

- 1. Report title:** Your Moorlands - Legacy Agreement Update
- 2. Action:**
For information and noting.
- 3. Recommendation(s)**
Information and noting.
- 4. Report of:** Sharon Wheeler – Operations Manager Moorlands
- 5. Contact details of author:** sharon.wheeler@yourhousinggroup.co.uk
- 6. Confidential report:** No
- 7. Supporting documents:** Appendix 1 & 2

8. Introduction

In 2017, Moorlands Housing Association transferred its engagements to Arena Housing Group. This means that governance is undertaken by those members of the YHG Common Board who govern Arena and will 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 goodwill agreement between Moorlands Housing Association, YHG and SMDC and sets out the conditions for change to the legal structure.

This paper provides a performance and development update on the YHG business areas identified in the legacy agreement.

9. Housing Management

9.1 The Property team based at Eaton House are currently responsible for housing Management. There are plans to close Eaton House by Spring 2018 and we are in discussion with SMDC to use office and reception space at Moorlands House in Leek. This will ensure that we retain a presence in the area and remain available for customers who need face to face support.

9.2 YHG are members of the Staffordshire Moorlands Home Options Partnership and allocate properties via the Choice Based Lettings system. Home Options was rolled out in April 2017 and this has resulted in a positive impact on our lettings time.

9.3 YHG are going through a tenancy harmonisation project to standardise tenancy conditions across the group. YHG tenants in the Moorlands and High Peak area are among those being invited to sign up to the new tenancy agreements.

9.4 Compliance

We continue to be 100% compliant in term of domestic gas servicing, asbestos checks, electrical safety and legionella testing in our flatted blocks. Our Compliance and Facilities agent also does regular safety checks on all our communal areas.

9.5 Anti-Social Behaviour

Tenancy breaches and anti-social behaviour are dealt with by our Legal Co-ordinator. They are working with local policing partnerships and will be setting up a confidential information sharing panel with local councillors to assist with individual Councillors' own case management.

10. Asset and Investment

There is a planned programme for renewal of kitchens and bathrooms in the Moorlands and High Peak area. Moorlands had a delayed start this year due to a couple of operation issues but have been delivering regular monthly completions since their commencement. The Moorlands kitchen delivery programme will have assistance from an external contractor starting in November ensuring the volume delivery plan is achieved for March 18. High Peak kitchen delivery forms part of a wider group delivery programme and is being completed by an external contractor. The contractor has high resource levels and can complete higher volumes within shorter programmes. This enables the contractor to move to the next phase of delivery within the group.

11. Repairs

Moorlands Direct Labour Organisation (DLO) continues to deliver responsive repairs and void work in the Moorlands area.

Fix 360, YHG in-house contractor, was successfully launched on the 2nd October 2017 operating in the regions of Merseyside and Greater Manchester, and the Moorlands DLO 2018/19 Investment Programme is currently in development.

12. Community First

12.1 Increase in customers who are economically active due to engagement with YHG activities

Customer First Team continued to resource Work Clubs across Leek, Biddulph and Cheadle. The Work Club engages with businesses and training providers across the Moorlands to identify opportunities for customers. We have worked alongside the Building Resilient Families and Communities program, which helps families facing challenging circumstances, and have set up Work Routes, a Euro funded programme to assist people to get into employment in our three key locations.

12.2 Increase in appeal of local neighbourhoods (Street Scene)

The YHG Customer First Team have been developing projects and products to enhance the assets of YHG and the Community we operate in across Leek & Biddulph.

12.3 Leek & Biddulph

Working with customers and stakeholders to address issues such as fly tipping, parking issues and anti-social behaviour in 6 other blocks. This includes using a Parking Eye system to deter non-residents from parking or fly tipping, deploying temporary surveillance on nuisance or hotspot areas, and redesigning waste and recycling areas to improve customer use and support the Local Authority's waste strategy.

12.4 Biddulph

St Johns Road Biddulph-An intensive approach on the empty commercial units and low performing single occupancy flats above the complex on St Johns Road, 3 of the 5 commercial units are now operational, opportunities to use other units are being explored.

Investing £30k to improve the commercial units, car park upgrades and in particular The Learning Curve premises which hosts Work Club and Community Room Hire. Supporting a Community Angels concept which operates out of the Toast-Roast Café weekly and improves the local area through litter picking.

We are seeing a financial return on the above by renting the commercial units alone.

Helping customers into employment has a positive effect on their financial and mental well-being. Eleven YHG Customers who have moved into employment have reduced their rent arrears by a total of £6K this year.

12.5 Leek

Allocating £21k to improve Belle Vue blocks external areas

Working with Grow Moorlands, a local social enterprise on a resident involvement gardening and cleaning project at Belle Vue.

12.6 Increase in local services within priority neighbourhood

Developing new youth groups that link into the local schools and estates within Leek & Biddulph. Due end of 2017.

Investing in a Business Start Up project to support community growth in our key neighbourhoods. Starting November 2017.

13. Digital Engagement

13.1 The digital housing application is being piloted with the general needs housing teams in both Cheshire and Greater Manchester South teams since May 2017. All new applicants applying for properties apply online and we have over 85% of applicants completing the process digitally without any support from staff. To date 140 applications have been completed and 95 have become customers. In October, we launched the digital tenancy agreement in the pilot areas of Cheshire and Greater Manchester, where customers complete the sign-up process online and are sent a digital tenancy agreement which they sign electronically. We have received positive feedback from customers who have completed the process, who have said the process was simple, accessible and easy to complete.

13.2 The digital customer portal with the functionality for customers to manage their tenancies online; make a payment and view payment history, report a repair and view repair history and to utilise our help and advice section have all been developed.

Prior to the roll out of the customer portal to all existing customers, which will be in 2018, we have given access to a small group of customers to provide some additional internal customer testing and feedback. This pilot group has been extended to provide access to the portal for the digital customers who complete the online housing application and have since become a customer and also to a sample of customers who have reported repairs through our website. Currently the pilot group is around 200 customers.

We will grow this pilot group of customers over the coming months and a full communication plan will be undertaken prior to the full roll out of the customer portal to all customers in 2018.