

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

---

**Date of Meeting:** 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2014

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

**Key Decision:** No

**Responsible Officer:** Lynne Pennington  
Divisional Director of Housing

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr Glen Hearnden  
Portfolio Holder Housing

**Exempt:** No

**Decision subject to  
Call-in:** No

**Wards affected:** All

**Enclosures:** None

**Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations**

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.

**FOR INFORMATION AND CONSULTATION**

## **Section 2 – Report**

Updates from previous discussions and new items for information

### **1. Responsive Repairs Service**

- 1.1 Overall contractor performance across our main contracts is fully compliant with contract requirements and performance is continuing to improve. Contract Appraisal Panels continue to take place bimonthly, with resident representatives taking a proactive role in monitoring performance. There are now seven tenants and leaseholders giving their time to assist us in this process and we really appreciate their dedication and significant contribution to the contract management process.
- 1.2 Resident representatives will be taking part in an audit exercise during July/August where they will visit contractor offices to validate some exceptionally good performance information that has been submitted by contractors. This exercise will be targeted to ensure that the data is accurate and genuinely does demonstrate that performance and satisfaction levels continue to rise. The main focus of the audit will be:
- Appointments, made and kept
  - Recalls
  - Overdue orders
  - Jobs completed at first visit

The findings of the audit will be reported to TLRCF at a later date. There are always opportunities for additional residents to become involved in these panels and if anyone is interested in finding out more about what this entails please let us know.

### **2. Capital Programme 2014/15**

- 2.1 Delivery of the capital programme for the current financial year has got off to a slower start than we would have liked –but there are a number of reasons for this. One of these is that the proposals for regeneration have delayed confirming addresses on the programme for internal improvements, as we clearly do not want to undertake major improvements in homes where there will be a regeneration scheme in the near future. However validations of revised address lists are now complete and we are moving towards procurement for the internal improvements.
- 2.2 Another reason for delays involves the need to consult locally on the detail of what is to be included in some of the external enveloping schemes on this year's programme. This is linked to the ongoing development of the new Better Homes standard and our aim to "future

proof” works we undertake by moving away from a “one model suits all” approach and spending a little more if needed to address any specific problems there may be locally. Whilst consultation delays procurement of contractors and therefore starting on site, we are committed to ensure that we learn from the successful model that developed during the Francis Road project as we know that seeking residents’ input at every stage of the project ensures that the completed scheme will have a far greater chance of meeting residents’ needs.

- 2.3 We are also looking into a number of opportunities to pilot some of the new elements that tenants and leaseholders have told us they would like included in future capital programmes. These pilots will be subject to local consultation and where appropriate s20 consultation with leaseholders but among the ideas we are exploring currently are the installation of external stores for mobility scooters, upgrading of bin shed areas to better meet the needs of recycling and installation of bicycle/buggy stores to help keep communal areas of blocks of flats clear of any hazards.

### 3. **Asset Management Priorities 14/15**

- 3.1 Our overarching priorities were detailed in the April TLRCF report. To help ensure that members of TLRCF are consulted on initiatives arising from these it might be useful to provide a regular update on progress made with the key priorities. The views of TLRCF are sought on whether this will be helpful in structuring future reports to the forum, so that information is provided in a similar format each time.
- 3.2 Only those priorities where there are new initiatives underway or where achievements have been made will be included in each TLRCF report, with a round up to be included in the April report as part of the review of the year’s performance.
- 3.3 **Promote engagement and scrutiny by residents**  
As previously reported we have been very pleased to be able to demonstrate that where residents are engaged in all aspects of the work of the team –things work more effectively, we achieve either savings in procurement or community pay back from contractors-in some cases both and customer satisfaction is higher. The success of the Contractor Appraisal Panels for our major responsive repairs contracts has been reported elsewhere in the report but the Asset Management Team have also benefitted from working closely with the Residents Value for Money Group.
- 3.4 This group now meets bi monthly, and looks at all aspects of the Housing Service to see what steps are being taken to ensure we achieve value for money, but has focused on Asset Management procurement activities because of the significant expenditure.

- 3.5 The last meeting on 17th June reviewed evidence of savings achieved in 2013/14 on the capital programme, heard about value for money in communications and the challenges of dealing with homelessness in difficult times. A forward plan has now been developed that will set agendas for future meetings and includes:
- The aids and adaptations service
  - An overview of all housing contracts and outcomes from the monthly Contracts Board
  - Housing MOT's-the next steps
  - Review of the void standard
- 3.6 **To support the local economy**  
We are continuing to ask for commitment to supporting the local economy from all our contractors, whether in the form of employment for local people and/or through purchasing supplies locally. Each of these factors is monitored through contractor management processes and achievements will be reported throughout the year.  
In addition we now have a work experience placement within the office to support the planned investment team in the delivery of the capital programme.
- 3.7 To improve the energy efficiency of our stock  
We have set aside up to £800k to undertake pilots on improving energy efficiency in Council stock in the current financial year, with a view to developing standards for works from 2015 onwards. We are currently working up a proposal for one specific block of flats where we will pilot installation of solid wall insulation and solar panels.
- 3.8 Further work in this area is not currently moving forward as we continue our negotiations with Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) regarding how we spend the grant funding they have provided for private sector homes. If we are able to resolve the issues with the DECC funding it will be sensible to procure both streams of work together, so further developments will be reported to a later TLRCF.
- 3.9 **To implement a comprehensive Health & Safety programme**  
As previously reported we have been undertaking fire safety work in partnership with the London Fire Brigade, particularly focusing on more vulnerable tenants. Part of this work has been to install sprinkler systems in individual homes where the tenant is at high risk from fire. We have recently submitted a bid for funds to continue with this work and hope to hear the outcome of this bid by the end of June. If we have any news a verbal update will be given to TLRCF.
- 3.10 A further Health and Safety initiative we are working on is to refocus our efforts to achieve the so far elusive 100% target for annual gas safety inspections. Performance has been increasing steadily over the last couple of years and whilst it fluctuates from month to month it has been steadily above 99.5% for several months. This means that an average of 4 cases are outstanding each month, where the tenant has not allowed us access to carry out the service and we need to go to court for a warrant to get into the property.

- 3.11 An officer project team is now meeting regularly to take forward a detailed action plan to move us further towards our goal of 100% compliance.
- 3.12 **To develop and deliver a first class responsive repairs service**  
Our performance indicators are continuing to improve and we are particularly pleased that customer satisfaction with the service is the highest it has ever been. We are currently working on the figures and supporting evidence to submit our performance figures to Housemark, the organization that compares our performance to other similar social landlords. When all the reports are in we will receive a report that shows how well we are performing when compared to others and we are hopeful that our improved figures will show we are now delivering a first class service that can be demonstrated by us being amongst the top performers in our group.
- 3.13 **Consult with residents and review how other landlords structure contracts, in preparation for retendering responsive repairs contracts from 2016**  
Our existing contracts with Slade and Waites come to an end in May 2016. It seems a long time ahead but we are now preparing by reviewing the existing contract and specifications to ensure they still meet our needs. We also need to ensure that any new contract takes into account any significant changes to housing stock during the life of the contract because of regeneration proposals. The aim is to have identified a clear way forward, for further discussion with all stakeholders early in 2015.

## **4.0 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 There are no specific financial implications arising from this report as all contracts in place and initiatives being developed are expected to be delivered within existing budgets.

## **5.0 Risk Management Implications**

- 5.1 There are no risk implications arising from this information report. The Housing Risk Register includes risks associated with non-delivery of the responsive repairs service and capital programme.

## **6.0 Equalities implications**

- 6.1 There are no equalities implications arising from this information report

## 7.0 Council Priorities

The Council's vision:

### **Working Together to Make a Difference for Harrow**

The work of the Asset Management team meets the administration's priorities as follows.

- Making a difference for the vulnerable  
A number of initiatives within the Asset Management service plan are specifically targeted to assist the most vulnerable households living in the Council's housing stock to sustain their tenancies, reduce health and safety risks and live independently
- Making a difference for communities  
The Asset Management service plan includes a commitment to improve the external environment, providing communities with better places to live
- Making a difference for local businesses  
Asset Management are committed to supporting local businesses through encouraging local contractors to bid for all contract opportunities and ensuring that a high percentage of spend on supplies is committed in Harrow.

## **Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance**

Name: Dave Roberts	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Chief Financial Officer
Date: 19 <sup>th</sup> June 2014		

<b>Ward Councillors notified:</b>	<b>No</b>
-----------------------------------	-----------

## **Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers**

### **Contact:**

Maggie Challoner  
Head of Asset Management  
Tel: 020 8424 2473  
Email: Maggie.challoner@harrow.gov.uk

**Background Papers:** None