

7 January 2015

Housing & Health Committee

Performance Report

Report of: *Helen Gregory, Acting Head of Housing Services*

Wards Affected: *All*

This report is: *Public*

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 In addition to the standard performance information this report recommends the implementation of a modernisation programme of the Housing department over the next 12 months. The modernisation programme – Getting our house in order - will be extensive and involve an improvement plan for each service area (excluding Sheltered Housing). Staff will be attending workshops in December 2014 to discuss the programme. Regular updates will be provided in future Committee meetings.
- 1.2 The report also updates Committee on the final stage of the Repairs review to review the Office/client side of the Repairs team and provide a permanent solution for the Property Manager role. It is proposed to recruit a Property Manager on a 12 month fixed contract; while we complete the modernisation programme. To mitigate the interim risk an internal 6 /12 fixed term, Team Leader secondment is recommended. This will be funded from savings elsewhere in the Property team structure.
- 1.3 Officers are researching opportunities for shared services with other local authorities. As part of this Thurrock Council will be providing assistance with the Repairs, leasehold and caretaker services review.
- 1.4 The performance update is supplemented with information on Complaints as requested by Cllr Ross Carter.

2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to monitor the performance information submitted within the report.**
- 2.2 The Committee is requested to note the implementation of the housing modernisation programme and the future direction of travel. That the committee approves the deletion of a vacant surveyor post.**
- 2.3 The Committee approves the commissioning of Thurrock Council to assist with reviews of Repairs, leasehold management and caretaking.**
- 2.4 That Committee grants approval to increase the responsibilities in an existing Property team role to create a Secondment (6/12 month) opportunity for a Team Leader post for internal recruitment.**
- 2.5 That the Committee notes the impact of recommendations 2.4 & 2.5 is a saving on the HRA of £12,500 p.a.**
- 2.6 That the Committee approves officers to explore possible opportunities with other neighbouring local authorities to work to develop its Property team and achieve a cost effective service delivery.**

3. Introduction and Background

- 3.1 The Housing department has prioritised performance improvement since July 2014; notably with the introduction of the KPI workshops held with Staff and Managers. This is beginning to produce improvements in performance. However there are a number of key areas that require a complete review including:**

- identifying skill gaps in staff knowledge and responsibilities
- developing /streamlining process and updating policies and procedures, Service Standards
- ensuring compliance with the national regulatory standards and best practice.

Within the Housing team there is evidence of lack of a performance culture, under utilised IT systems causing over reliance on manual systems; outdated staff knowledge base which has contributed to poor customer service.

- 3.2 The KPI workshops are working well with front line staff being encouraged to share ideas for improvement and enhancing communication with colleagues within the department. However, it is evident that some of the issues are endemic and will not be resolved by KPI workshops alone. Therefore, due to the scale and nature of the improvements required, a complete modernisation programme needs to be implemented to improve culture, performance and customer service in the Housing department over the next 12 months.
- 3.3 We now also need to complete the final review of the Repairs service. Following the successful outsourcing of the comprehensive maintenance contracts in June 2014, the size and structure of the Housing Property team needs to be downsized to fit the reduced workload; to meet the requirements of the new service.
- 3.4 The Property Manager role has been covered by a consultant as an interim manager to bed in the new contracts, to assist the team to adapt to the new method of working and new performance management requirements.
- 3.5 The use of a consultant has provided necessary experience and guidance to take the service forward, but the additional cost is unsustainable in the medium term. The proposals are set out in Section 4.8 – 4.12.

4. Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

Performance information

- 4.1 The table below outlines performance information up to 8 December 2014; we are currently in mid cycle of Q3. Members should note the information is likely to change at the end of Q 3 (31 December 2014) and will be reported to March 2015 Committee.

Key Performance Indicator	Quarter Target	Q1	Q2	Q3 (up to 8 Dec 2014)	Commentary
Average re let times for LA Housing	23 days	32.67 days	28 days	25.45 days	This KPI continues to improve as a direct result of the KPI workshop.
% rent Collection (annual target)	99.70%	98.42%	98.39 %	100.29 %	Following a meeting with House mark; we have been advised that the formula used to calculate this KPI is incorrect – we are pleased to report the new formula used has achieved top quartile performance.
% rent arrears of current tenants as a proportion of the rent roll	1.95%	1.63%	1.65%	1.69%	This KPI continues to achieve top quartile performance.
No. of households living in temporary accommodation	29	45	42	49	This KPI has increased and continues to be a challenge to manage; with the continued demands of preventing homelessness.

4.2 We are pleased to report performance generally continues to improve; Staff have been working hard in the KPI workshops and improved focus on performance.

The performance on the additional KPIs is as follows:

Key Performance Indicator	Quarter Target		Q2	Nov 14
Customer Satisfaction	95%	Wates	92%	97%
		Oakray	97%	96%
Urgent Repairs completed on (3 day) target	99%	Wates	84.35%	95.8%
		Oakray	94.7%	95.8%
Appointments kept	100%	Wates	98%	98.6%
		Oakray	98%	98.6%
Gas Servicing	100%	Oakray	99.5%	99.6%

4.3 Performance generally is continuing to improve. The exception is Oakray's customer satisfaction. This is partly because there have been more system failures in November and a few residents have been unhappy that the new system cannot be fitted within two days. The typical turn around is five working days. This is to verify the need to replace the system rather than repair and to measure for, supply and fit the new system.

Gas servicing is still under 100% at 99.6%. We are about to seek magistrate intervention on four homes where access has been continually denied.

Complaints Performance information

4.4 The table below outlines the number of complaints received during Q1 and Q2 and a brief commentary on the type of complaint.

QUARTER 1				
Stage	No	Service Area	Type of Complaint	Outcome
STAGE 1	4	Temporary Accommodation	Temporary Accommodation Storage	Not Upheld
		Estate Management	Garage cleared in error	Upheld
		Sheltered Housing/Repairs	Emergency access and redecoration	Partially Upheld
		Estate Management	Service failures following fire	Upheld

Stage	No	Service Area	Type of Complaint	Outcome
STAGE 2	2	Sheltered Housing/Repairs	Emergency access and redecoration	Not Upheld
		Estate Management	Service failures following fire	Upheld

Stage	No	Service Area	Type of Complaint	Outcome
STAGE 3	2	Sheltered Housing/Repairs	Emergency access and redecoration	Not Upheld
		Estate Management	Service failures following fire	Upheld

QUARTER 2				
Stage	No	Service Area	Type of Complaint	Outcome
STAGE 1	2	Estate Management	Rent Payment Missing	Upheld
		Allocations	Staff attitude and poor customer service	Partially Upheld

Stage	No	Service Area	Type of Complaint	Outcome
STAGE 2	0			

Stage	No	Service Area	Type of Complaint	Outcome
STAGE 3	0			

4.5 The number of stage one complaints received during Quarter 2 has reduced by 50%. All complaints received during Quarter 2 have been resolved at stage 1. This is an improvement compared to Quarter 1; in Quarter 1 we received two stage 2 complaints and 2 stage 3 complaints. There has been a focus in the housing team to prioritize complaints; importantly learning lessons from complaints to help to improve service delivery. .

4.6 **Getting Our House in Order – Modernisation programme**

There have been significant service improvements over the last six months; however these reviews have been piecemeal and reactive to poor performing KPI's rather than a holistic approach which will set priorities, increase productivity, identify skills gaps to direct training, improve communication and motivation and ultimately develop a performance management culture. The service reviews will take place over the next twelve months and will result in a reshaping of the management and team structures.

4.7 The modernisation programme will include the following areas Repairs, Income management, Leasehold management, Service Charges, Care taking Homelessness and Housing Advice. All of the reviews will have a focus in providing excellent customer service. If Members are interested in further information on the programme the Acting HoS will arrange a meeting for members.

4.8 Because the scope of the programme is extensive; it is recommended to appoint Thurrock Council, on a consultancy basis, to assist with reviews of leaseholder and caretaker services at a cost of £5,000 per month. It is considered the arrangement with Thurrock will provide better value than seeking external consultancy services.

Repairs review

4.9 The Head of Housing and the Interim Property Manager have reviewed the demands of strategic and operational delivery. It is clear that the current establishment can now be reduced as the contract has been in operation for 6 months. Contract monitoring arrangements, have been working well; performance KPI's are achieving above or close to target and customer feedback has been positive so far.

- 4.10 The interim Property Manager is due to leave at the end of January 2015. Recruitment to role is essential as quickly as possible, to minimise the risk of service failure within the team. There is capacity within the team and officers are reviewing the team balance as part of the recruitment to the role. Part of this review includes considering shared services with other local authorities. The current consultant will be retained part time while recruitment takes place.
- 4.11 As an interim measure, it is proposed to create a team leader post from within the current surveying team. This responsibility will be additional to one of the current Surveyor / Technician roles and will result in an increase in the salary of up to £10,000 p.a. depending which officer is offered the role following interview. This post will be for a six month period to assist with day to day operational decision making in the absence of the Property Manager and while the new recruit settles in.
- 4.12 There is some capacity within the team which is likely to increase as the current maintenance contracts mature and performance management is imbedded. The Housing modernisation programme will be considering how best to shape the future Property team to provide an efficient and effective service alongside the other services within Housing.
- 4.13 It is proposed to immediately delete one surveyor post that is currently unfilled generating a saving of £37,500. The savings for the post deletion will be offset by the extra cost of the Team Leader. This will generate an overall saving of £27,500 p.a.

5. Reasons for Recommendation

- 5.1 To keep members informed of the key performance levels within the Housing service to enable Members to monitor our performance.
- 5.2 The service improvements proposed in the 'Getting our house in order initiative' will improve service and value for money for residents and stakeholders.
- 5.3 The future shape of the Property Service team needs to align with current service demands and officers are reviewing both the service and staffing levels to ensure they align with current needs. This will be part of the Getting our house in order initiative.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 Workshops are being planned to inform all housing Staff of the Modernisation programme; and the changes proposed in the final stage of the Repairs review on the 17 December 2014.
- 6.2 Formal consultation will take place with Repairs staff that are directly impacted by re-structure of the Repairs team. We will consult with Midland HR for legal advice on the correct consultation required with Staff and Trade Unions to ensure we are compliant with good practice.
- 6.3 Regular feedback on Performance information is provided at Residents' Talkback meetings to enable Residents to scrutinise our performance. In addition performance is published in the Annual Report to all Residents.

7. References to Corporate Plan

Improving service delivery will meet the Council's commitment to service improvements and will also enhance the efficiency of the service. Increasing the number of headline PIs regularly published and analysed will improve the openness of governance.

8. Financial Implications

Name & Title: Jo-Anne Ireland, Acting Chief Executive.

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- 8.1 There is an immediate need to reduce the cost of the consultant interim manager and to redefine the strategic management of the housing maintenance service. The short term appointment of a Team Leader at a cost of up to £10,000 will provide day to day operational decision making.
- 8.2 A saving of £37,500 will be achieved by the deletion of a vacant surveyor post.
- 8.3 These two changes to the structure provide an overall benefit of £27,500 p.a.
- 8.4 It is anticipated that the consultancy work that Thurrock Council will be undertaking on leaseholder and caretaker services will cost £15,000. This cost will be met from savings in the HRA.
- 8.5 The overall impact of these recommendations on the HRA is :

Item	Impact £
Deletion 1 x Surveyor	- 37,500
Team Leader allowance	+ 10,000
Thurrock Council consultancy fee	+ 15,000
Net saving	-12,500

Financial Implications

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8.6 None at this stage.

9. Background Papers

None.

10. Appendices to this report

None .

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