

**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:**

Dave Lovatt, Regional Housing Manager – Staffordshire, Cheshire, High Peak & Derbyshire

**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)

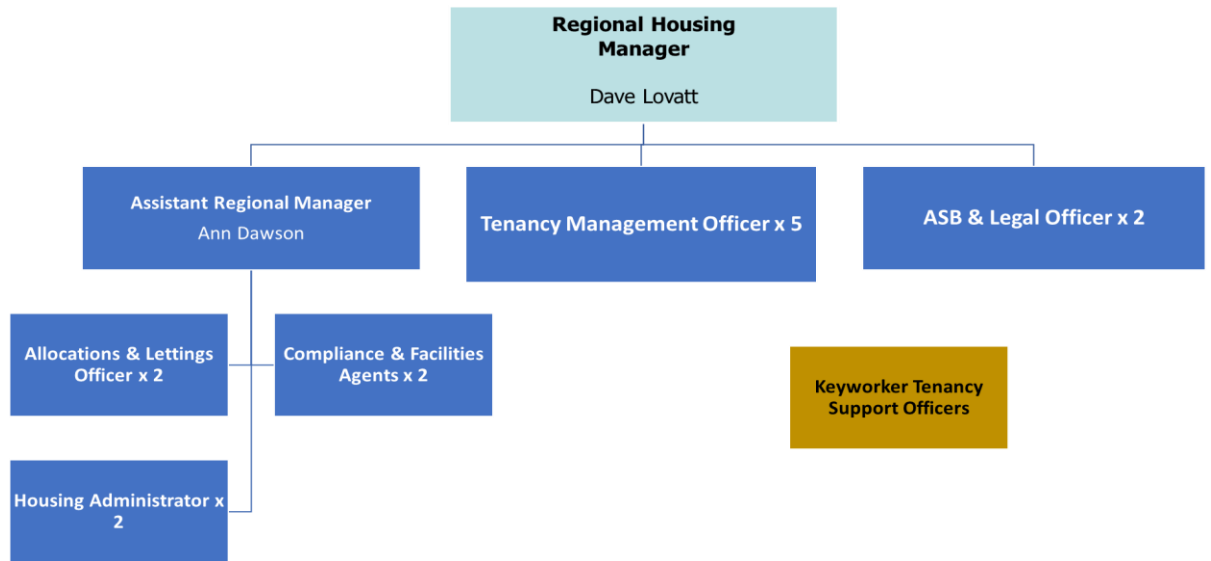
The legacy agreement is a goodwill agreement between Moorlands Housing Association, YHG and SMDC and sets out the condition for change to the legal structure.

This paper provides a performance and development update on YHG business areas identified in the legacy agreement and relates to business activity between 01 January 2023 and 30 June 2023 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. Housing Management**

The local housing team structure across the Staffordshire, Cheshire, High Peak & Derbyshire region delivers Housing Management, Tenancy Enforcement and Support and Allocations and Lettings services. The structure of the Regional Housing Management Team supporting customers in the Staffordshire Moorlands locality is illustrated below: -



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

### 9.1 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.	<a href="mailto:paula.marshall@yourhousinggroup.co.uk">paula.marshall@yourhousinggroup.co.uk</a> M: 07880 065 734
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	<a href="mailto:conan.mckinley@yourhousinggroup.co.uk">conan.mckinley@yourhousinggroup.co.uk</a> M: 07920 206 882
Aaron Hammersley	Head of Housing	Responsible for delivering operational performance across General Needs Housing including Neighbourhood Management, Lettings, Allocations and Non-Social Housing.	<a href="mailto:aaron.hammersley@yourhousinggroup.co.uk">aaron.hammersley@yourhousinggroup.co.uk</a> M: 07880 013 606
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.	<a href="mailto:heidi.hewitt@yourhousinggroup.co.uk">heidi.hewitt@yourhousinggroup.co.uk</a> M: 07471 357 741

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.	<a href="mailto:dave.lovatt@yourhousinggroup.co.uk">dave.lovatt@yourhousinggroup.co.uk</a> <a href="tel:07515050434">M: 07515 050 434</a>
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## 9.2 Neighbourhood inspection and Customer Engagement Events

YHG are currently carrying out neighbourhood / estate inspections on a regular basis and these are communicated to customers via letters, emails, text messages 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.

From February 2023, a monthly housing drop-in surgery has been arranged across Leek, Biddulph and Cheadle. To date over 40 customers have attended one of these drop-in surgeries.

The next scheduled events have been sent to all customers in the respective areas by way of text message and email as well as to all local councillors. These are as follows:

### **Haregate Community Centre, Queens Drive, Leek 10am – 12.30pm**

Tuesday June 27<sup>th</sup>

Tuesday July 25<sup>th</sup>

Monday August 7<sup>th</sup> **Note: 5pm – 6.30pm**

Monday 26<sup>th</sup> September

### **The Learning Curve, 85, St Johns Road, Biddulph 10am – 12.30pm**

Thursday July 13<sup>th</sup>

Thursday August 31<sup>st</sup> **Note: 5pm – 6.30pm**

Thursday September 14<sup>th</sup>

### **Cheadle Community Fire station, Ashbourne Road, Cheadle 10am – 12.30pm**

Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> July

Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> August

Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> September **Note: 5pm – 6.30pm**

We have also hosted two scheduled meetings with SMDC local councillors over the last 6 months in February and May 2023. During these meetings we discussed local issues and provided updates on Allocations and Lettings, Housing Register Update, Energy Efficiency and Service Standards. These have been very well attended by elected members and we have committed to holding these on a regular basis moving forward.

## **10. Damp & 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 Campaigns which aim to identify and remediate any instances of damp, mould, and condensation across the entirety of our portfolio. These have been conducted via newsletters, letters, leaflets and home visits.

Additionally we have carried out a programme of Customer Connect Visits where we conducted in-person visits to customers homes. 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.

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](mailto: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](http://yourhousinggroup.co.uk)).

#### **11. 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 recently within the Staffordshire Moorlands locality.

#### **12. Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) Update**

YHG completed 43 Minor and 9 Major adaptations in 2022/23.

Activity since April 2023 is as follows:-

- 13 minor adaptations received since April 23
- 4 Major adaptations completed to date
- 40 Majors adaptations currently on the waiting list

Alliance Norse took over the management of all major adaptations in April 2023 from Millbrook, on behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council. YHG have worked with Alliance Norse to bring them up to date with all the open major adaptation's cases. Alliance Norse have spent a day with YHG's adaptations team at Youngle House (YHG's Head Office) in May 2023 to go through each individual case to ensure a full and detailed handover was completed.

#### **13. 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.

YHG provided local councillors with a detailed update on our approach to Energy Efficiency at meeting with elected members in February 2023.

#### **14. 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 January to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023 is 65 days against a target of 28.5 days.

An improvement plan has been implemented which has resulted in increased resources within the voids maintenance teams, complete with additional support from sub contractors. It is anticipated that performance will improve over the next few months once current voids in maintenance have had work completed and been relet.

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

#### **15. Anti-Social Behaviour**

The following statistics show the number of ASB cases reported to YHG and those subsequently resolved / closed in the period 1 Jan 2023 – 30 June 2023.

ASB Reported 1 Jan - 30 Jun Staffordshire	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Grand Total
ASB Category							
Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)	5	7	8	5	5	5	35
Unacceptable Behaviour Towards Customer	1	2			1	2	6
Grand Total	6	9	8	5	6	7	41

ASB Closed 1 Jan - 30 Jun Staffordshire	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Grand Total
ASB Category							
Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)	5	7	8	5	4	1	30
Unacceptable Behaviour Towards Customer	1	2			1		4
Grand Total	6	9	8	5	5	1	34

## 15. Compliance

YHG continue to remain 100% gas safety compliant, with all annual gas safety checks being completed on or before their due date.

Due to rising energy costs, we are finding that upon attending some properties to complete the gas safety check an increasing number of customers do not have gas credit. YHG are working with customers and other stakeholders to proactively support by providing money and tenancy support services.

Over the last 6 months the Compliance Team have worked closely with Sure Maintenance (heating contractor) to address performance issues. As part of this they were placed on a Service Improvement Plan. Pleasingly their performance has improved significantly and they are no longer needing to be managed via an improvement plan.

## 16. Development

### Well Street, Lightwood, Cheadle – Circa 20 units

YHG are currently exploring options with various SME contractors who may be suitable for a development of this scale and then how best we take forward a new planning application.

### Sunninghill Drive, Leek – Circa 45 units.

Development are continuing to liaise with Casey, who have advised that the planning decision notice and amended s106 is waiting to be signed by the Council. One particular complication with the signing of the amended s106 agreement is that an original signatory has sadly passed away and there may be a need to wait for the outcome of their estate's probate. As a result any start on site is likely to be delayed until early 2024.



## **17. Repairs and Maintenance**

There continue to be 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 88%.

See Appendix 1 for Repairs and Maintenance Performance Information.

## **18. 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 13,957 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 5000 repairs logged by customers.

## **18. 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.

Since January 2023, three community clean up “impact” days have been held: one in Biddulph and two 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.

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 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023 are as follows:

- 14 customers have been gained employment
- 15 customers into regular volunteering
- 25 customers have accessed training.

## **19. Recommendation**

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