healthy Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the municipal year 2022/23.

1. The Committee's provisional work programme was endorsed at the meeting held on 5 July 2022 and Councillors have agreed that further reports will be brought to future meetings to highlight current issues / identify any changes/additions to this programme.
2. Appendix 1 sets out the work programme as it currently stands and highlights proposed changes to the programme in bold and italics for ease of identification.

Recommendations

3. The Committee is asked to
 - a) Note the provisional programme;
 - b) Note that further reports on the work programme will be brought to the Committee to identify any additional policy issues, which the Committee may be asked to consider.

Contact: Rosalyn Patterson

Extension: 2088

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Draft Housing Environment & Healthy Communities OSC Work Programme 2022-23	
27 June 2022 1.30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Management and Improvement Framework – Year End Performance 2021-22 • Housing Performance Report – Q4 2022-22 • Flytipping – Update • Work Programme
19 September 2022 1.30pm *Meeting cancelled*	
7 November 2022 1.30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction Services Update - Update on Repairs and Maintenance Improvement Plan • Housebuilding Update (Deferred from Sept 2022) • Housing Performance and Compliance Monitoring a) HEHC Performance Qtr2 b) HEHC Performance Indicator Review • Implications of Constitutional Change – Tenant Representative on the OSC • Work Programme
5 December 2022 1.30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Management and Improvement Framework – Six Month Update • Community Safety priorities update / progress (now to include information that was due at Sept 2022 meeting) • Protection of Green Assets (eg Chopwell, Thornley Woods) – Update • Section 106 update • Work Programme
30 January 2023 1.30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-social Behaviour Review • Private Landlord Registration Scheme – Update • High Street South update • Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022/27 • Work Programme
13 March 2023 5.30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Check of Community Centres • Construction Services Update – Improvement Plan Progress Report • The Flood and Water Management Act 2010: Annual Progress Report • Work Programme
15 May 2023 1.30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Performance Qtr 4 • Housing Compliance Update • Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2022 • Customer Contact Scrutiny Review • Work Programme

Issues to slot in:

- **Housing Regulatory Self-Assessment (deferred from Nov 2022)**
- **Tenant Satisfaction Survey Results 2022 (deferred from March 2023)**
- **Lifelong Learning Report (deferred from March 2023)**
- **Impact of Brexit on businesses large and small – Update (Deferred from May 2023)**