

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Future Repairs &amp; Maintenance to Council Housing Stock</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>29 April 2020</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Executive Director for Housing, Neighbourhoods and Communities</b>		
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<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE.****1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 This report updates committee on the commencement of the council in-house Repairs and Maintenance service following the TUPE (Transfer of Undertaking Protection of Employment) transfer of Mears staff into the council, which took place on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020. This was in line with recommendations approved, following extensive consultation, at a special Housing & New Homes Committee meeting held on 28 September 2018 and Policy Resources & Growth Committee on 11 October 2018 that, following expiry of the of the contract with Mears:

- Customer service and quality assurance services are brought in house;
- Responsive repairs and empty property refurbishment works to council housing stock are brought in-house.

- 1.2 Given that the transfer has only recently taken place, this report focuses on how the programme completed the transfer, how this was impacted by Covid-19 measures, and highlights areas of the programme which are still in progress. A more detailed report on the programme and the TUPE transfer will be presented at June Housing committee.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the progress with the programme which is outlined in the body of this report.

**3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 On 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020, 132 Mears staff transferred into the council as part of the Repairs & Maintenance service. This milestone marks the end of a thorough consultation and engagement process which has taken place over the last 18 months.

- 3.2 The programme has been impacted by the measures put in place due to Covid-19, but due to the significant planning and work carried out over the last year the programme was in a strong position to continue with the transfer, albeit scaled back to meet the necessary health and safety measures to protect staff and residents.
- 3.3 A 'go-live' plan was developed for the week of the transfer, with a focus on the testing of systems and equipment to enable a smooth transition. This included testing IT equipment, phone lines, access to information and equipment, new processes and procedures.
- 3.4 On the day of transfer, support was provided both on-site at the Housing Centre and remotely by staff working from home, with any issues being triaged by the programme team. This enabled support to be delivered quickly and directed to the relevant team.
- 3.5 There were some initial issues encountered in the repairs call centre, regarding logging into the IT systems and phones. These were dealt with swiftly and the call centre was fully operational by 9am.
- 3.6 Jobs were successfully scheduled in on the MCM IT system, interfacing with the Operatives new Council PDA (Personal Digital Assistant) devices and enabling them to pick up materials from suppliers.
- 3.7 The new waste management provider Acumen delivered the new skips to the Housing Centre on the morning of the 1<sup>st</sup> April, with the old ones being removed the day before.
- 3.8 Equipment was distributed to staff throughout the week, which included laptops and mobile phones. This was completed over an extended period of time to facilitate social distancing, and has enabled staff to work from home where possible.
- 3.9 The interfaces with the out of hours call centre were tested successfully during the day on the 1<sup>st</sup> April, with further tests carried out after 5pm to ensure calls were being picked up by the out of hours call centre.
- 3.10 Due to Covid-19, the service is currently only carrying out emergency repairs to our council housing, health and safety maintenance checks, and repairs to empty properties. On the 1<sup>st</sup> April, the repairs call centre received 170 calls, with 32 emergency jobs completed by the Responsive Repairs team. Prior to Covid-19, on a typical day the call centre would receive approximately 500 calls.
- 3.11 Since the go-live week, the Repairs & Maintenance service has continued to run well in a challenging environment. Daily calls between the service managers and members of the programme team and Housing Leadership Team are ongoing to enable any teething issues to be raised and resolved quickly, and to help embed the new service into the council.
- 3.12 Due to Covid-19, some areas of the programme had to either be delivered differently or put on pause. This includes parts of the induction and training for transferring staff, vehicle checks, distribution of equipment, and the mapping of

new processes. The impact of Covid-19 was captured on an impact assessment and work which has been paused will be picked up at the appropriate time.

#### **4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 4.1 This report updates Committee on the progress of the programme and therefore alternative options are not required.

#### **5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 The resident 'task and finish' group which has worked with the programme team over the last year were unable to meet in March due to the social distancing measures. Updates on the programme are being sent to the group via email and post. Further meetings with the task and finish group will be scheduled when possible.
- 5.2 Information on the new Repairs and Maintenance service was included in the March edition of the resident's magazine 'Homing In'. This included information on what is and is not changing with the service, pictures of the new vans and uniforms, and how to report a repair.
- 5.3 Further information was provided through updates on the Housing Service Twitter and Facebook accounts during the week of transfer as well as providing information on the service through the council website.

#### **6. CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 This report updates committee on the TUPE transfer of the Repairs and Maintenance service. 132 staff successfully transferred into the council on 1<sup>st</sup> April following an extensive consultation and engagement process.
- 6.2 The transfer was impacted by Covid-19, with elements of the programme having to either be adjusted or put on hold. The go-live week activities had to be scaled back to accommodate the new ways of working, but have not had a material impact on the service received by residents.

#### **7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

##### Financial Implications:

- 7.1 The HRA budget for 2020/21 includes a one year programme management budget of £0.392m for the continuation of this significant change programme. It is also estimated that £0.420m will remain in the set up and mobilisation reserve for use in 2020/21. The final position will be known later this month.
- 7.2 The HRA budget for 2020/21, approved at Budget Council on 27 February include a budget of £9.725m for revenue repairs and maintenance as shown below:

<b><u>2020/21 Revenue Budget</u></b>	<b>£</b>
Direct Employee Costs	4,860,000
Premises - Subcontractor supply chain	2,140,000
Supplies & Services – Materials, Works Management system, Office costs	1,495,000
Transport - Vehicle costs (Lease costs, fuel, insurance, repairs etc.)	850,000
Support Service Charges - Overheads	380,000
	<b>9,725,000</b>

This budget includes the following services:

- Responsive repairs
- Estate Development Budget (EDB)
- Call Centre
- Concessionary Decorating
- Concessionary Gardening
- Electrical Test & Report
- Infestations (Pest Control)
- Mutual Exchange Surveys
- Asbestos Surveys
- Fire Safety

*Finance Officer Consulted: Monica Brooks*

*Date: 09/04/2020*

**Legal Implications:**

- 7.3 There are no direct legal implications arising out of this report which is for noting. Legal implications with respect to the transfer of the repairs and maintenance service in house have been provided in previous reports to committee.

*Lawyer Consulted: Isabella Sidoli*

*Date: 09/04/2020*

**Equalities Implications:**

- 7.4 There are no direct equalities implications arising from this update report.

**Sustainability Implications:**

- 7.5 There are no direct sustainability implications arising from this update report.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

### **Appendices:**

None

### **Background Documents**

None

