

1. Report title: Your Moorlands - Legacy Agreement Update

2. Action:

For information and noting

3. Recommendation(s)

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

4. Report of:

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5. Contact details of author:

Dave Lovatt – dave.lovatt@yourhousinggroup.co.uk

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 August 2022 and 31st December 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 – Covid Recovery

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 we endeavour to facilitate activity digitally or by telephone where possible.

YHG has also experienced ongoing impacts due to staff sickness from COVID and other flu related illnesses, this has become more prevalent over the winter months. We are continuing to provide hand sanitising equipment on some of our schemes whilst encouraging the use of face coverings for YHG staff and customers.

In addition to Covid Recovery activity there continues to be 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 repairs and maintenance and void works.

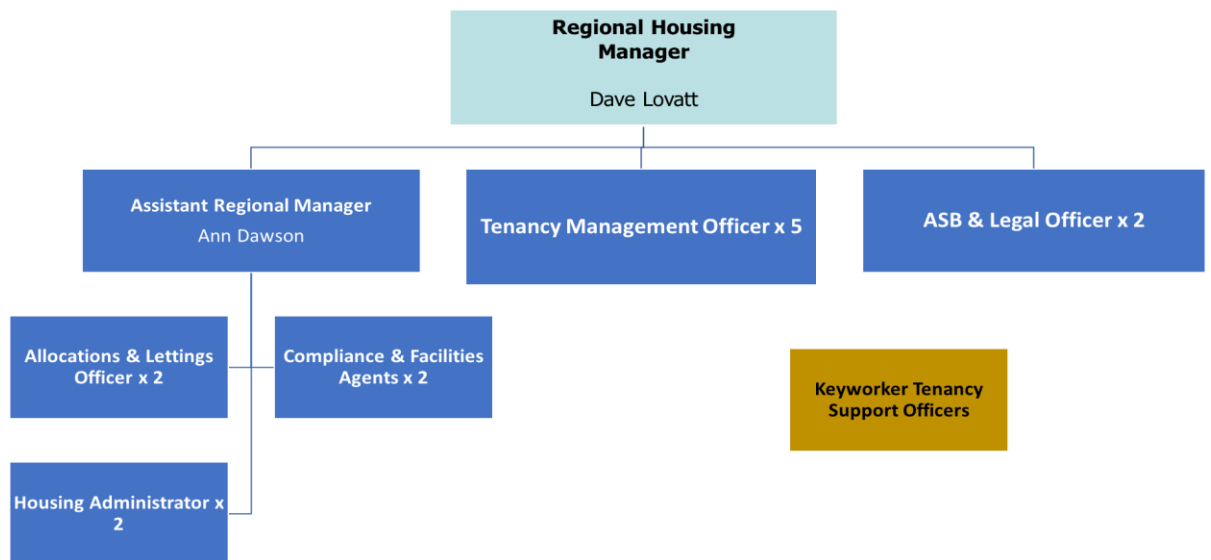
10. Housing Management

Following YHG’s remodelling of its Housing Management structure and the implementation of a new customer operating model in 2021, the local team structure across the Staffordshire, Cheshire, High Peak & Derbyshire region is fully resourced and delivering Housing Management and Allocations and Lettings services.

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: -



Detailed overleaf is an overview of key contacts at Your Housing Group complete with contact details.

YHG Key Contact Details

Name	Job Title	Overview of Role	Contact Details
Paula Marshall	Director of Housing and Customer Services	Responsible for all areas of strategy and performance in relation to neighbourhood management and all customer services teams.	paula.marshall@yourhousinggroup.co.uk
Conan McKinley	Director of Asset and Building Safety	Responsible for all areas of strategy and performance in relation to Asset Strategy, Repairs and Maintenance, Property Compliance and Building Safety	conan.mckinley@yourhousinggroup.co.uk
Aaron Hammersley	Head of Housing	Responsible for delivering operational performance across General Needs Housing including Neighbourhood Management, Lettings, Allocations and Non-Social Housing.	aaron.hammersley@yourhousinggroup.co.uk
Heidi Hewitt	Housing Services Manager - South Region	Responsible for neighbourhood management and allocations services for circa 10,000 general needs properties across Merseyside, Cheshire, and Staffordshire Moorlands.	heidi.hewitt@yourhousinggroup.co.uk
Dave Lovatt	Regional Housing Manager - Staffordshire Moorlands and Cheshire	Responsible for neighbourhood management and allocations services for circa 3800 general needs properties across Cheshire and Staffordshire Moorlands.	dave.lovatt@yourhousinggroup.co.uk

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 been working on 2 priority neighbourhoods across the Staffordshire Moorlands locality at Belle Vue, Leek and St Johns Road,

Biddulph that have involved extensive customer engagement and involvement in improving kerb appeal and associated services at both schemes over the past 6 months. A high-level overview of activity and outcomes includes: -

- Customer Impact Days – YHG staff and contractors attending site completing customer surveys and implementing scheme / estate improvement plans
- Reduction in reports of Anti-Social Behaviour
- Improved bin storage
- Planting and improved grounds maintenance works

We continue to welcome elected member involvement in these priority neighbourhoods to ensure that we capture and consider views from members' respective constituents as we continue to work closely with customers and key stakeholders in delivering our project plans.

10.2 Damp and Mould

YHG takes a zero-tolerance approach to damp and mould and has adopted a proactive approach at a strategic level prior to the latest action by the Regulator of Social Housing and the publication of the Housing Ombudsman's Spotlight Report on Damp and Mould in November 2021.

This can be evidenced by our Damp and Mould Campaign which we initiated well over a year ago and which aimed to identify and remediate any instances of damp, mould, and condensation across the entirety of our portfolio. In summer 2021 we distributed letters to all properties that YHG have a responsibility to manage and maintain (c.25,000), then undertook any required surveying and remediation works.

Following the letters, we carried out a programme of Customer Connect Visits where both front-line operational teams and central services staff conducted in-person visits to customers. We asked every customer who engaged with us to confirm receipt of the damp and mould letter and logged any new or existing issues with damp and mould which were raised as part of the conversation. All works to properties identified as part of our Damp and Mould Campaign have now been completed and we continue to deal with cases as they are reported to us.

The Campaign formed part of a wider YHG Damp and Mould Action Plan which also included the implementation of a new Damp and Mould Policy. Several workstreams and initiatives are now established to proactively support the reduction of the risk across our homes and implement measures designed to prevent/lower the likelihood of occurrence in the future.

In December 2022, we sent out a new flyer to all our tenants, reminding them that damp and mould is YHG's responsibility and that they should contact us if they have found any evidence of damp or mould. In addition to the mailed flyers, posters will also be displayed in all communal areas of all sheltered and retirement living and supported housing schemes across the Group.

Where customers report any instances of damp or mould in their home, we will seek to resolve their issue as a matter of urgency. Customers can report instances of issues arising from damp, mould and/or condensation to YHG via several other channels, including reporting to a YHG staff member face-to-face, our Your Home Hub app, a call to our contact centre, completion of a self-referral form on YHG's customer website, via email to dm@yourhousinggroup.co.uk, via letter or social media.

Damp and mould cases are dealt with in compliance with service level agreements set out within the YHG Repairs & Maintenance Policy in relation to remediation of repairs. All damp and mould repairs are raised as 21-day priority. When a repair is needed, we aim to complete the repair right first time. Where this is not possible, we aim to ensure works are completed in as few visits as is possible and keep customers informed through all steps of the process. We have set up a specific team to deal with any new reports of damp and mould and aim to visit customers to investigate these within 2 working days of being reported.

In addition we have updated our website with specific detailed advice and guidance for customers – [Damp and Mould \(yourhousinggroup.co.uk\)](https://www.yourhousinggroup.co.uk).

10.2 Tenancy Support and Money Advice

YHG provide a tenancy support and money advice service which is available to all YHG customers. Attached in Appendix 1 is an overview of the activity and support provided to customers within the Staffordshire Moorlands locality.

10.3 Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) Update

Victoria Quellan, Aids & Adaptations Manager at YHG, meets regularly with Mike Towers – Senior Officer at SMDC & High Peak to review current case numbers and progress with all DFG referrals within the district.

As of March 2023, Millbrook will no longer be the designated contractor for local DFG work. Further details of the new contractor will be shared at the earliest opportunity in the New Year.

Stats:

- 62 referrals have been received since April 22.
- 7 of these have been closed or cancelled due to non-engagement of the customer.
- 24 Completions as of 1st December 2022.
- YHG's Aids & Adaptations Team won the National Award for Adaptations Team of the Year at the Healthy Housing Awards in November 22.
- Designs to grow the team further during 2023.

Customer feedback for the service currently at 100% satisfaction.

10.4 Energy Efficiency Update

YHG are currently undergoing a period of strategic planning in relation to decarbonisation, biodiversity, and our wider net zero obligations. Our initial focus is to ensure we are achieving a minimum EPC C across our entire portfolio by 2030, this will include improvement works to all properties currently SAP D or below in the Staffordshire Moorlands District. We are doing this by vigorously modelling and validating all the information and data we hold on our assets, to establish which properties will receive improvement measures first based on their current energy performance.

We are concentrating these efforts on the poorest performing homes we have, which have prioritised our short-term programme of works. In the ST postcode area, we have 1960 properties which may benefit from improvements between now and 2030, this will be subject to further surveying and validation - just to note, the average SAP rating is D within the Staffordshire Moorlands District.

YHG are currently assessing all our communal blocks and external areas to establish any additional energy efficient measures and ways to reduce usage.

There are other funding initiatives such as ECO4 which we will be hoping to access in addition to YHG's own investment to continually improve our

energy performance of the portfolio - again this eligibility criteria will be modelled against properties within the Staffordshire Moorlands Locality.

To lead on service delivery and improvements in this area YHG have appointed an Energy and Sustainability Manager, Martin Lee. Martin will attend the SMDC Community and Scrutiny Panel on 16th January 2023.

11. Lettings

Current lettings performance has been impacted by supply chain issues and 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 for the period 01 August to 31st December 2022 is 52 days against a target of 28.5 days.

An improvement plan has been developed which will result in increased resources within the voids maintenance teams, complete with support from sub contractors. It is anticipated that performance will improve early in the new calendar year once current voids in maintenance have had work completed and been relet.

Current Customer Satisfaction for the lettings service delivered to customers is 93%.

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.

From 30th June 2022, Sure Maintenance took over the local contract from PH Jones for all domestic gas servicing and gas repair responsibilities across Staffordshire & High Peak.

13. Development

13.1 Well Street, Lightwood, Cheadle – Circa 20 units

YHG are still exploring the option to deliver 20 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.

Ascent Stats:

- 277 Properties (including 3 refurbished properties) were built during the Ascent Programme across the Staffordshire Moorlands.

14. Repairs and Maintenance

There have been shortages across the sector due to materials and labour which has impacted some of our services, in particular void and responsive maintenance works.

Customer satisfaction with the repairs service which is currently at 89%.

In December 2022, local elected member representatives met with YHG's Chief Executive and Director of Housing and Customer Service to discuss some specific individual complaints and concerns raised to them about YHG's repairs and maintenance service. A further meeting is taking place on 9th January 2023 to discuss how communication between YHG and elected members can be further improved, and whether the format of information sharing and meetings should be reviewed.

See Appendix 1 for Repairs and Maintenance Performance Information.

15. 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. Your Housing Group has circa 13000 customers who are signed up / able to use Your Home Hub – this is a customer portal / app which allows customers to report a repair, change / update their personal details, view their rent account, and make payments. Since this was launched to customers in summer 2022, there have been over 4000 repairs logged by customers.

16. 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 August 2022, two community clean up “impact” days have been held: one in Biddulph and one in Leek. 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.

- 17.2** The work clubs see circa 35 people per week accessing one-to-one support via a booking system in each of the work clubs 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 customers in the Staffordshire Moorlands locality since 1st August 2022 to 31st December 2022 are as follows:

- 35 customers have been gained employment
- 29 customers into regular volunteering
- 78 customers have accessed training.

18. Recommendation

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