

Lead Member Briefing Report

Districts and STAR Performance

Lead Member: Cllr Cutkelvin

Lead Director: Chris Burgin

Housing Scrutiny Commission: 23rd November 2020

Useful information

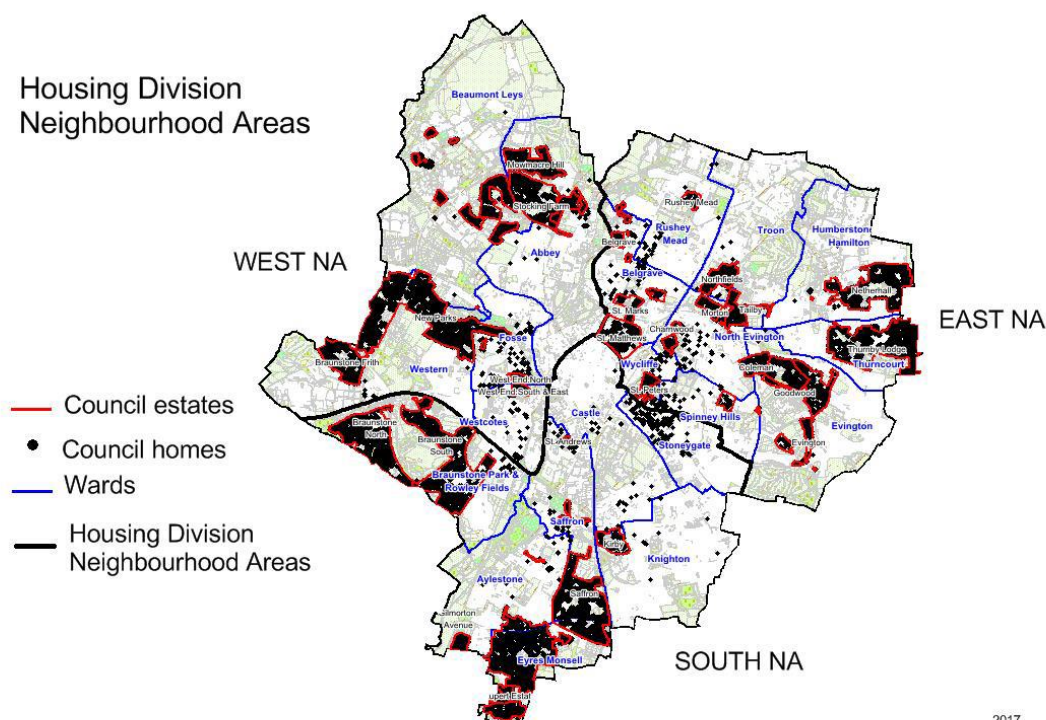
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- Report version number: 1

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The Purpose of this report is to provide the Housing Scrutiny Commission an update on the work and priorities of the Tenancy Management and STAR Service.
- 1.2 This report will highlight the next steps and improvements being planned within service areas.
- 1.3 The report will also provide an update on how the service responded and adapted service provision to support the most vulnerable tenants during the Coronavirus pandemic.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Tenancy Management Service provides the social landlord function to the 21,146 Leicester City Council owned homes, which involves dealing with an extensive range of service requests from tenants
- 2.2 The service is also responsible for the management of the Sheltered Housing Units, Leaseholders and the Gypsy and Travellers sites in the city.
- 2.3 The city is divided into three Neighbourhood Housing areas each with a District Manager responsible for tenancy and estate management in their area.



3. Detailed report

3.1 The Tenancy Management Service delivers a range of functions, which includes dealing with the following types of service requests:

- Abandoned Properties/Unlawful Occupiers/ NTQs
- Anti-Social Behaviour - includes working with partners such as CrASBU
- Building Officer Responsible Work – includes fire safety checks to communal areas
- Communal Cleaning Checks
- Condition of Property Enquiries – damp, alterations and inspections
- Condition of Tenancy Breaches
- Customer Face of Housing –assisting and facilitating tenants to access other services, repairs, ASC, support services
- Decants – re-housing of tenants in an emergency or crisis
- Domestic Violence Cases
- Estate Management – includes a variety of tasks dealing with fly tipping, security and grounds maintenance
- Evictions
- Priority Case Transfers – involves carrying out investigations and writing reports for tenants who need to move for reasons such as harassment
- Environmental Projects - consulting with local communities and identifying and facilitating improvement works for the area
- Gypsy and Traveller Site Management
- Leaseholders Management
- Sheltered Housing – inspections and checks on residents
- Welfare Visits – contacting tenants where we identify they may have additional support needs that are not being addressed and developing support action plans

3.2 During 2019- 20, 18,972 service requests were dealt with on top of carrying out the day to day building responsibility and estate management work.

3.3 Performance on key performance measures for the Tenancy Management service in 2019/20 was:

- percentage of new tenancies sustained over a year was 91.1% just slightly below the target set of 92%.
- percentage of fire inspections carried out on time was 99.1%, this is a rag rated measure
- ASB cases dealt with were 1487, in 2018/19 1,322 cases were dealt with

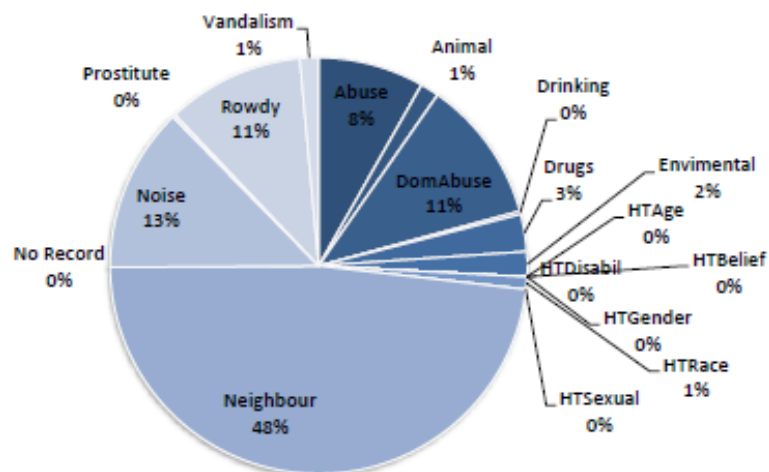
The service has performed well considering the challenges brought about by the Coronavirus and maintained performance in these key areas.

Performance Indicator	Direction of Travel	Lead HOS	2018-19 Outturn	2019-20						
				Target	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	YTD	Projection
Percentage of new tenancies sustained for over a year	Higher is better	Gurjit Minhas	89.8%	92.0%	90.5% inc	93.3% inc	89.1% dec	90.9% inc	91.1%	91.1%
Percentage of fire inspections carried out on time	Higher is better	Gurjit Minhas	90.2%	RAG Rated	99.6% inc	90.3% dec	99.2% inc	99.5% inc	99.1%	99.1%

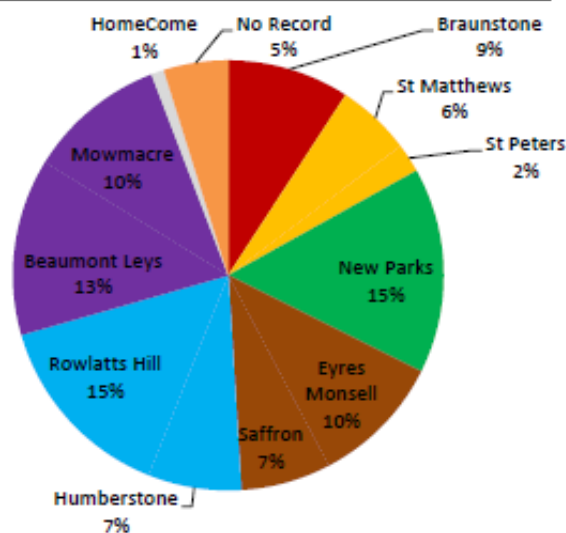
Total ASB Cases Reported													
	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	YTD
2019-20	158	128	136	191	135	119	98	107	83	134	97	101	1487
2020-21	52	85	184	146	116								583

Cases That Escalated To Perpetrator Path													
	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	YTD
2019-20	81	79	76	99	57	67	61	67	27	61	53	54	782
2020-21	37	53	86	72	49								297

ASB By Type



ASB By Area



3.4 Service Priorities

Key service priorities are:

- Improving our estates
- Improving communal areas
- Dealing with Fire Safety
- Tackling anti-social behaviour
- Supporting tenants

3.5 A survey about tenants priorities was carried out in early 2020, over 300 tenants participated from across the City who had contacted the Housing Service in the last 12 months. Respondents stated that their key top priorities to improve the area in which they lived were, car parking, communal area refurbishment and tackling anti-social behaviour and harassment. These priorities identified link in with the service priorities we already have in place.

3.6 Improving our Estates

3.6.1 In 20/21 we are estimated to spend over £800k on 38 schemes agreed with Local Ward Councillors across the City to improve estates and buildings, which includes the following works:

- External painting and replacing patricians
- Increase parking bays
- Improve bin areas
- Replacing gates and fencing
- Bedroom and bathroom conversions
- Improve lighting
- Landscaping
- Replacing paths

3.6.2 In the West area of the City we are carrying out external painting, increasing parking and tidying up courtyards.



- Abbey Ward external painting to blocks of flats

3.6.3 In the East Area of the City we are erecting fencing to deal with anti -social behaviour tower blocks and increasing parking.



- Thurcourt Ward supported by ward members £80,000, parking is an ongoing issue due to estate layout.

3.6.4 In the South of the City we are creating additional parking, carrying out hedge removal and bedroom and bathroom conversions.



- Braunstone and Rowley Fields ongoing conversion scheme approved by Councillors, programme of property conversions cost £30,000

3.7 Public Realm Project

3.7.1 The Housing Division is investing £5m over 3 years in the St Matthews and St Peters areas of the City to improve the Estate environment. Working closely with local residents to identify improvements to the estates. Including

- Internal Communal Area enhancement
- External improvements balconies and externals of flats
- Development and improvement of communal garden areas
- Landscaping around Tower Blocks and other areas across both areas
- Tree Planting
- Additional Parking
- Replacement of Garage doors and enhancement of garages

3.7.2 Plans have currently been drawn up for Ottawa Road. A landscape architect will be drafting plans for internal courtyards and parking to make spaces more suitable for use by local people. A project board has been set up to deliver this project and monitor progress.

3.8 Supporting Tenants and Residents (STAR)

3.8.1 The STAR service (housing related floating support service) supports our most vulnerable tenants to sustain and maintain their tenancies. The service works with Council tenants across the City on a one to one basis. Currently the service is working on 500+ cases at any one time.

3.8.2 The service achieves successful outcomes and gets service users to engage by building up trusting relationships. The service coaches' people on life skills and maximises their income so that they are able to maintain their tenancies. Some of the most complex cases involve tenants who have mental health, substance issues and/or fleeing from violence and abuse. These cases require intensive one to one support to encourage tenants to engage with services. The service will also be piloting the role of employment worker to increase the number of tenants on the pathway to work, although Covid is presenting additional challenges in this area.

3.8.3 **Performance on key measures for the STAR Service in 2019/20 was:**

- Total number of vulnerable tenants supported to maintain their tenancy 949
- 1,416 short term cases were supported
- Total income maximised for tenants by providing support was £1,016,097
- New tenancies sustained for over a year was 91.1%

Performance Indicator	Direction of Travel	Lead HOS	2018-19 Outturn	2019-20						
				Target	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	YTD	Projection
STAR: Total number of vulnerable tenants supported to maintain their tenancy	Contextual	Gurjit Minhas	N/A	Contextual	509	509	505	502	502	502
STAR: Service-wide sustainment cases (short term support)	Contextual	Gurjit Minhas	1,759	Contextual	365	385	321	345	1,416	1,416
STAR: Total Income Maximised (£)	Higher is better	Gurjit Minhas	1,245,407	Contextual	1,082,318	1,087,082	1,100,912	1,016,097	1,016,097	1,016,097

3.8.4 Performance has been maintained; support was focused on an increased number of short-term cases in addition to the arrangement of 1,535 food parcels for households during the early stage of the coronavirus lockdown.

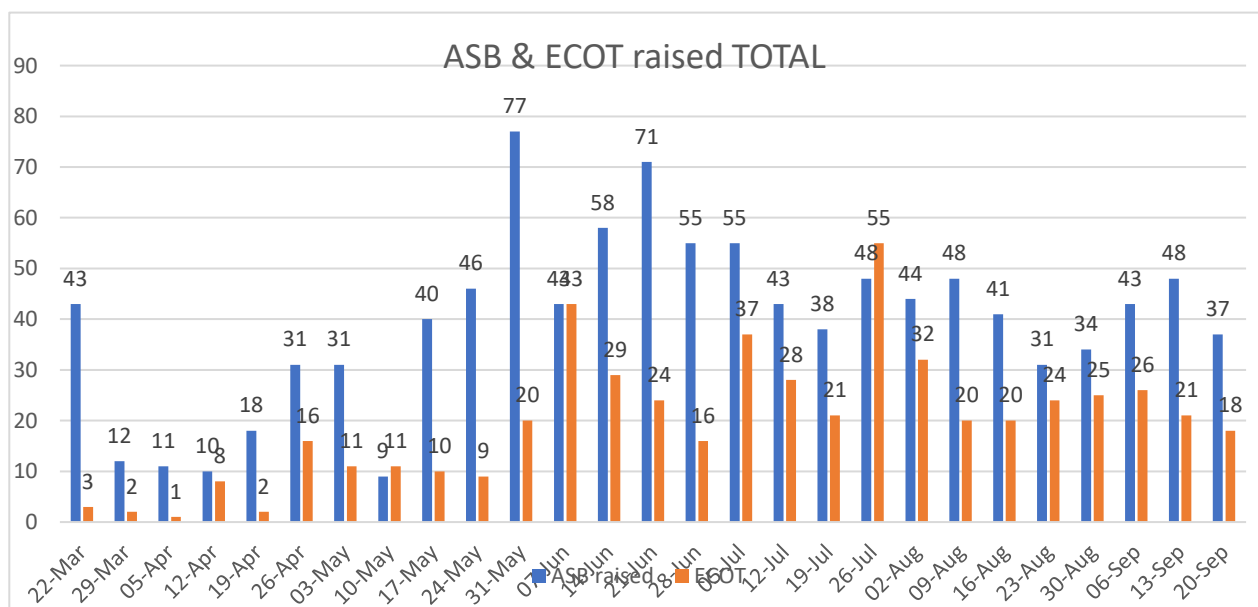
3.9 COVID 19 Pandemic

3.9.1 During the Coronavirus lockdown the Tenancy Management and STAR service responded by transferring most operations to remote working. Services had been mainly operated from the St Marks Office, Saffron Office, New Parks Centre, Beaumont Leys Hub and St Matthews Community Centre. Services are also delivered directly to tenants, leaseholders and residents on estates and in their homes. When lock down took place all offices/centres were closed, and most home visits stopped. However, staff have continued to deliver a substantial service offer by working remotely from home.

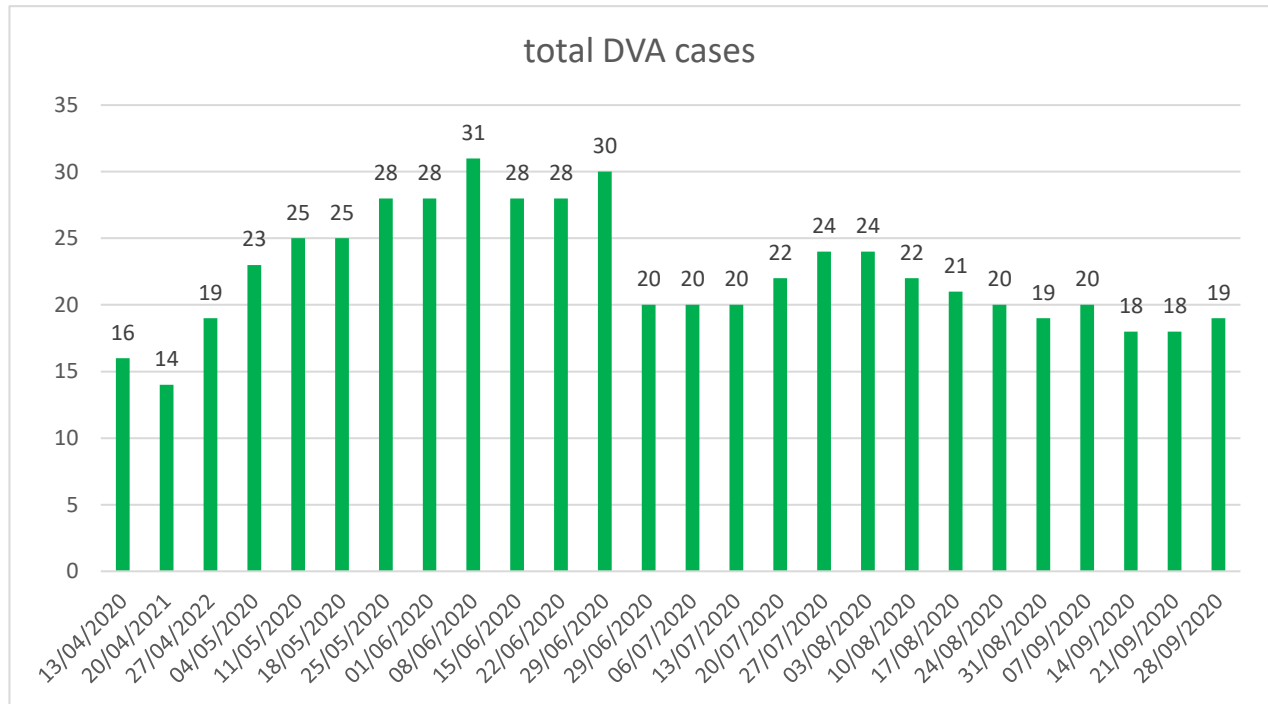
3.9.2 The Tenancy Management and STAR service focused on providing support to the most vulnerable tenants and residents during the height of the pandemic in April this year. Officers rang vulnerable tenants, referring them to support and arranging for food parcels. Urgent cases for rehousing due to domestic violence and harassment have been prioritised and supported. The service has also been focusing on ensuring households coming out of temporary accommodation are allocated sensitive lets, to increase their longer-term chances of sustaining their tenancies and maintaining stability in neighbourhoods. To enable the service to focus on these priorities low level service requests and environmental improvement work was put on hold.

3.9.3 Over 6,500 welfare calls were made by Tenancy Management staff, people have been referred on for food parcels and additional support as appropriate. The STAR service linked tenants in with the corporate Covid -19 support in the City.

3.9.4 During the first few months of the lock down the service saw an increase in Anti - Social Behaviour cases as households had no-where to go as non – essential travel was not permitted. This has now levelled out to pre-Covid levels.



3.9.5 We also saw a corresponding rise in domestic violence cases reported to the service, again as households stayed at home during the lockdown period.



3.9.6 Tenancy management and STAR service continued to provide support and provide assistance to these priority cases and arranged for people for move, access refuge and tackle perpetrators during the lockdown.

3.9.7 Coming out of Lockdown, to ensure the safety of our tenants and staff we have developed a critical contract matrix and method statements that sit alongside our service risk assessment. We are now carrying out home visits where it is absolutely essential and have supplied staff with PPE and guidance on how to carry out their work safely. The majority of services will continue to be delivered remotely.

3.10 Next Steps and Improvements

3.10.1 Environmental Projects and the Public Realm work will continue to be a priority and we will progress this work as quickly as possible subject to COVID which has already impacted the start of the project.

3.10.2 We continue to play a key role in fire safety to ensure nothing like Grenfell ever happens again, fire safety checks continue on a regular basis and improvement work has taken place to buildings including the installation of sprinkler systems. We are now ensuring important information in relation to buildings is stored electronically and is accessible for the Building Responsible Officers.

3.10.3 We have had an increase in complaints about pigeons, rats and bed bugs, therefore will be reviewing our service level agreement with pest control services to ensure we are dealing with the increasing demand in this area.

3.10.4 Connected to the above is addressing the behaviour and lifestyle of tenants and resident who contribute to the increase of these problems by leaving food out. We also have issues with residents disposing of fat and wipes inappropriately which clogs up sewers and pipes. We will be reminding residents of how to dispose of these items appropriately to help reduce the cost of unblocking waste systems and disruption to other tenants.

3.10.5 To improve the Anti-Social Behaviour Service offer we are proposing to transfer the function from the Housing Division to the CrASBU Team in the Neighbourhood and Environmental Department. The aim of this is to have one specialist service dealing with ASB regardless of tenure providing a more seamless and consistent service. Details of this proposal are contained within a separate report.

3.10.6 This change will give Housing Officers more capacity to take on the holistic role to support tenants through early intervention, carry out welfare visits and ensure tenants access appropriate support as required to maintain their tenancies. We aim to enhance the Neighbourhood Housing Officer role so they are the key contact person for the tenants.

3.10.7 The Tenancy Management service will enhance partnership working with agencies to ensure that tenants with a range of needs and different backgrounds access the appropriate support they need to maintain their tenancies.

3.10.8 We have identified gaps in housing provision for people who have ongoing support needs and need more specialised accommodation. This can be due to chaotic lifestyles, mental health issues, abuse or institutionalisation. We will be working with our partners to develop this provision for people who are not suited to general needs housing.

3.10.9 Moving forward we now face the challenges brought by the coronavirus, which has left many households in financial difficulties. With the "safer in" policy we are now rehousing more people who have been in temporary accommodation and have very complex needs. To ensure the support we provide is in alignment with the changing needs of our tenants we will be reviewing the STAR eligibility criteria. As furloughing stops and the ban on evictions is lifted households will more than even need additional support to maximise their income.