

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:

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)

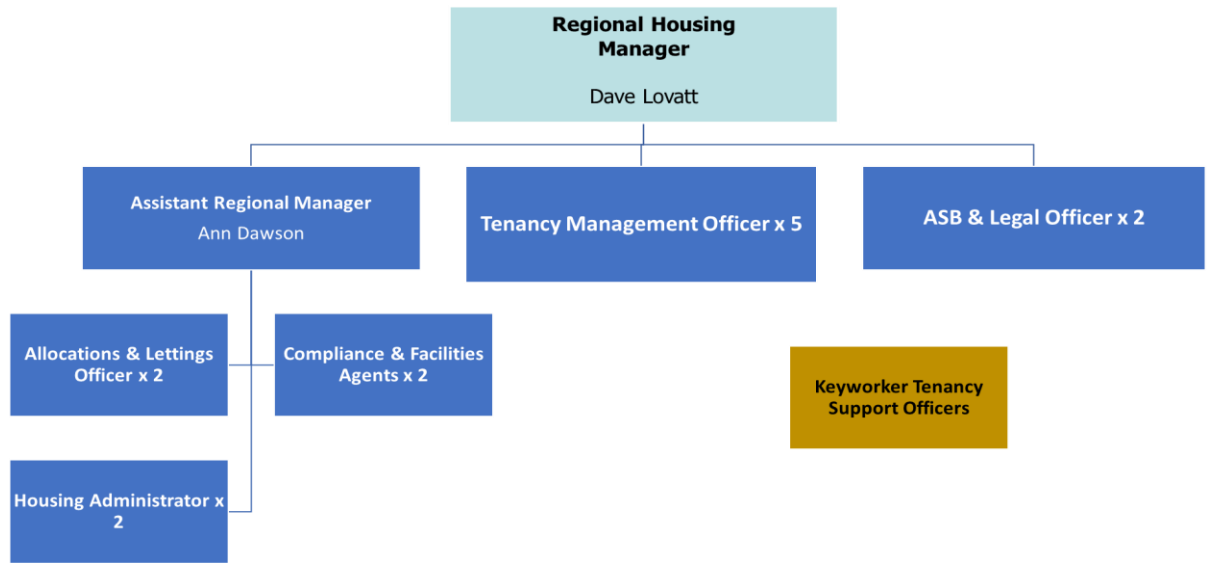
The legacy agreement is a goodwill agreement between Moorlands Housing Association, YHG and SMDC and sets out the condition for change to the legal structure.

This paper provides a performance and development update on YHG business areas identified in the legacy agreement and relates to business activity between 01 July 2023 and 31st December 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.	paula.marshall@yourhousinggroup.co.uk 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	conan.mckinley@yourhousinggroup.co.uk M: 07920 206 882
Aaron Hammersley	Head of Housing	Overall responsibility for the tenancy management, anti-social behaviour and housing services performance, customer satisfaction, service improvement and compliance requirements for the group.	aaron.hammersley@yourhousinggroup.co.uk M: 07880 013 606
Heidi Hewitt	Housing Services Manager - South Region	Overall operational responsibility of the tenancy management, anti-social behaviour and allocations and lettings service regionally, that includes performance, compliance, customer satisfaction, service	heidi.hewitt@yourhousinggroup.co.uk M: 07471 357 741

		improvement and management of transfers or other complex lettings in circa 10,000 general needs properties across Merseyside, Cheshire, and Staffordshire Moorlands.	
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 M: 07515 050 434

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.

Monthly housing drop-in surgeries are in place across Leek, Biddulph and Cheadle. These continue to be reasonably well attended by customers across all three regions.

Details of 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

- 23rd January 2024
- 27th February 2024
- 26th March 2024

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

- 11th January 2024
- 8th February 2024
- 14th March 2024

Cheadle Community Fire Station, Ashbourne Road, Cheadle 10am – 12.30pm

- 24th January 2024
- 21st February 2024
- 20th March 2024

We have also hosted three scheduled meetings with SMDC local councillors over the last 12 months in February, May and December 2023. During these meetings we discussed local issues and provided updates on Allocations and Lettings, Housing Register and lettings activity and demand, Energy Efficiency, Service Standards, New Development opportunities and an update on the current position with some garage sites. These meetings have been very well attended by elected members and we have committed to holding these on a regular basis moving forward.

Elected members are asked to consider what topics they would like to cover with YHG over the forthcoming months and sessions will be arranged accordingly.

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.

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 3 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).

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

- 44 major adaptations on the waiting list.
 - Alliance Norse (managing agent for the local authority) inherited several major adaptation applications from the previous managing agent on 01

April 2023. When the new agent was appointed a number of the historic major adaptations had to be processed again leading to delays. These are now progressing well and moving in the right direction. YHG's adaptations team works closely with Alliance Norse meeting weekly to review progress with each individual case.

- 39 major adaptations completed to date since 01/04/2023.
- 51 minor adaptations completed since 01/04/2023.
- As of the 08/01/2024 only 1 minor adaptation outstanding.

13. Energy Efficiency Update

As part of YHG's ongoing strategic planning and delivery of our decarbonisation obligations, which includes asset energy efficiency, YHG have progressed to bring forward our target to achieve EPC C across our portfolio to 2029.

Throughout 2023, YHG's Energy & Sustainability Team have been working to improve energy performance data held for our portfolio, which enables us to model various outcomes for alternative energy efficiency upgrades. This allows us to deliver a tailored programme of the most appropriate energy efficiency upgrades for individual properties, in line with our long-term business plan, the needs of the customer and sector/industry standards.

Although our strategic focus is to treat the poorest performing assets first, we have also developed a programme of less invasive, high impact improvements to properties which already perform well. This will see c.400 properties within the Staffordshire Moorlands District achieve the EPC C target before March 2024.

The energy company obligation (ECO) scheme is one of the mechanisms the Government has established to help achieve the goal of being carbon neutral. One of the things that the ECO3 scheme does is provide grants to fund energy efficiency upgrades to homes that reduce emissions, electricity and energy bills.

Following the successful delivery of the ECO3 programme in 2022, we have continued to install insulation upgrades using ECO4. The ECO funded programmes have to date delivered upgrades to c.200 properties in the Staffordshire Moorlands District (c1700 overall). We are in discussion with new suppliers to mobilise additional programmes throughout 2024/25 which will focus on specific geographical areas including Staffordshire Moorlands.

Whilst previous SHDF (Social Housing Decarbonisation) projects have concentrated on metropolitan areas such as Manchester and Liverpool through consortium

funding bids, we will continue to explore all future funding opportunities across all regions including Staffordshire Moorlands.

We are currently working to extend our supply chain to increase delivery of ECO4 funded energy efficiency measures to eligible properties, which is also complimented with GBIS funding (Great British Insulation Scheme) where possible.

To date, we have predominantly carried out cavity wall insulation installations, however, we are reviewing the potential to extend the programme to include Solar PV and Air Source Heat Pump's where eligibility and budget allows. We will be running a feasibility study once a contractor has been appointed.

YHG will be focusing on all geographical regions for feasibility.

Our Energy & Sustainability Manager will be working closely with colleagues from SMDC and is attending the January Climate Change Working Group. We will also be allocating Social Value funds from recent energy efficiency retrofit programmes to benefit SMDC sustainability and ecology related projects, such as the Swift re-population project.

14. Lettings

Current lettings performance has been impacted by supply chain issues and our in-house contractor Fix360 continues to experience 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 July to 30th December 2023 is 66 days against an overall re-let target of 28.5 days.

An improvement plan is in place 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 final quarter of the financial year once current voids in maintenance have had work completed and been relet.

Current Customer Satisfaction for the lettings service delivered to customers is 80%.

15. Anti-Social Behaviour

Between 01 July to 31 December 2023, YHG investigated and supported residents of Staffordshire Moorlands with 35 reports of Anti-Social Behaviour. The following statistics show the number of ASB cases reported to YHG and those subsequently resolved / closed in the period 1 July 2023 – 31st December 23.

	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Grand Total
Total ASB Cases Received	0	10	3	10	10	2	35
ASB Cases Closed / Resolved (breakdown below)	2	6	7	5	8	4	32
Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)	1	4	7	5	8	4	29
Unacceptable Behaviour Towards Customers	1	2					3

16. 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.

17. Development

Well Street, Lightwood, Cheadle – Circa 20 units.

YHG has received a speculative offer for the sale of the site via a local agent, but at this time the preferred option remains for YHG to build out the site once a suitable SME contractor has been successfully procured. Discussions are ongoing in search of a preferred SME contractor.

Sunninghill Drive, Leek – Circa 45 units.

Previously reported s106 amendment delays and uncertainty over programme delivery due to a pepper-pot approach to tenure; resulted in YHG not being able to put this opportunity forward as part of its current Homes England Strategic Partnership Programme, which requires a start on site before the end of March 24. However, YHG continue to liaise with Casey (Contractor) regarding the opportunity, with a view that it may still be suitable for a future Homes England bid.

18. 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 is currently at 78%.

See Appendix 1 for Repairs and Maintenance Performance Information.

19. 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 14,670 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. In the last 3-month period 1st October – 31st December 2023 there have been 3,301 repairs logged by customers.

20. Community Regeneration

Community Investment

Employment & Training support is delivered from 3 locations in the Staffordshire Moorlands area every week. The Learning Curve in Biddulph, Haregate Community Centre in Leek and Cheadle Community Fire Station in Cheadle is available to local residents to attend to get support with employment, training or other wellbeing needs. Led by YHG's Community Investment Team with support from partners such as NHS Step On, Acorn Training, DWP, Leek College, NHS Social Prescribers, Volunteering Bureau and local PCSO's, residents can access a range of services and support from these locations.

From April 2023 to the end of December 2023 we have supported:

- 36 People into Work
- 108 People Completed Accredited Training
- 31 People Volunteering Weekly

To date, we have offered 16 Courses in total including Basic IT, Health & Safety at Work and Food Hygiene Level 2 and held a NHS Support Event in partnership with the NHS Wellbeing College and NHS Step On.

We have also supported families over the Christmas period with 70 families receiving Christmas Presents, 92 Christmas Dinners delivered to the elderly and vulnerable and 220 Christmas Food Hampers collected from our community locations.

Garages

Your Housing Group established a steering group last year to review garage sites across the Staffordshire Moorlands locality focussing on sites which had low occupation and little / no demand for garage use. These sites are as follows: -

Site	No of Garages
Bridgewood Road, ST11 9PU	22
Churchill Road, ST10 1DL	13
Thorpe Rise Site A, ST10 2EA	8
Thorpe Rise Site B, ST10 2EA	3
Wentlows Avenue, ST10 4DP	13
Total	59

Several options for these sites have been considered which include: -

- Demolition of the sites and resurfacing
- Attempting to re-let the garages.
- Disposal

Following careful consideration, the sites will be offered for disposal over the coming months.

This process will involve consultation with local residents who will be invited to make an offer for the garage sites. If no viable offers are received from local residents, the sites will be listed in an auction. Resident consultation and the process of sale will begin later this year and members will be kept updated with progress.

21. Recommendation

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