

- 1. Report title: Your Moorlands- Legacy Agreement Update**
- 2. Action:**  
For information and noting
- 3. Recommendation(s)**  
Information and noting
- 4. Report of:**  
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- 6. Confidential report:**  
No
- 7. Supporting documents**  
Appendix 1

## **8. Introduction**

In 2017, Moorlands Housing Association transferred its engagements to Arena Housing Group (now Your Housing Limited). This means that governance is undertaken by those members of the YHG Common Board who govern Your Housing Limited and now also have a specific oversight and responsibility for Moorlands. A legacy agreement was developed by and for:

- Moorlands Housing Association
- Your Housing Group (YHG)
- Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (SMDC)

The legacy agreement is a good will agreement between Moorlands Housing Association, YHG and SMDC and sets out the condition for change to the legal structure.

This paper provides a performance and development update on YHG business areas identified in the legacy agreement and relates to business activity between January 2020 and June 2020, unless otherwise specified.

In addition to reporting to the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel (COSP), the legacy agreement includes a requirement for a small tenant panel to be convened to join the COSP in reviewing the report. A customer panel has been recruited and attends the COSP meetings.

## **9. Your Housing Group Response to Covid 19**

In response to the Covid 19 crisis, YHG implemented plans to minimise infection risk to customers and staff whilst ensuring essential services were still delivered. Emergency repairs, gas compliance and other safety checks were all deemed essential. All activity was risk assessed and processes changed where necessary, essential frontline staff were equipped with PPE and social distancing measures introduced. Customers were contacted by phone rather than home visits and customer engagement was done digitally.

YHG were aware that many of our customers were vulnerable and may have lost their usual support networks due to lockdown measures. In response, Your Housing Group contacted all customers group-wide who were over 65 or making weekly calls where needed. YHG colleagues worked with local support networks to ensure that

all customers had food, medication and other essentials. Welfare calls began in April 2020 and ended in August 2020.

Lettings performance has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Your Housing Group was only able to complete essential lettings between April- June. This resulted in voids being held vacant until lettings could recommence in June 2020.

The repairs service was reintroduced incrementally following lockdown, with a full service back in place by 6<sup>th</sup> August 2020.

YHG continues to monitor local and national Covid situations and change the way we deliver our services in line with Government guidance.

## **10. Housing Management**

YHG continues to recognise the need to enhance customer experience, improve satisfaction, reconnect with our customers and neighbourhoods and has taken action to improve this.

Including:

### **10.1 “Out and About” Customer Engagement Events**

In response to concerns raised by Councillors about the reduction of customer contact and the worry that some YHG customers are missing out on our services, we arranged a series of “Out and About” events in the Moorlands area, planning to visit Leek, Biddulph and Cheadle. These events have been put on hold due to Covid 19 restrictions but will recommence once it is safe to do so. We will be focusing on local areas where feedback has indicated that customer satisfaction could be improved.

### **10.2 Neighbourhood Inspections**

As well as visiting individual customers, YHG staff carry out regular neighbourhood inspections to check on cleaning and grounds maintenance of communal areas and to better identify and deal with nuisance such as fly-tipping or vandalism. Customers will also be invited to join the staff to do joint estate inspections when it is safe to do so.

### **10.3 Agile Working**

Staff in Moorlands are continuing to work agilely and use hubs in Leek, and Biddulph. The housing surgery at Moorlands House is currently suspended due to Covid restrictions but will continue when restrictions are lifted. Most of our customers contact staff by phone either directly or via Your Response.

## **11. Compliance**

We continue to be 100% compliant in terms of domestic gas servicing, asbestos checks, electrical safety and legionella testing in our flatted blocks. Our Compliance and Facilities agents also do regular safety checks on all our communal areas and these were continued during lockdown.

## **12. Development**

**12.1 Well Street, Lightwood, Cheadle** We are still exploring the option to deliver 21 new build units on this site, which is currently owned by the Group subject to Treasury and Board approval.

**Sunninghill Drive, Leek.** We continue working with Casey Development to unlock the development of the former Barnfield Hughes concrete plant on Sunninghill Road, Leek.

The plan is to deliver a range of 2 bed, 3 bed and 4 bed housing for shared ownership and rent to buy.

## **13. Repairs and Maintenance**

Your Housing Group's Direct Labour organisation (DLO) now operate as Fix360 Staffordshire and have streamlined working practices with Fix360. The team continue to be based at Moorlands House, Leek.

See Appendix 1 for Repairs and Maintenance Performance Information.

## **14. Asset**

See Appendix 1 for asset improvement delivered in the Moorlands in 2020/2021

## **15. Digital Engagement**

All tenancy sign ups to general needs housing in Moorlands area are now digital except where this poses specific challenges for the customer due to disability or vulnerability.

## **16. Community Regeneration**

YHG have renegotiated contracts with SMDC & DWP (Work Routes) to provide payments by results at Work Clubs delivered across Leek, Biddulph and Cheadle. YHG continue to run 3 weekly work clubs in Moorlands, which are held in Leek, Biddulph and Cheadle. These were suspended due to Covid, but support was still offered to customers on an individual basis via phone.

We continue to engage with businesses and other organisations across Moorlands to provide better opportunities for customers. Work placements incentives provided.

We are involved in Building Resilient Families & Communities programme to provide further employment outcomes for YHG customers.

Customers attending work clubs also get advice on training, welfare benefits, and housing options with the workclub co-ordinator making referrals to our Money Advice, and housing teams where customers have more complex issues.

### **16.1 Regeneration**

Belle Vue flats in Leek have been one of YHG's poorest performing assets with high levels of ASB and environmental issues along with being visually unappealing.

A number of Interventions have taken place to change the appearance of the building including painting, cleaning and gardening with majority of works taking place through Social Value projects. Further work planned includes the installation of CCTV and reconfiguration of bin areas throughout the site to reduce Anti-Social Behaviour including fly tipping.

### **17.Commercial**

The external Revolution Launderette Unit is now in its final phase of preparations prior to its planned installation during October 2020 at Mill Street, Leek

The unit, operated by Photo Me, will offer service for local residents and the wider community. This is a pilot project for Your Housing Group (YHG) involving Severn Trent Water, Groundwork MSST, Western Power Distribution and Photo Me.

The unit is classed as a temporary structure and will be positioned to the left of the Mill Street shops on land owned by YHG. If successful, the project may be replicated on other YHG sites.

The site is also undergoing initial works on improving the frontage by regenerating the area to allow vehicles and access to the shopping area.

### **18.Swallow Walk, Biddulph**

Our arrangement with Rooftops Housing Group to manage 15 properties at Swallow Walk, Biddulph is due to end on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020. The properties will be owned and managed by Honeycombe Group. The properties were transferred with the current tenants in situ. The tenants have been kept fully informed and we are continuing to work with Rooftops Housing Group and Honeycombe Group to ensure a smooth handover.

### **19.Recommendation**

That the content of this report is discussed and noted.