

HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE SUB- COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 28

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Annual Review of Repairs Partnership 2012/13		
Date of Meeting:	Housing Management Consultative Sub-Committee 29th October 2013		
Report of:	Executive Director, Environment, Development and Housing		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Glyn Huelin	Tel: 29-3306
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 This document provides an update on progress with the Repairs & Improvement Partnership with Mears in the financial year 2012/13, this is the third year of the partnership. The partnership is scheduled to run until March 2020 and delivers responsive repairs, empty property refurbishments, planned works and major refurbishment projects across the city.
- 1.2 The report is set out in sections focusing on specific areas of the partnership; each section closes with recommendations for improvement which have been identified through working with the resident representatives that monitor and manage the partnership. Actions are collated in the plan accompanying this report; progress against this action plan will be monitored by residents, officers and Mears through the Core Group which manages the partnership.
- 1.3 The report also includes a short section detailing the status of other service contracts managed by the Property & Investment Team.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

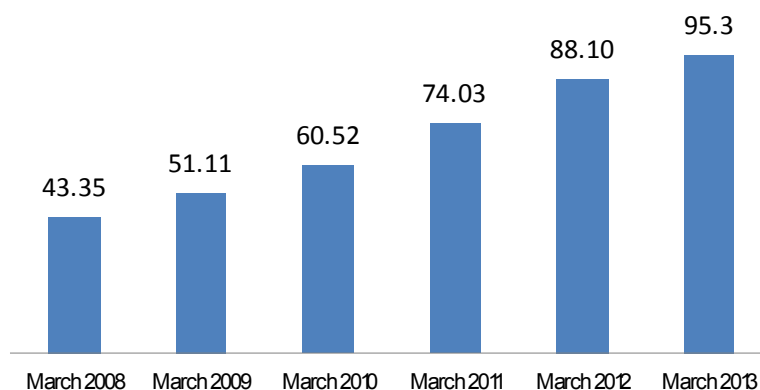
- 2.1 That sub-committee members note the report.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Progress towards achieving decent homes
The council has continued to make excellent progress in improving residents homes and bringing properties up to the government's Decent Homes Standard. At the end of March 2013 95.3% (11,347) of the council's housing stock (11,903) met the government's Decent Homes Standard compared to 88.1% at the end of March 2012. In 2012/13 a total of 948 new kitchens and bathrooms were fitted as well as 1,474 new doors, 937 new boilers and 484 properties were rewired.

- 3.2 The council remains on target to achieve 100% decency by the end of December 2013.
- 3.3 The improvement in decency is illustrated in the graph below. For illustrative purposes the progress against the Decent Homes' Standard has been demonstrated since the contract commenced in April 2010 as well as the previous three years.

% of homes that meet decent homes standard



- 3.4 The following improvement opportunities have been identified:
- Simplify the Brighton & Hove standard for improvement works so it is easier to understand and transparent for residents
 - Investigate how the standard measures properties where residents have invested in replacing elements themselves
 - Review quality assurance processes across the partnership to ensure they meet the relevant standards

3.5 Major projects within the city

Delivering Major projects has been a key focus since the partnership began. There is a clear need to progress these works effectively and also to ensure that the best value for money is achieved for the council and residents.

- 3.6 A number of large projects were completed and commenced during 2012/13 with several scheduled to commence this financial year. These are detailed in the table below:

Projects completed	
St. James House – Phase 1	Car Park concrete repairs and new boiler house
Walter May House	Boiler replacement and installation of solar panels
Bristol Estate Phase 1	Concrete repairs, External Wall Insulation, roofing works and windows to seven blocks
St James House – Phase 2	Roofing, window repairs, concrete repairs, decorations, cladding and

	insulation.
Nettleton Court & Dudeney Lodge	Boiler replacement, tanks and water pumps, windows, concrete repairs and roof repairs.
Projects in progress	
North Whitehawk High Rise Blocks	Window replacements, balconies, roofing, concrete repairs and external decorations (Kingfisher Court only). Due for completion in November.
Hereford Court	Concrete repairs, External Wall Insulation, roofing works, windows and disabled access improvements. Due for completion in November.
Jubilee Court and Lindfield Court	Boiler House and heating renewal
Tyson Place	Roofing works
Projects to be commenced in 2013/14	
Essex Place	Concrete repairs, External Wall Insulation, roofing works, balcony enclosures and windows
Bristol Estate - Phase 2	Concrete repairs, External Wall Insulation, roofing works, balcony works and windows to five blocks

- 3.7 The Partnership has also recognised that engaging with tenants and leaseholders is an essential part of delivering major projects successfully and now operate to a process with a higher level of stakeholder involvement than previously undertaken. This includes providing briefings to ward councillors and meeting with leaseholders to discuss works during the consultation period.
- 3.8 Residents have given good feedback around pilot schemes and find this a good way of building understanding of what works are involved in a project. The partnership will be looking at ways to use pilots further. Residents also felt that the newsletters used by the partnership on projects were a good way of keeping them informed about progress with works.
- 3.8 The following improvement opportunities have been identified:
- Improved communication with ward councillors throughout Major projects
 - Liaise with residents at every stage of project planning – including in the development of the feasibility study
 - Look at further opportunities to use pilot properties for major works projects
 - Survey residents at the end of projects to see how satisfied they were with works and where improvements can be made
 - Look at a formal closedown meeting for residents at the end of works especially in sheltered schemes
- 3.9 Performance and complaints
Contract performance is reported regularly to a number of groups such as Core Group and the Partnership Group where council officers, residents and Mears staff review performance in detail on a monthly basis. In addition a range of performance measures are reported to Housing Management Consultative Sub Committee as part of the quarterly performance report.

3.10 The table below details the contractual key performance indicators that are used to review performance to Housing Management Consultative Sub-Committee on a quarterly basis:

Carrying out repairs to your home				
Performance Indicator	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	Target 2013/14
Emergency repairs completed in time	98.38% (6,686 / 6,796)	99.13% (6,240 / 6,295)	99.57% (8,281 / 8,317)	99%
Urgent repairs completed in time	95.98% (9,195 / 9,580)	96.94% (6,551 / 6,758)	99.36% (618 / 622)	98%
Routine repairs completed in time	98.37% (19,711 / 20,037)	99.35% (28,015 / 28,199)	99.78% (33,799 / 33,873)	98%
Average time to complete routine repairs	11 days	8 days	9 days	15 days
Percentage of appointments kept	95.42% (26,334 / 27,597)	90.24% (35,608 / 39,460)	94.56% (27,434 / 29,013)	95%
Tenant satisfaction with repairs	95.26% (5,562 / 5,839)	97.14% (6,242 / 6,426)	97.03% (7,493 / 7,722)	95%
Percentage of responsive repairs passing post-inspection	98.15% (689 / 702)	96.18% (3,702 / 3,849)	95.44% (4,728 / 4,954)	95%
Percentage of repairs completed right first time	97.08% (32,881 / 33,870)	97.98% (40,536 / 41,373)	98.09% (45,717 / 46,607)	97%
Cancelled repair jobs	n/a	n/a	11.04%	n/a
Home improvements				
Performance Indicator	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	Target 2013/14
Percentage of homes that are decent	74.0%	88.1%	95.3%	100%
Energy efficiency rating of homes (SAP 2009)	n/a	61.0	62.5	63.1
Percentage of planned works passing post-inspection	n/a	98.40% (2,091 / 2,125)	99.37% (2,221 / 2,235)	97%
Empty Homes				
Performance Indicator	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	Target 2013/14
Percentage of empty properties passing post-inspection	99.24% (654 / 659)	98.23% (609 / 620)	98.99% (591 / 597)	98%

3.11 The drop in the number of urgent orders in 2012/13 reflects the phasing out of this priority, with statutory right to repairs now all being classified as emergency repairs. Those repairs that do not require a priority response are classified as routine and an appointment is agreed with the resident.

3.12 There was an overall increase in the number of repairs completed from the first to the second year of the contract reflecting the mobilisation of the service in April

2010 and changes in the service as it bedded in. There have also been changes to the appointments systems over the contract years which have led to fluctuations in the numerical data seen here. Appointments performance was an area where targets were missed in 2012/13 and weekly monitoring is now in place to ensure that improvements are delivered.

- 3.13 Subsequent to the performance reported here a number of changes are being made to the data reports that produce this performance information. These mainly relate to additional internal works orders which have been included in the right first time measure. Corrected reports are expected to be in place for the reporting of quarter two 2013/14 data.
- 3.14 Complaints, compliments and customer feedback are also reported each month. There has been a good reduction in the number of complaints received in the last financial year with the number of complaints dropping by a third from 328 in 2011/12 to 212 in 2012/13. Unfortunately the time taken to respond has increased and this is, in part, due to the fact that supervisors have taken more responsibility for replying to complaints. An action to improve this was agreed with Mears and performance was back within target (10 days) by June 2013.

Period	No. of Complaints	Average Time to respond
2011/12		
Q1	82	9 Working Days
Q2	81	9 Working Days
Q3	78	9 Working Days
Q4	87	9 Working Days
2012/13		
Q1	48	7 Working Days
Q2	57	10 Working Days
Q3	47	10 Working Days
Q4	60	13 Working Days

- 3.15 Improving the quality of customer service delivery is now the main focus of the partnership with the Core Group and residents identifying this as the key area to improve in 2013/14.
- 3.16 The following improvement opportunities have been identified:
- Establish a “Customer Service Board” to ensure that the partnership delivers excellent customer service at every opportunity
 - A quality log will be introduced to identify and track technical issues across the partnership
 - A process review will be undertaken for responsive repairs to eliminate duplicate and lost jobs that lead to a negative customer experience
- 3.17 Repairs Helpdesk
The delivery of excellent customer service through the Repairs Helpdesk has been a challenging area for the partnership. Improving this has been the main focus of the senior management team at Mears through 2013. Monitoring data has given a clear indication of peak times throughout the week and the team has been restructured to ensure that call answering times meet expectations.

- 3.18 The team is also been changed to have specific call takers who do not undertake other repairs tasks such as scheduling and liaising with operatives, this means they will be focused only on dealing efficiently with customer enquiries, ordering repairs, making and rearranging appointments and signposting to other services.
- 3.19 A new supervisory and management structure is also being put in place for the Repairs Helpdesk as well as customer service and communications. This will ensure that there is better and more consistent scripting when handing calls, eliminating duplicate jobs and using monitoring tools to ensure that good customer service is always being delivered by the team.
- 3.20 The following improvement opportunities have been identified:
- Revise call monitoring at Partnership Group, including number of calls and call answer times and longest wait time per day
 - Agree targets for waiting times and consider inclusion of this in contract performance indicator report
 - Ensure there is more consistent scripting when handling calls, ensuring that duplicate jobs are eliminated and good customer service is always being delivered
 - Review the scripting for repairs reported to communal areas
 - Text ahead - when routine repairs are generated the system will automatically send out a text reminder to the tenant a day before their appointment
 - Amend texts sent to residents to include the local rate Repairs Desk number
 - Promote Text Ahead in a future edition of Homing In
 - Look at accessibility of staff by telephone in other areas of the branch
- 3.21 Value for money and efficiency
The repairs and maintenance budget is £10.2 million in total. Money is invested into three main areas
- Responsive repairs – £6.1 million (funds Mears repairs and two gas contracts)
 - Empty properties - £1.4 million
 - Servicing and other repairs - £2.7 million (funds non-Mears service contracts)
- 3.22 Financial results are monitored on a monthly basis by a dedicated finance team and the Partnership Group. The partnership has delivered year on year savings over the first three years of the contract including a reduction of £300,000 in responsive repairs over 2012/13. The average cost of a responsive repair has fallen from £99.02 in 2011/12 to £87.33 in 2012/13. The average cost of an empty property refurbishment has fallen from £2,121 in 2011/12 to £1,897 in 2012/13.
- 3.23 Benchmarking carried out by the partnership has indicated some areas where further work is needed which are detailed in the improvement opportunities below.
- 3.24 The following improvement opportunities have been identified:
- Look at the pricing framework for the partnership and investigate opportunities to develop price per property models
 - Measure tenant satisfaction with empty properties after moving in

- Review use of subcontractors and whether the partnership can support greater delivery through directly employed operatives

3.25 Increasing employment and work opportunities

Part of the Partnership's strategy is to deliver significant work and apprentice opportunities to the city. The table below shows how many apprentice and development places have been allocated since the partnership began. Mears recruited a further 15 apprentices in August 2013:

Year	Apprentices
2010/11	15
2011/12	21
2012/13	14
Total	50

3.26 These apprentices are across a range of areas and include; plumbing, carpentry, electrical and multi-trade as well as painting and decorating, surveying and administration. Further events are being held to encourage people to join as administrative apprentices and to work with supply chain partners to provide work opportunities to local people.

3.27 Mears have signed up with Job Centre Plus to do work trials. This will involve having placements in the offices, stores and trades with the view to finding suitable candidates to signpost into apprenticeships as well as providing some valuable work experience.

3.28 The following improvement opportunities have been identified:

- Increase targeting of apprentices from areas of multiple deprivation to maximise opportunities for these families
- Review local labour plan for the partnership to give a greater focus on the ways the partnership can benefit the community

3.29 Resident involvement

The Partnership is committed to resident involvement and there are a range of meetings that support this alongside other ways for residents to highlight enquiries and influence the service. The Core and Partnership groups which manage the partnership have resident representation; this was previously through the Repairs & Maintenance Monitoring Group and the Asset Management Panel. From 2013 residents who sit on the Home Service Improvement Group will have the opportunity to sit on the Core and Partnership groups.

3.30 Mears are committed to attending each Area Panel meeting and HMCSC to respond to residents enquiries. In addition the partnership welcomes input from all residents and has a clear process for helping escalate issues as well as operating a Resident Action Plan. This is monitored by residents on the Home Group to ensure requests and issues raised by tenants and leaseholders are acted upon and resolved.

3.31 The Estate Development Budget (EDB), a ring-fenced community led budget, is operated by Mears on a profit-free basis and is now managed by a group of four

resident representatives with regular reporting from Mears and council officers. This group of residents decide on “quick bids” for projects under £500.

3.32 The “Our Neighbourhood” project in Whitehawk has piloted resident led monitoring where residents collect data on customer satisfaction with our repairs service. Resident led monitoring will now be rolled out across the partnership to provide an independent measure around the quality of services and an opportunity to develop resident’s skills around communication, using computers and working with data.

3.33 Additional tenants were also recruited as Resident Assessors during 2012/13. Their role is to evaluate the condition of empty properties which have been repaired before they are let to tenants. Feedback from residents has been that this is a good opportunity but is not being used as effectively as it could be. The partnership is going to review this programme to ensure it is useful for residents and also helps improve the quality of the repairs service.

3.34 The following improvement opportunities have been identified:

- Ensure earlier involvement of residents to enable the Annual Review to be taken at earlier HMCSC and Area Panel meetings.
- Roll out the “Our Neighbourhood” model of collecting resident satisfaction information across the city
- Review the resident assessor programme to ensure it is fit for purpose and benefits residents that invest time in the programme
- Improve the use of social media as a tool for promoting the partnership and getting feedback from residents
- Work with the Home Group to monitor and manage the Repairs & Improvement Partnership

3.35 Sustainability

The council’s major works programme improves the condition and efficiency of properties across the city. The programme includes works to replace windows, roofs, communal heating systems and install external wall insulation which is designed to prolong the life of buildings and to improve thermal efficiency. These works are also targeted to reduce the heating costs for residents in their homes.

3.36 Mears have installed vehicle trackers to their van fleet as a carbon reduction measure. This will enable Mears to ensure that the vans are only used for valid business usage as well as checking that the vehicles are driven in a cost-efficient manner and operatives work is scheduled to minimise travel time across the city.

3.37 Mears are also utilising their “Mears Energy” subsidiary to ensure that funding opportunities are investigated and realised wherever possible. This is offset against projects such as communal boiler installation and cladding to reduce project costs for residents.

3.38 Construction is on-going on the UK’s first house made almost entirely of thrown-away waste material. The “Waste House” project is led by Mears and the University of Brighton. The aim is to show how low-carbon homes can be built cheaply and quickly using waste including surplus material from building sites – the construction industry discards 20 per cent of everything it uses. More than 3,000 people, among them students, apprentices, local builders and school

children are involved in building the house, with the ambition to train students and apprentices around emerging sustainable industries. The project will demonstrate the process of building and once complete the house will be one of the first A* energy-efficient rated buildings in the UK.

- 3.39 The following improvement opportunities have been identified:
- Increasing awareness of energy efficiency through behaviour change is a major factor in continuing improvements
 - Energy efficiency needs to be part of the culture and a factor in all repair and improvement works we take forward
 - Include article in Homing In that communicates the benefit of cladding and data around potential energy savings for residents

3.40 Other service contracts

As well as the Repairs & Improvements contract discussed above, the Property and Investment Team also manage the following contracts:

Contract	Contractor	Description
Gas	PH Jones and Mears	Gas Installation, maintenance and servicing.
Lifts	Liftec	Lift Installation, maintenance and servicing.
Aerials	SCCI	Installation and maintenance of communal aerial systems.
Legionella	Hertel	Service and maintenance of water systems.

- 3.41 The Property and Investment Team also manage low voltage contracts such as Door Entry, Fire Alarms, ventilation and warden call. We are currently in the process of procuring new contracts for this work.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 This report sets out a review of the partnership and is for noting by sub-committee members. As such alternative options are not appropriate.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 As detailed in this report resident representatives sit on the Core and Partnership Groups which manage the partnership between Mears, the council and residents. These residents have inputted into the content of this report and a draft version of the report has been agreed by the partnership Core Group. The Annual Review was taken through Area Panels in August 2013 where residents across the city made a number of observations and recommendations that have been included in the report and action plan.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 This report sets out progress in the delivery of the ten year Repairs & Improvement Partnership with Mears and is for noting.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

7.1 Financial Implications:

There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report as this report is for noting. Value for Money and efficiency information is provided in paragraphs 3.18 to 3.21. Financial monitoring of the Repairs Revenue and Capital programme budgets are included in the council's Targeted Budget Management reports to the Policy & Resources Committee.

Finance Officer Consulted: Susie Allen

Date: 08/10/13

7.2 Legal Implications:

The long (724 pages) contract with Mears includes provisions relating to the delivery of high quality, value for money services; an open and honest approach to the joint resolution of problems and a commitment to continuous improvement and innovation. This report sets out how those provisions have been addressed.

Lawyer Consulted:

Liz Woodley

Date: 15/10/13

7.3 Equalities Implications:

Equality Impact Assessments are carried out on relevant projects undertaken by the Repairs & Improvement Partnership. This includes major works projects and discretionary work as well as the Estate Development Budget.

7.4 Sustainability Implications:

Implications are detailed within the main body of the report (see 3.32).

7.5 Any Other Significant Implications

None envisaged.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Action plan for improvements detailed in report

Documents in Members' Rooms

None

Background Documents

None