

REPORT FOR: Tenants', Leaseholders' and Residents' Consultative Forum

Date of Meeting: 31st October 2012

Subject: **INFORMATION REPORT – Head of Asset Management's Report**

Responsible Officer: Lynne Pennington
Divisional Director of Housing Services

Exempt: No

Enclosures: Appendix 1 – Asset Management Structure Chart

1 Section 1 – Summary

This report sets out a range of information items that the Interim Head of Asset Management would like to bring to the attention of the Tenants', Leaseholders' and Residents' Consultative Forum.

FOR INFORMATION

2 Section 2 – Report

Updates from previous discussions and new items for information

1. Progress with recruitment to the client side structure and our key priorities for the next 6 months.

- 1.1. Recruitment to the new Asset Management staffing structure is now almost complete. Two posts (Stock Condition Surveyor and Customer Experience Co-ordinator) remain vacant but appointments have been made, pending references and other clearances. Unfortunately it was not possible to appoint to the Empty Homes Co-ordinator post following an external advert. A decision was therefore taken in late September to make a temporary arrangement for approximately 4 months, and re-advertise after Christmas.
- 1.2. A structure chart to introduce the new team is included at Appendix 1. As has previously been reported some of the most positive things about the new structure is that it gives us the ability to both manage contracts more proactively, ensuring that tenants and leaseholder receive good quality, value for money services and progress a wide range of Health and Safety inspections. Details of progress on both of these are provided further on in the report.
- 1.3. Essentially the new staff structure consists of 3 teams. The first, managed by Andrew Champion is responsible for delivering the Capital programme and for planned and cyclical maintenance. The second team, managed by Kulwinder Singh-Rai is responsible for preparing future years investment in our homes and other assets, and undertaking Health and Safety inspections of all homes and other assets. The third team, led by Subhash Patel is responsible for responsive repairs, management of voids and the gas contract.
- 1.4. As this is my first report as Head of Asset Management I thought it would be useful to set out the priorities of the service over the next 6 months. As the restructure has almost been completed and the new contracts have now been operating for 3 months our key, and overwhelming priority is to ensure that we now deliver on the promises we have made to tenants and leaseholders through the Repairs Charter. This means:
 - delivering improved services that are good value for money
 - improved consultation with tenants and leaseholders about how we deliver services
 - establishing robust contract management arrangements and clear and accurate performance information that can be regularly reported.

- work more closely with Resident Services to ensure we present a more “joined up” approach to issues and concerns that cross both service areas
 - improve both communication, and partnership working with tenants and leaseholders
- 1.5 This means that future reports to TLRCF will be targeted to provide more detailed performance information on progress against these priorities.

2. Responsive Repairs and Voids Contracts

- 2.1. The new contracts went live on 1st July 2012. There have been some teething problems, as was only to be expected with new arrangements but most of these have been overcome by joint working between staff and contractors. One major teething problem that was unexpected was that the interfaces between the Council and contractors computer systems did not work. The effect of this problem has been to delay the receipt of both performance information and invoices, in some cases for 3 months. Whilst I am pleased to report that these problems have now been resolved and that information is now being received, this has caused a delay in our ability to report on performance as there is now a backlog of information to process.
- 2.2. Despite these delays early indications are that overall the new contractors are performing well and that both the predicted savings and improved customer satisfaction are likely to be achieved. At the time of writing this report the quarter 2 performance information has not been finalized and customer satisfaction surveys with responsive repairs have not started. However both pieces of work are being actively progressed. A detailed performance report will therefore be reported to the next TLRCF meeting.
- 2.3. Contractor appraisal panels for the East, West & Central contracts and the borough wide gas contract are being established. These panels will include the contract surveyors and 2 local stakeholders. They will look at performance, customer satisfaction, complaints etc. and meet bi monthly. The first meeting will concentrate on establishing ways of working together on monitoring each contract area. Arrangements to report the outcomes of each contractor panel to the Housing Senior Management Team and the Portfolio Holder are currently under discussion, but future reports to TLRCF will include feedback on the overall outcomes of the monitoring.
- 2.4. Our new contractors, Slade, Linbrooks and Quality Heating along with Asset Management staff took part in all the Summer events arranged by the Resident Involvement Team over the last 3 months. This was a great opportunity for them to get to meet some of our tenants and leaseholders in an informal setting and a

handy-man service for minor repairs was offered at many of the events.

3. 2012/13 Capital Programme

3.1. Good progress continues to be made with delivery of the £9 million capital programme for the current year. All the work carried forward from the 2011/12 programme is either currently on site, or had been completed. Several of the new projects for 2012 are either on site or will be very soon, others are at the design stage. However the current projection is that the majority of the programme will be delivered by the end of the financial year. The table below summarises the current position with larger elements of the programme. TLRCF are asked to consider how they would like progress with the programme reported in future. The options would be:

- Details of progress on major projects (as above)
- Details of the amount actually spent to date on the programme
- Both of the above

Element of Programme	Value	Status
Kitchens and Bathrooms (carried forward from 11/12)	2,029,000	On site-due for completion November
Kitchens and bathrooms 2012/13	950,000	Start on site November-Complete March 2013
Enveloping 12/13 Windows and Doors (Houses)	420,000	Start on site November-Complete January 2013
Heating Programme 12/13	430,000	In preparation
Variety of enveloping projects 12/13	662,612	Either complete or starting on site November or January
Enveloping-Francis road	1,200,000	On site
HRA Fencing Programme	100,000	At Design Stage
Digital TV 12/13 Virgin Sites	155,000	On site
Lifts 12/13	300,000	Business case prepared
Variety of Structural issues	505,000	All to be complete by March 2013
Lofts and Pathway	277,963	At Design Stage

4. Preparation for future years Capital Programmes

- 4.1 Work is also progressing well towards establishing future years capital programmes with staff working to validate information held from stock condition surveys and establish outlines for future programmes.
- 4.2 The target is to validate a 3 year outline programme which will be reported to TLRCF in February. This will enable the detailed programme for the next financial year to be published by the end of March each year, following consultation so that we will be able to start work on delivering the works in April each year-spreading the programme more effectively across the year. This will place us in a much stronger position to deliver the full programme every year.

5. Essential Improvements to assets that are not homes

- 5.1 The Capital programme is, quite rightly predominantly targeted to maintaining our homes. However there are also ideas generated where capital expenditure could help resolve a management problem, reduce spend on responsive repairs in communal areas, generate income and/or improve the areas surrounding homes.
- 5.2 We are working towards a longer term investment plan, linked to the Asset Management Strategy and the HRA business plan where we will identify and programme major works to homes several years in advance.
- 5.3 However as yet there is no forward plan in terms of capital works to assets owned in the HRA that are not homes. This includes community centres, garages & car parks, and communal areas in sheltered schemes. It could also apply to improvements to open spaces on housing estates.
- 5.4 Many of the ideas for improvements to assets that are not homes are generated in Resident Services through Estate Inspections, enquiries from Councillors or tenants and leaseholders or from work done in focus groups such as the Estates Services Steering Group. In one example the idea came from a tenant's letter published in Homing In. Currently there is no procedure for costing such proposals, evaluating their benefit to tenants and leaseholders and deciding whether they should be included on future capital programmes-and if so how urgent they are.
- 5.5 A procedure is therefore in preparation to address this need, and discussions taking place to determine how large a slice of future Capital budgets should be set aside for this purpose. Once completed, and agreed with the Portfolio Holder the procedure will be discussed with tenants and leaseholders at the appropriate groups, to design a system to ensure effective engagement in the decision making process.

6. Update on Health and Safety Programme

- 6.1 Members of TLRCF will recall that one of the commitments in the new Asset Management structure was to initiate a comprehensive inspection process to ensure we are meeting our obligations to tenants, leaseholders and users of our other assets such as Community Centres.
- 6.2 Work has started on this 12 month programme in August and we are prioritizing sheltered housing and communal areas in flats for Fire Risk Assessments. Works orders are being raised for any issues arising from the inspection, according to the urgency of the matter. The next stage will be to undertake inspections of our Community Centres. Plans are currently being made to begin the next stage of the programme which will be to undertake electrical testing in tenanted properties and legionella testing in all communal water tanks.

7. Repairs MOT's

- 7.1 Members of TLRCF may recall the proposal to undertake 100 Repairs MOT's each year in the properties with the highest number of repairs orders raised. These are targeted to reduce the overall cost of responsive repairs by managing the most expensive properties differently. These MOT's are the responsibility of the Voids Contract Surveyor.
- 7.2. Unfortunately our inability to recruit to the Empty Homes Co-ordinator means that the Voids Contract surveyor has effectively been covering two jobs since June, and combining this with the IT issues we have had with the contractors impacting on workloads, the start on these is delayed. However they are programmed to start in November with a target to complete 50 by March 2013. A further progress report will be made to a future TLRCF meeting.

Section 4 - Financial Implications

Any financial issues are contained within the body of the report.

Section 5 - Equalities Implications

There are no equalities implications associated with this report
No Equality Impact Assessments have been carried out.

Section 6– Corporate Priorities

All of the above contribute to the corporate priorities, in particular:

- Keeping neighbourhoods clean, green and safe.

- United and involved communities: A Council that listens and leads.
- Supporting and protecting people who are most in need.

Name: Roger Hampson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 17 th October 2012		

3 Section 8 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact:

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Background Papers: None

Asset Management – October 2012

