



| <b>Welwyn Hatfield Tenants Panel Scrutiny Sub Group</b> |  |
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| <b>Review of the Repairs Call Centre</b>                |  |
| <b>Date to be presented to Tenants Panel</b>            | Wednesday 28 <sup>th</sup> March 2018  |
| <b>Date to be presented to Cabinet Housing Panel</b>    | Thursday 16 <sup>th</sup> April 2018   |
| <b>Group members involved in the review</b>             | Dave Goodson, Rose Read, Brian Rhodes, Betty Robbins, Jan Corson, Susan Schofield, Jannet Mutawe |
| <b>Supported by</b>                                     | Fiona Plumridge  |
| <b>Key Contributors</b>                                 | Peter Gray – Head of Asset Management<br>Kate Harvard-Davies – Call Centre Manager               |

### **Executive Summary**

This is the second review the Scrutiny Sub Group have undertaken. After recent training the group is keen to embed what they have learnt into their scrutiny process. With this in mind the group decided to choose a focussed service to review. Due to receiving anecdotal evidence from both tenants and leaseholders it was decided to undertake a review on the Repairs Call Centre

The Sub Group have undertaken a review of the service and have proposed a number of recommendations which they hope will lead to improvements that will benefit both tenants and call centre staff.

### **Recommendations**

1. That the Tenants Panel and Cabinet Housing Panel note and agree the report and recommendations
2. That an improvement plan to complete the recommendations is devised and monitored by the Commercial Manager
3. That the Scrutiny Sub Group receives an update on the actions against the improvement plan in six months.

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| <b>1.0</b> | <b>BACKGROUND</b>  |
| 1.1        | This report outlines the findings from the review of the Repairs Call Centre   |
| 1.2        | The Repairs Call Centre is the service that tenants and leaseholders use to report repairs that are required on their homes and communal areas. The service is available from 8.45am to 5.15pm Monday to Thursday and 8.45am to 4.45pm on Friday. Outside of these hours, emergency calls are taken in the Contact Centre  |
| 1.3        | Working in the call centre there are 4 full time and 5 part time staff. Through work shadowing the group recognise that they work in a very high pressured environment and have to cope with stressful situations  |
| 1.4        | Tenants and leaseholders can call in on either one of two numbers 01707 357800 or 0800 1114484, email in on <a href="mailto:housingmaintenance@welhat.gov.uk">housingmaintenance@welhat.gov.uk</a> or report online by logging in to See My Data. All emergency calls must be reported through the 0800 number.            |
| 1.5        | The Call Centre staff handle over 53,000 calls per year – approximately 3,500 per month. Of those calls, over 900 are non-repair enquiries – almost 25% of all calls   |
| 1.6        | Emergency repairs account for 28% of all responsive repairs  |
| 1.7        | The Call Centre staff raise in the region of 3,000 works orders each month   |
| <b>2.0</b> | <b>PURPOSE OF THE REVIEW</b>   |
| 2.1        | The Scrutiny Sub Group decided to look at the Repairs Call Centre due to anecdotal evidence from both tenants and leaseholders of the need to improve the service  |
| <b>3.0</b> | <b>METHODOLOGY</b>   |
| 3.1        | A range of methods were used to carry out this service review:<br><br><b>Documents reviewed:</b><br>Policies used to support call centre staff<br><br><b>Other methods:</b><br>Survey Monkey questionnaire sent out to 200 leaseholders<br>Presentation on the work of the call centre<br>Work shadowing Call Centre staff |

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| <b>4.0</b> | <b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>   |
| 4.1        | <p><b>Up to date policies to support Call Centre Staff</b></p> <p>The policies that call centre staff use to help them advise residents still had the Housing Trust logo on them. We recommend that all policies need to be updated and have the Housing Trust logo replaced with the WHBC one.</p>  |
| 4.2        | <p><b>Response to emails</b></p> <p>When a tenant emails in a repair, there is no automatic response to acknowledge their request. This means that some people then ring in to check if it's been received. In order to reduce the number of calls to the call centre we recommend that an automatic response is set up on the system.</p>   |
| 4.3        | <p><b>Keep tenants informed on the progress of call backs</b></p> <p>The group found that a number of calls were due to tenants or leaseholders ringing in to check when an operative would be coming back out to finish the job. The group recommend that where possible the operative should contact the Call Centre to arrange a new appointment whilst they are with the tenant. If this is not possible we recommend that the tenant is given a contact name for them to enable to check on the progress of the call back.</p>  |
| 4.4        | <p><b>Service information</b></p> <p>If there is an issue locally that affects the quality of the call centre service such as the phones going down or lack of power/water the call numbers increase and people get frustrated when they can't get through to an operator. The group recommends that research is undertaken to investigate how tenants could be informed of this in advance - it could be as simple as having a message on the telephones so people are aware as soon as they try to phone in.</p>   |
| 4.5        | <p><b>Tenant expectation of the Repairs service</b></p> <p>Whilst work shadowing, the group found that some tenants had unrealistic expectations of the repairs service, both in work undertaken and timescales. The group recommend that a small project is undertaken to explore ways of informing tenants about repairs that are the Council's responsibility and timescales they should expect the work to be done in and those that are the tenant's responsibility. This information would also need to clarify what constitutes an emergency repair. The Tenants Panel would be happy to work with the Repairs Service on this.</p> |