

**1. Report title: Your Moorlands - Legacy Agreement Update**

**2. Action:**

For information and noting

**3. Recommendation(s)**

It is recommended that the content of this report is discussed, and actions agreed at the meeting.

**4. Report of:**

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**5. Contact details of author:**

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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 YHG Common Board who govern Your Housing Limited and now also have specific oversight and responsibility. 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 goodwill 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 April 2021 and September 2021 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**

Since the end of the national lockdowns of January – March 2021 YHG has operated our services as normal. A full repairs offer is in place and our housing management services and compliance functions are operating as normal. Although YHG are operating our services as normal, where customers have concerns about COVID 19 we will try to facilitate activity digitally or by telephone where possible.

YHG has also seen ongoing impacts due to staff sickness and isolation from COVID 19, this has become more prevalent over recent months with the emergence of the Omicron variant. There has also been an impact in shortages of labour and materials in the construction sector which has impacted the delivery of some asset works, primarily some delays with void works.

YHG continues to monitor local and national Covid 19 guidance and adapts how we deliver our services in line with Government advice and recommendations.

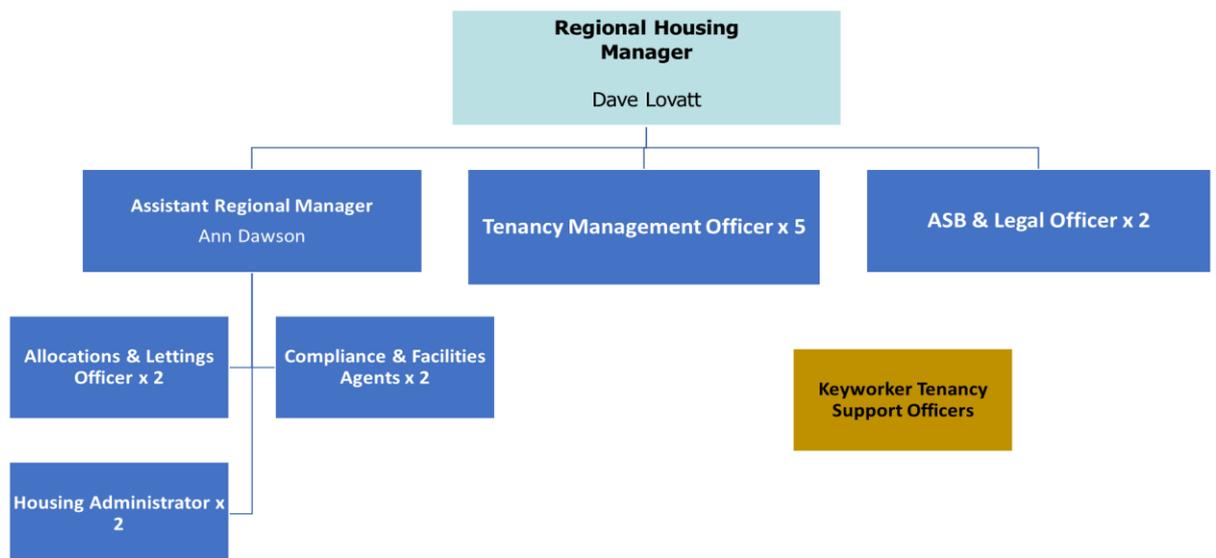
### 10. Housing Management

During 2021 YHG reviewed our general needs housing management structure and implemented a new customer operating model. The new operating model went live in October 2021 and introduces an enhanced regional approach to tenancy and housing management, tenancy enforcement and allocations. This will result in a more collaborative approach, enabling colleagues to improve their relationship with customers, local stakeholders and better understand the needs of local neighbourhoods.

The new operating model has increased the number of front-line housing management colleagues to improve our services to customers in the following areas:-

- Tenancy Enforcement to improve our approach to anti-social behaviour and other tenancy breaches.
- Keyworker Tenancy Support by re-introducing a dedicated Tenancy Support team to support new and existing customers that may need more intensive dedicated support to enable them to sustain their tenancies.

The structure of the new Regional Housing Management Team supporting customers in the Staffordshire Moorlands locality is illustrated below:-



### **10.1 Neighbourhood inspection and Customer Engagement Events**

YHG will reintroduce our Customer Engagement events when it is safe to do so. We are currently carrying out neighbourhood inspections on an ad-hoc basis however the new customer operating model will see a more comprehensive scheduled programme of neighbourhood inspections introduced and communicated to customers by the Regional Housing Management Teams. YHG will be promoting this activity in the Moorlands area over the coming months and would welcome elected member involvement.

### **10.2 Money Advice Support**

YHG has a dedicated Money Advice Team who provide support and advice to customers to maximise their income and the team assist in applying for welfare benefits and grants to support customers in their tenancy. During the period 01 April to 30 September 2021, 176 customers were referred for assistance to YHG's Money Advice Team.

In this period £231,387.65 has been secured in benefit gains for customers including £90,399.07 Universal Credit payments and £49,899.28 Housing Benefit payments. In addition the team has supported customers in obtaining 19 charitable grants for the purchase of white goods, energy and other essential items.

## **11. Lettings**

Lettings performance has been impacted by the ongoing response to COVID 19. Although lettings activity has not been restricted there have been delays due to applicants' COVID status and in some cases an applicant's reluctance to move home at this time. In addition our in house contractor Fix360 has experienced sector wide issues with shortages of labour and materials impacting the time taken to complete void repair works. The target for average re-let days is 28.5 days, however, performance has continued to be impacted throughout the year.

## **12. Compliance**

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

### **13. Development**

#### **13.1 Well Street, Lightwood, Cheadle.**

YHG 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.

#### **13.2 Sunninghill Drive, Leek.**

YHG 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.

### **14. Repairs and Maintenance**

Performance and normal service delivery has continued throughout the ongoing COVID 19 pandemic. There have been shortages across the sector due to materials and labour which has impacted some of our services, specifically delivery of some voids.

During this period YHG have seen improvements in service delivery which is demonstrated in an increase in customer satisfaction which is currently at 92%.

See Appendix 1 for Repairs and Maintenance Performance Information.

### **15. Asset**

See Appendix 1 for Asset Improvement delivered in the Moorlands in 2020/2021

### **16. 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.

### **17. Community Regeneration**

YHG has continued to support Community Centres including Haregate Community Centre, Biddulph Youth Zone and Cheadle Homelink. The support has concentrated on sourcing volunteers and coordinating management to enable community access for weekly food parcels, Christmas presents, and lunches.

**17.1** Since April 2022 Five community clean up “impact” days have been held; two in Biddulph, two in Leek and one in Cheadle. These impact days have included

customers, PCSO's local Cllrs, YHG staff and contractors. The aim of all the impact days is to improve the neighbourhood, provide volunteering experience and customer engagement. The benefits include improved customer wellbeing.

- 17.2** Employment support has continued with over 140 members interacting on the Facebook Workclub. In addition, over 50 work club phone support calls have been maintained. The work clubs reopened in October with a maximum of 6 customers having access to one to one support via a booking system in Biddulph and Leek. The support provided not only includes access to employment advice, training, volunteering as well as housing and benefit advice.

The outputs from the employment support since April 2021 to Dec 2021 are as follows:

26 customers have been gained employment  
15 customers into regular volunteering  
21 customers have accessed training.

- 17.3** "Landlocked Land" Roach Close  
Further investigative works have been ongoing in the land situated behind Roach Close which has become a target for flytipping. We are reviewing options for this site, including offering residents a garden extension. We are expecting to be able to report back in 2022 on a range of options to develop out this space with full engagements with the householders effected.

## **18. Commercial**

The external Revolution Launderette Unit outside Mill Street, Leek was installed in January 2021 and an ongoing review is being provided on how the unit is being used and impact it has had to increase footfall to the Mill Street shops.

In addition to this, planning permission to change the layout of the frontage of Mill Street to allow a one-way, short stay parking facility has been made and a decision by planners is expected in January 2022. The aim of these improvements is to further increase the viability of the commercial units and reduce local customers' parking issues.

Work has also progressed on the St. Johns, Biddulph shopping parade in which a local customer is looking to open a Bridal shop early in 2022. This business will in time be able to employ local customers.

**19. Recommendation**

It is recommended that the content of this report is discussed, and actions agreed at the meeting.