

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

Date of Meeting: 30th April 2014

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

Responsible Officer: Lynne Pennington
Divisional Director of Housing

Wards: All

Exempt: No

Enclosures: None

Section 1 – Summary

This report sets out a range of information items that the Head of Asset Management would like to bring to the attention of the Tenants', Leaseholders' and Residents' Consultative Forum. Views are invited on the priorities for the Asset Management service over the next 12 months.

FOR INFORMATION AND CONSULTATION

Section 2 – Report

Updates from previous discussions and new items for information

1. Consultation Event on Future Capital Programmes

- 1.1. On Saturday 15th March an event was held at the Civic Centre to consult on the future of the housing capital programme. The event was jointly organised by HFTRA and Asset Management staff and the objective was to explore how to develop the capital programme over the next few years. Key areas covered were the design standards for future improvements to homes, other areas the capital programme should include such as improvements to the external environment, and how best to ensure tenants and leaseholders were fully involved in setting priorities and planning programmes.
- 1.2. Led by officers from the Data and Planning team the agenda included:
 - An explanation of how the team operate and how programmes have been planned to date
 - Steps taken to move away from “pepper potting” of works towards a whole street or block approach to improvements
 - A presentation on innovation and best practice
 - The links between the re-generation plans and the capital programme
 - Prioritising items to be included on future programmes
 - Involving tenants and leaseholders in planning capital programmes
 - Exploring design and quality standards for refurbishment of homes.
- 1.3. 17 residents attended the event representing the following groups:
 - Harrow Weald TRA
 - Weald Village TRA
 - Kenmore Park TRA
 - Pinner Hill TRA
 - Little Stanmore TRA
 - Graham White Sheltered Scheme
 - William Allen Sheltered Scheme
 - Edwin Ware Court Sheltered Scheme
 - Harrow Weald Park sheltered scheme
 - The Leaseholder Support Group
- 1.4. One Leaseholder and one estate representative were also in attendance.
- 1.5. A number of areas of concern for individuals came up during the day which were taken away to be explored with colleagues from other teams. However the following areas were feedback to the team who will be planning future programmes, and will be fully taken into account in future planning processes.

- Ideas to involve tenants and leaseholders in the planning process through an online portal were welcomed, but it was necessary to have an alternative for those without access to the internet. This was important to underline the commitment to demonstrate works were prioritised according to the condition of the property.
- Steps taken to “future proof” works undertaken by undertaking a little more work, at a higher cost in the interests of prolonging the life of an improvement were welcomed
- An internal decorations scheme for older people, and others unable to carry out decorations themselves should be considered
- Tenants should have choice between showers and baths in general needs as well as sheltered housing
- More works and improvements in external areas would be welcome. These ranged from cleaning of brickwork, improved lighting, more notice boards and/or whiteboards that are better positioned and have solar powered lighting, to the provision of bike and buggy stores to landscaping of communal gardens, particularly in sheltered housing
- Measures to prevent condensation were welcomed
- Participants were in favour of the development of a policy and protocol to consider extending properties by building extensions, loft conversion and/or re-configuration of existing space but stressed the need to retain some smaller properties for tenants who wished to down size
- Looking to improve security was also popular, and the proposed new door entry programme with more secure main entry doors operated by fob keys in blocks of flats was popular
- All possible measures to provide warmer homes and reduce residents fuel bills should be prioritised
- The day was useful and deemed a success. Participants would like a similar session with the delivery team and an additional session for feedback on how their ideas were to be taken forward in a few months’ time

2. Audit of works orders raised through Estate Inspections

- 2.1. Members of TLRCF will recall concerns raised in previous meetings that a number of works raised as a result of Estate Inspections were not completed, but that contractors were invoicing for these works and being paid. It was agreed at the February meeting that an audit would be undertaken to determine whether there were any issues to be addressed in these areas.
- 2.2. To complete this piece of work a project team was established to undertake the audit. The team consisted of staff from Asset Management and Resident Services, a number of whom had not previously been involved in Estate Inspections. Advice was provided by colleagues involved in both estate inspections and post inspection of works.

- 2.3. The brief for the project team was to review all works raised through the estate inspection process in one estate for each of the 3 contract areas. Brookside was included, as specific concerns had been raised in this area and 2 others randomly selected. These were Greenford Road and Edgware Road Golf Course. The audit was carried out by taking the estate inspection reports for the last 2 inspections carried out in each area, and investigating each job individually to determine:
- Whether the work was completed
 - Whether it was post inspected
 - Whether an invoice had been received
 - Whether this invoice had been checked and if so by whom
 - Whether the invoice had been queried or challenged
 - Whether the invoice had been paid.
- 2.4. The audit was completed on 19th March and findings are below. Whilst conducting post inspections photographs were taken where possible, to confirm that the works were completed.
- 2.5. Following post inspection at Brookside Close (6th of March 2014) for Estate Inspections undertaken on 27th of June 2013 and November 2013 the following was found:
- 33 Jobs were raised in total
 - 1 job was raised to the wrong address, which was an administration error.
 - 2 of the 33 jobs were found not to have been completed on the more recent Estate Inspection. These jobs were a side entrance door that needed splice repair and painting and a metal entrance gate that required painting.
 - Specific jobs such as gullies, were previously cleaned but have blocked again. These have been raised for the contractors to re-clear at no charge.
 - 3 of 33 jobs were difficult to locate, due to insufficient detail on the inspection report
 - In summary 93% of jobs have been completed. However whilst 2 jobs were incomplete Harrow have not yet been invoiced for the last inspection report, so this work has not been paid for. The contractor was instructed to complete these jobs urgently and they were both completed by the end of March.
- 2.6. Following post inspection at Greenford Road (10th of March 2014) for Estate Inspections which took place on 16th of May 2013 and 17th of October 2013 the following was found:
- 30 jobs were raised in total
 - All 30 jobs have been completed, 100% of jobs completed.
 - No recalls or unsatisfactory works found
- 2.7. Following post inspection at Edgware Road Golf Course (12th of March 2014) for Estate Inspections which took place on 11th of June 2013 and 17th of November 2013 the following was found:
- 12 jobs were raised in total

- All 12 jobs have been completed, 100% of jobs completed
 - No recalls or unsatisfactory works were found.
- 2.8. These findings are reassuring. Whilst it is disappointing that 2 jobs were incomplete at Brookside this work had not been paid for. In addition these works were raised in the November Estate Inspection and both involved painting which would have been extremely difficult to complete during the very wet weather we had during the winter months.
- 2.9. A number of recommendations have been put forward as a result of this audit that will be fed into the review of the Estate Inspection process. These are:
- Greater detail of the repair is needed for example the exact location of the repair. Where a repair may be difficult to locate photographs should be taken both when the repair is identified, and on completion
 - There needs to be a detailed process developed to take forward major works on estates (i.e. those works that are too large, or need greater planning than can be covered as a responsive repair.) This will be taken forward jointly by Asset Management and Resident Services as it crosses both areas of work and both capital and revenue budgets
 - The administration of the Estate Inspection reporting process needs to be streamlined to take into account the post inspections that are completed by officers.

3. **2013/14 Performance Report for the Asset Management Service**

- 3.1 Although this report was written ahead of confirmed figures for the end of the financial year this section aims to provide TLRCF with an update on key areas of performance over the last year across Asset Management.
- 3.2 **Capital Programme.** At the time of writing this report we anticipate spending £6.968 million against our committed resources of £8.390million-which equates to 83% of our 2013/14 capital programme. The 17% that was not spent is due to a combination of savings against the estimated costs of schemes when the budget was set and slippage of some works to the new financial year. This is a similar outturn as 2012/13 performance where 86% of the programme was delivered.
- 3.3 The major areas where we have not spent the amount we expected to are listed below-but there are other examples both of slippage and savings in the more detailed scheme progress report that follows at 3.4:
- Aids and adaptations to Council properties are expected to spend £507,000 against a budget of £615,000. This is a demand led service so expenditure will also fluctuate according to the number of applications received and the cost of each individual scheme.

- We have reduced the Milmans Heating programme outturn by £15k as we wait for British Gas information on the installation of gas meters.
- The mobilisation of the Door Entry Schemes has slipped by 2 weeks due to clarifications on tenders. The scheme is currently undergoing stage 2 consultation and will start on site at the beginning of April. We will carry over a further £100k of resources into next year's programme to account for this.
- We also have 2 schemes where savings on pre-tender estimates have been made. A saving of £60k has been made on the demolition of Garages at Augustine Rd. Also on initial quotations for the Garden Access work at Milmans we are estimating a saving of at least £5k.

3.4 **Scheme Progress.** The following is a summary of what has been delivered this year:

3.5 **Kitchens and Bathrooms Contract Mulalleys (£1.259m)**

At the time of writing 91 bathrooms, 92 Kitchens, 14 properties with extra toilets and 7 rewires were complete. Mulalleys are reporting 96% customer satisfaction which is currently being validated by officers. Savings of £40k have also been made on this programme with re-engineering of costs and unused contingency budget.

3.6 **Heating Contract Quality Heating (£621k with an additional £570k to complete properties brought forward from the 14/15 programme)**

Quality Heating have installed 309 boilers/heating systems to date and have confirmed that they can install a further £200k worth of work before year end. Customer satisfaction is high at 99%, the validations officers have carried out are so far are confirming these figures, and not a single complaint has been received on this part of the programme. We have experienced some problems with no access though, and Quality Heating report 11 properties where the tenant has refused the work or there are problems with access.

3.7 **External Decorations/Enveloping (Blocks) Axis Europe (£252k)**

The contract completed 3 weeks late and whilst this was in part due to the poor weather and no access there were also some delivery issues. These were resolved at a meeting in September where the contractor's performance was discussed and an improvement programme put in place. 3 complaints about the programme were received, 1 concerning the contractor starting work and not completing within stated timescales, 1 over the specification where the contractor was not at fault and one on the workmanship of the contractor. Customer satisfaction figures are 92.97% and have been validated. The contract is now complete and came in at £10k under budget.

3.8 **Francis Road Thomas Sinden (£2.247m)**

The contract, for the refurbishment at Francis Road was extended for roof renewal works and the contingency of £130k has also been fully utilized. Due to claims for weather interruption and design delays further funds for contingency have been added to the original budget.

The final account is now being negotiated with Thomas Sinden. Customer satisfaction with the project, which is not yet validated is reported at 96%. However we know from meeting residents at the recent unveiling of the plaque to commemorate the completion of the projects that many residents are delighted with the improvements to their homes.

3.9 Windows and Doors (Blocks) (Install Direct £167,499)

The programme started in November. All works are now complete at the 3 blocks and all the properties were completed within the ½ day target completion time. Resident satisfaction is high at 97% and the scheme is now in final account.

3.10 Roofs (Blocks) (Breyer Group £183,598)

The project started in November and is complete, although it was one month behind schedule due to an issue with the scaffolding and the weather. Customer satisfaction targets have not been achieved on this project with 81% satisfied with the product and only 70% satisfied with the service. The satisfaction surveys took place before snagging and this may have impacted on the results. We are carrying out further work on these surveys. The scheme is now in final account.

3.11 Replacement of Sheltered and Community Centre Fire Alarm Panels and Emergency Lighting at Watkins House (Black and White Ltd Capital contract £270,040 over 3 years - £114k in 13/14)

All works are on time with completions signed off only one site left to complete. Customer satisfaction is high with 90% customer satisfaction and 95% warden satisfaction. The contingency budget will not be utilised.

3.12 Windows and Doors (Houses) (Install Direct £460,496)

The contract is to renew windows to 15 houses and front & rear doors to 257 houses at various locations throughout the borough. Also included is the window and door element of the pilot scheme to Grange Farm Close. The contract is on site and 92 properties were complete up to w/c 10th March 2014.

3.13 Milmans Garden Access (Estimated £40k)

Planning permission has now been received. This contract will be procured as a small tender, but will slip to next year. A consultation event was held in March with no responses received.

3.14 Milmans Communal Boiler (Estimated £60k)

We have met with the freehold company who have agreed for the communal boiler to be decommissioned from June onwards. Arrangements are currently being made to deliver some individual boilers to some of the tenanted properties.

4. Aids and Adaptations Service

- 4.1 As previously reported to TLRCF the Aids and Adaptations service transferred to Housing in January 2014. Although demands on the service are growing, performance continues to improve steadily
- 4.2 **Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG)**
These grants cover adaptations to homes that are not Council properties. The demand for the service is growing year on year, requests for the service increased from 231 in 2012-2013 to 270 in 2013 -2014. Average waiting times for DFGs from the date of the Occupational Therapy assessment to approval of the scheme improved from 15 weeks in 12-13 to 11 weeks in 13-14. The average costs per DFG reduced from £7919.68 in 12-13 to £7301.73 in 13-14.
- 4.3 **Council adaptations**
The demand for this service is also increasing. The requests for the service increased from 85 in 2012-2013 to 98 in 2013 -2014. The average waiting times for council adaptations from OT assessment to completion improved from 27 weeks in 12-13 to 21 weeks in 13-14. The average costs per adaptation also reduced from £7666.10 in 12-13 to £6904.96 in 13-14.
- 4.4 **Handyperson scheme**
Due to changes in supporting people funding 2 other handyperson schemes have been withdrawn in the borough, and this has resulted in the demand for the adaptations team handyperson scheme increasing greatly. In 2012-2013 we received 298 requests for the service, in the current year it is 430 requests for the service. However at present the service is meeting this increased demand but we may need to explore options for increasing capacity if demand continues to rise.
- 4.5 **Aids and Adaptations under £1000**
The demand for this service is also growing year on year, requests for the service increased from 53 in 2012-2013 to 82 in 2013 -2014. Average times from assessment received to works completed improved from 7 weeks in 12-13 to 6 weeks in 13-14. The average cost increased from £456.26 in 12-13 to £582.77 in 13-14.
- 4.6 The increase in demand is due, at least in part to urgent work coming through that was not done in the past and includes work to help clients get by with items such as door entry systems, handrails and steps while the major adaptations are going through. Since the team moved to Asset Management a number of processes have been reviewed to improve efficiency and one change has been to move responsibility for minor adaptations in Council properties from the Responsive Repairs team to the adaptation team from February.
- 4.7 Satisfaction figures have been collated but as they have not been reported on previously these are not in the format we have used across the rest of the service. We will review the way these are reported and

collated over the next few weeks. However the following information has been collated:

Council Adaptations and Disabled Facilities Grants

	Very Helpful	Quite Helpful	No Opinon	Quite unhelpful	Very unhelpful	
How would you describe the approach of the Harrow Adaptations Team staff that you have had contact with?	151	18	0	2	6	
Number of responses						
	Essential	Useful	Not useful	unhelpful	Doesn't apply	Don't know
Filling in Grant forms	76	52	0	2	36	5
Getting builders to give estimates	68	46	2	2	34	13
Finding the grant/money to pay for the work	88	28	0	2	44	5
Practical help e.g. removals, decorating	72	44	6	2	38	4
Dealing with the builder during the work	80	57	0	2	24	4
Finding other services e.g. extra income	46	30	4	4	63	12
Number of responses						
	Very Good	Quite good	OK	Quite poor	Very poor	Don't know
The quality of the work done was:	143	24	4	4	0	2
The speed at which the work done was:	100	50	15	4	6	2

Handyperson Service

	Very Helpful	Quite Helpful	No Opinion	Quite unhelpful	Very unhelpful	
How would you describe the approach of the Harrow Adaptations Team staff that you have had contact with?	81	7	4	0	0	
	Number of responses					
	Very Good	Quite good	OK	Quite poor	Very poor	Don't know
The quality of the work done was:	80	6	4	1	0	0
The speed at which the work done was:	79	5	4	1	1	0
	Number of responses					
	Yes	No				
Would you have had the work done without the help of the Harrow Staying Put Scheme	14	74				
Would you use the Adaptations team again or recommend the service to other people?	91	1				

5. Responsive Repairs

- 5.1 Progress continues to be made in delivering improvements to the responsive repairs and voids service. Part of this work has been to embed the existing contract management arrangements for our key contractors, and this approach is demonstrating the performance continues to improve. We have also been successful in recruiting more residents to attend the appraisal panels to help provide the scrutiny and challenge on performance.
- 5.2 One initiative that we reported to an earlier TLRCF was for our gas contractor, Quality Heating to take calls for heating and hot water breakdowns from tenants. This started in June 2013 and has been a complete success, without a single problem with the service being reported. We have also secured a significant saving by re-negotiating basket rates for boiler replacement with Quality Heating that will deliver average savings per boiler of £328. These rates have now been confirmed and agreed and began to apply in March.
- 5.3 Our voids performance was previously an area of concern, but since we reported to TLRCF in June 2013 that we had reviewed the process and performance was improving we have maintained a turnaround time of 10 days, which is consistently on target.
- 5.3 When we advised TLRCF of our key objectives for 2013/14 we advised that to reach our overarching commitment to provide a first class asset management service we agreed a suite of key performance indicators that we would measure to demonstrate how well we were moving towards that goal. These included many of the areas of performance that our tenants and leaseholders were most concerned about when we were preparing to let the current contracts. The table below demonstrates how performance continues to improve in the areas measuring responsive repairs performance, but it should be noted that some of the figures are used for benchmarking with other social housing providers and so are only available for 2012/13-others we monitor quarterly so are available from December 2013.

Measure	Harrow Performance 2011/12	Our target-to benchmark as upper quartile	Harrow Performance 2012/13	Performance December 2013
Repairs completed in Target Time - urgent	96.9	97.2	N/A	98.5
Percentage of repairs completed at first visit	88.05	95	94	97.1
% of properties with current gas	99.5	100	99.72	99.85

servicing certificates (CP12)				
% of respondents very or fairly satisfied with repairs and maintenance	73.39	74.00		100% Nb this figure is obtained from a percentage survey of all completed jobs undertaken on our behalf by Access Harrow and it should be noted this is the first time 100% has been achieved

6. Data and Planning Team

- 6.1 As previously reported to TLRCF in addition to planning the capital programme the team do a great deal of work gathering information on the condition of the housing stock, undertaking surveys and inspections on health and safety matters and taking steps to improve the health and safety of residents. The team also completed the Asset Management Strategy in partnership with HFTRA during 2013/14.
- 6.2 We have previously reported on the work we have done to improve health and safety in sheltered housing in conjunction with the Fire Brigade and our first sprinkler system has now been installed, with more in the pipeline. However the number of surveys undertaken shows a considerable amount of progress in gathering up to date comprehensive data on all our homes.

Survey/Purpose	Number completed
Asbestos surveys , general stock	636
Asbestos surveys for the Capital programme	221
Health and Safety inspections.	320
Stock Condition Surveys	562
Block external surveys	50
Window and Door led validations	596

7. Asset Management Priorities 14/15

Our overarching priorities were detailed in the Asset Management strategy and these have been used to develop a detailed Service Plan for the next year. These priorities incorporate the Council's priorities to deliver a cleaner, safer and fairer Harrow by ensuring that Asset Management consults and involves tenants, leaseholders and other

residents in all aspects of the service, seeks value for money, investment in Harrow and training or job opportunities from all procurement we undertake and that households in fuel poverty have the opportunity to have warmer homes delivered through using both grant funding and HRA funding. The headlines for each priority are given below with a brief description of how we plan to take forward these objectives.

7.1 Promote engagement and scrutiny by residents

Whilst we have had some success in increasing the number of residents actively working with us in all areas of the service we want to do more by introducing an opportunity for tenants to input into the planning of the capital programme-both through the self assessment process described at paragraph 1.5 -and in planning and prioritising improvements to the external environment. We also aim to introduce the contractor appraisal process to our cyclical programme, as although most of the contractors are performing well there have been some concerns raised with attendance from one particular contractor.

7.2 Implement and keep under review the Asset Management Strategy

We will monitor the action plan that sits below the strategy and report progress regularly. The strategy will need review in light of any changes related to the regeneration proposals or ECO/Green Deal funding

7.3 Integrate the Aids and Adaptations Service successfully into Asset Management

There are a number of opportunities to explore to enable us to improve performance, and potentially reduce costs by working more closely together.

7.4 To devise and implement the Harrow Better Homes Standard and develop a wider, long term capital programme

As reported in item 1 of this report officers are currently working on new projects for 2015 onwards, with the possibility of undertaking some pilot schemes this year.

7.5 To support the local economy

By continuing to work with procurement colleagues to encourage local companies to bid for contracts, purchase supplies locally, offer training opportunities and promote opportunities for apprentices, work placements and local employment.

7.6 To improve the energy efficiency of our stock

By undertaking more energy efficiency works i.e. loft, cavity wall and solid wall insulation. We are currently working on a delivery plan to invest £1.5 million grant funding in solid wall insulation in private sector homes, and exploring whether some Council houses can be included in the contract. This will help us plan further works to our stock from 2015 onwards.

7.7 To improve the customer experience

Responding to customer concerns and improving satisfaction with all areas of the service. This includes learning from any complaints

received and taking steps to ensure, where a complaint is upheld, that we address any reasons for service delays or failures promptly.

- 7.8 To implement a comprehensive Health & Safety programme**
Extending works already commenced in terms of undertaking safety inspections and completing remedial works as required.
- 7.9 To develop and deliver a first class responsive repairs service**
To continue our improvement journey and reach upper quartile on the agreed suite of performance indicators referred to in paragraph 5.3.
- 7.10 To achieve value for money in everything that we do**
To continue to seek procurement savings as well as additional works included in contract price-such as Community pay back in conjunction with HFTRA.
- 7.11 Develop and Implement strategies for assets other than homes**
To ensure that improvements to wider environment, community centres etc are included in future capital programmes. Many of the projects we will be considering are priorities identified by tenants and leaseholders.
- 7.12 Consult with residents and review how other landlords structure contracts, in preparation for retendering responsive repairs contracts from 2016**
It seems a long time but we only have 2 years left on existing contracts- so we need to prepare for what arrangements we have in place from 2016. Options are currently being investigated and we will consult on the way forward in due course.
- 8. Financial Implications**
There are no specific financial implications arising from this report as key priorities for 2014/15 are expected to be delivered within existing budgets.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Dave Roberts on behalf of the
Chief Financial Officer

Date: 10th April 2014

Ward Councillors notified: NO

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact:

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Background Papers: None