

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 01 October 2021 and 31 May 2022 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. This panel is in place and some members attend the COSP meetings.

9. Your Housing Group Response to Covid 19

Since the end of the national lockdowns 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 endeavour to facilitate activity digitally or by telephone where possible.

YHG has also experienced 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.

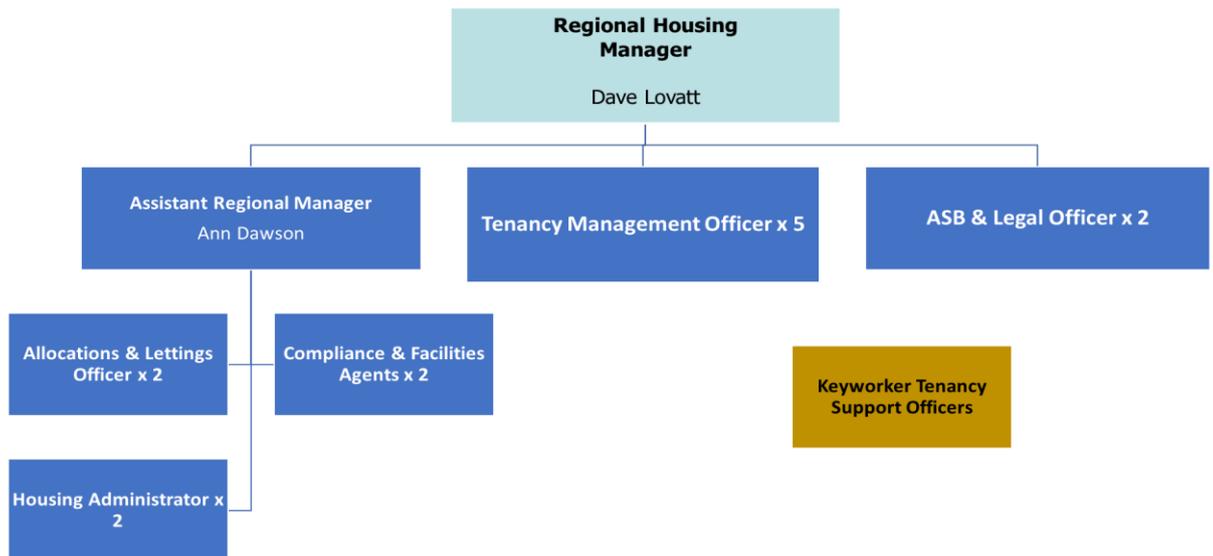
10. Housing Management

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.

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 are currently carrying out neighbourhood inspections on a regular basis and these are communicated to customers via letters and scheme notice boards by the Regional Housing Management Team. YHG will continue to

promote this activity in the Moorlands area over the coming months and would welcome elected member involvement.

YHG have identified 2 priority neighbourhoods across the Staffordshire Moorlands locality at Belle Vue, Leek and St Johns Road, Biddulph that will involve extensive customer engagement and involvement in improving kerb appeal and associated services at both of these schemes over the next 12 months.

We would welcome elected member involvement in these priority neighbourhoods to ensure that we capture and consider views from members' respective constituents as we finalise our neighbourhood improvement plans.

During the month of April 2022, we completed a series of Customer Connect Visits across all YHG properties which benefit from an internal communal area. The purpose of these visits was to gauge customer views on services and in particular their understanding of the fire evacuation procedure for their home. Further Customer Connect Visits to the remainder of YHG properties will be completed over the coming months.

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 October 2021 to May 2022 - 243 customers in the Staffordshire Moorlands area were referred for assistance to YHG's Money Advice Team.

In this period £485,856.80 has been secured in benefit gains for customers including £102,627.80 Universal Credit payments and £171,812.90 Housing Benefit payments. In addition, the team has supported customers in obtaining 103 charitable grants for the purchase of white goods, energy and other essential items worth £10,185 including £3,491 in food vouchers issued to customers in crisis in the Staffordshire Moorlands area.

11. Lettings

Lettings performance has been impacted by supply chain issues, 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 average re-let time in period 01 October to 31 March 2022 is 44 days against a target of 28.5 days.

Current Customer Satisfaction for the lettings service delivered to customers is **94%**.

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.

As of 30th June 2022, PH Jones will be replaced by Sure Maintenance for all domestic gas servicing and gas repair responsibilities across Staffordshire & High Peak.

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 Board approval.

13.2 Sunninghill Drive, Leek – Circa 45 units.

After many years of attempting to get the planning permission amended to make this site more deliverable, planning has now been approved so we are anticipating a start on site prior to the end of FY23 as part of a larger development with Casey acting as the main developer.

13.3 Along with a 3rd site in Newcastle Under Lyme this development activity will account for 61 units which is approximately 15% of the forecast starts this financial year.

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 activity delivered in the Moorlands locality for the period October 21 to May 22.

16. Digital Engagement

All tenancy sign ups to general needs housing in the 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 October 2021, 3 community clean up “impact” days have been held; One in Biddulph, One 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 and visibility of local YHG staff.

17.2 The work clubs reopened in October 2021 with circa 80 people per week having access to one to one support via a booking system in Biddulph, Cheadle 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 to customer in the Staffordshire Moorlands locality since October 2021 to May 2022 are as follows:

- 31 customers have been gained employment
- 25 customers into regular volunteering
- 39 customers have accessed training.

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, work has almost completed on the car parking development works at Mill Street in Leek. The aim of this project was to create a new parking provision for customers accessing the commercial units and we expect this to be fully finished by mid-July 2022.

19. Recommendation

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