

## **Background to the Service and Impact of COVID Pandemic**

### **1. Background**

- 1.1 A Motion was submitted by Councillor Paul Zukowskyj and seconded by Councillor Siobhan Elam to Council on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2020 as follows;

*“This council is concerned by the number of complaints received by members, about the level of maintenance of the council's housing stock.*

*As this council's most valuable asset, not to mention the welfare of the residents who call them home, the level and nature of the complaints raises serious concerns.*

*This council therefore asks the executive member, in consultation with officers, to bring forward proposals to council to firstly identify areas of concern, and then to address them.”*

- 1.2 Accordingly, preliminary arrangements were made to convene a “*task and finish*” group to review the responsive repairs element of the service.
- 1.3 The impact of COVID and Purdah (local elections were scheduled to be held on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2020) meant the full review could not be carried out as originally intended.
- 1.4 However, updates on individual complaints have been provided to Councillors on a one to one basis.
- 1.5 At the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2020 it was agreed by members that a review would now be carried out.

### **2. Scope of Report**

- 2.1 At a Microsoft Teams meeting on 10th September 2020 attended by Councillors Wrenn, Elam and L Chesterman, together with Simone Russell (Corporate Director), Peter Gray (Head of Property Services (Housing) and Alison Marston (Governance Services Manager) the terms of reference and scope of the scrutiny was discussed.
- 2.2 It was agreed that the aim of the report would be to provide detailed information about the Responsive Repairs Service, identify any areas of

potential concern and provide an opportunity for OSC to make recommendations to address them.

- 2.3 It was noted at the scoping meeting that there had been a significant effect on service delivery since March 2020 due to COVID.
- 2.4 This report therefore additionally identifies which aspects of the Responsive Repairs Service were particularly affected by COVID and the measures taken to reduce the impact on service delivery.

### 3. Methodology

- 3.1 A range of research and analytical methods were used, together with the collation of data relating to the service. This data was used to establish trends and measure performance against targets.
- 3.2 An end to end “journey” of a responsive repair was carried out to help identify any blockages, inefficiencies or elements of good practise. Provided in Appendix B attached.
- 3.3 The contractual Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) have been developed as part of the contract with Mears Limited. As the council’s partnering contractor for the delivery of responsive repairs, Mears were also involved in the review.

The list of performance indicators are as follows:

No	Title
KPI 1	% of all responsive repairs completed within target
KPI 2	% of responsive repair jobs completed on time - Emergency
KPI 3	% of responsive repair jobs completed on time - Urgent
KPI 4	% of responsive repair jobs completed on time - Routine
KPI 5	Number of Working Days to Complete Response Repair (Routine)
KPI 6	% of repairs completed under CIH Repairs Charter definition of First Visit Fix (Efficiency-linked)
KPI 7	Appointments made as % of repairs raised
KPI 8	Appointments kept as % of appointments made
KPI 9	% overall tenant satisfaction with the responsive repairs service provided by the Partnership (Efficiency-linked)
KPI 10	% of Response Repair Recalls
KPI 11	% of Response Repair that Pass Post Inspection

KPI 12	% void works that pass post inspection (Efficiency-linked)
KPI 13	% Voids Completed within target time (Efficiency-linked)
KPI 14	Average number of Working Days to Complete Void Properties
KPI 15	% planned works that pass post inspection (Efficiency-linked)
KPI 16	% overall satisfaction Planned works (excl Cyclical Decs) provided by the Partnership
KPI 17	% Overall satisfaction Cyclical Decs provided by the Partnership - reported quarterly
KPI 18	% Waste Material Recycling (Efficiency-linked)
KPI 19	No. of Health and Safety Inspections (Efficiency-linked)

**3.4 In addition to quantitative research, several other areas are monitored. These areas include:**

- 1) Perception of the service by residents – picked up through customer feedback and complaints
- 2) Residents expectations (i.e. repairs policy, job priority) – picked up through customer feedback
- 3) Blockages and barriers – monitored on an ongoing basis, addressed with contractor through monitoring meetings
- 4) The contractor's view – picked up and discussed at operational and strategic monitoring meeting with contractors

*Members are invited to discuss this and request further information on the above points*

**4 Impact of COVID-19 on service delivery**

**4.1 Background**

4.2 On 23 March 2020, the Prime Minister announced new strict rules applicable to the UK. The instruction was to stay at home except for certain "very limited purposes", and to travel to and from work where this is "absolutely necessary" and the work in question cannot be done from home.

4.3 This had an immediate impact on service delivery with staff within the Property Services (Housing) team working from home. A small number of staff continued to work from the Hydeway office to oversee any emergency work and management of void properties.

- 4.4 During this period, following the guidance from the government and a decline in work stream numbers a number of staff (46/80 at the peak) were furloughed by Mears. The remaining staff conducted essential works and void works during the lockdown period.
- 4.5 Mears staff returned at different stages between June and September. This was as challenge as work levels started to increase and they had to monitor not only the daily increase but also the specific trades required to be unfurloughed to meet the demand of the category of works being raised. Suppliers and Contractors within the supply chain having furloughed staff and the reduction of exports/imports of certain materials due to Covid-19 restrictions during lockdown made obtaining certain materials such as plaster, paving slabs, glass and wood challenging nationally and in turn hampered completing certain repair works in the prescribed timescales for repairs. This continued severely until early August and continues to have a ripple effect.

## 5 Covid impact on repairs activity

- 5.1 Tenants were generally following government advice to stay at home and a (unknown) number of them were either shielding, ill or vulnerable. Urgent and Routine responsive repairs were unable to be attended to and emergencies were treated on a “make safe” basis only.
- 5.2 The Team has seen increased volumes of contact by tenants, during the period that they were required to stay at home. This reflects generally the increased appetite of people to carry out home improvements, as seems to have been a trend nationally. This is reflected in the repair telephone calls that were received as below.

Repairs phone calls received by customers, by month

March	4,416
April	2,976
May	1,265
June	3,916
July	4,520
August	5,301

During this period, on average the team were also receiving between 250-300 emails per day.

During the same period a total of 9683 responsive repairs works orders were raised, broken down as follows;

Responsive Repairs works orders raised, by month

March	1,612
April	931
May	1,065
June	1,605
July	2,181

August 2,289

- 5.3 The significant reduction in the number of repairs we were able to carry out during the pandemic, resulted in less satisfaction surveys being sent out. Therefore, customer satisfaction performance results during the past six months has been based on a far fewer number of surveys.

## 6 Impact of COVID on repairs performance

Our Key Performance Indicators are shared here with the year to date performance

No	Title	Score %	YTD
KPI 1	% of all responsive repairs completed within target	100%	6121 / 6121
KPI 2	% of responsive repair jobs completed on time - Emergency	100%	3480
KPI 3	% of responsive repair jobs completed on time - Urgent	100%	2956
KPI 4	% of responsive repair jobs completed on time - Routine	100%	3484
KPI 5	Number of Working Days to Complete Response Repair (Routine)		14.09 Average working days
KPI 6	% of repairs completed under CIH Repairs Charter definition of First Visit Fix (Efficiency-linked)	94.27%	6088 / 6458
KPI 7	Appointments made as % of repairs raised	98.97%	6343 / 6409

KPI 8	Appointments kept as % of appointments made	100%	9881
KPI 9	% overall tenant satisfaction with the responsive repairs service provided by the Partnership (Efficiency-linked)	85.47%	294 / 344
KPI 10	% of Response Repair Recalls	3.99%	290 / 7265
KPI 11	% of Response Repair that Pass Post Inspection	91.74%	855 / 932
KPI 12	% void works that pass post inspection (Efficiency-linked)	100%	164 / 164
KPI 13	% Voids Completed within target time (Efficiency-linked)	100%	116 / 116
KPI 14	Average number of Working Days to Complete Void Properties		11 Average working days
KPI 15	% planned works that pass post inspection (Efficiency-linked)	100%	88 / 88
KPI 16	% overall satisfaction Planned works (excl Cyclical Decs) provided by the Partnership	92.16%	47 / 51

KPI 17	% Overall satisfaction Cyclical Decs provided by the Partnership - reported quarterly	0	0
KPI 18	% Waste Material Recycling (Efficiency-linked)	92.48%	442.49 / 478.42
KPI 19	No. of Health and Safety Inspections (Efficiency-linked)	100%	330 Inspections

## 7 Measures taken to help improve the customer experience and reduce the impact of the COVID pandemic

- Regular contract monitoring through close joined up working with repairs contractors
- Regular liaison between council teams, including housing management, public health and protection, communications
- Creating a new customer liaison team, using deployed staff and existing establishment, to provide support and encourage tenants to allow access for essential repairs and gas servicing visits
- We introduced a script for our call centre team that highlighted the Covid-19 situation along with instigating a process to ensure that the safety of customers, inspectors and Mears operatives as a high priority. We have had positive feedback from our customers in the service that we have been providing during this period
- Supporting staff to promote wellbeing

## 8 Next steps for scrutiny

- 8.1 Members are invited to propose their ideas for which areas included in this report they wish to scrutinise.