

Cabinet/Committee:	Tenants & Leaseholder Consultative Forum
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Subject:	INFORMATION REPORT – Update on the Housing Repairs Service, Delivery of the Decent Homes Programme and the Harrow Integrated Property Services Partnership Project (HIPSP).
Responsible Officer:	Eddie Collier Interim Head of Property
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Camilla Bath. Portfolio Holder for Housing.
Exempt:	No

SECTION 1 – SUMMARY

This report provides an update on the current position on Housing Maintenance Service, Decent Homes Delivery on Council Housing Stock and progress on Harrow Integrated Property Services Partnership Project.

FOR INFORMATION

SECTION 2 – REPORT

Responsive Maintenance Service

The service provides responsive repairs and preventative maintenance to sheltered homes, houses and flats handling over 20,000 repairs a year.

The service is delivered by the Housing Minor Works team following its integration within the Council's Property Group in May 2006. The team comprises technical and professional staff, maintenance support officers and direct labour technicians and operatives. The

team is supported by Access Harrow who provide the front line contact for receipt of repair defects in the first instance.

General responsive repairs are undertaken by heating and general building partnering contractors appointed by the Council in 2004. Their remit comprises general building maintenance and void repairs and statutory gas testing and servicing, responsive repairs to domestic and commercial heating installations. The repairs service also includes maintenance to lifts, fire alarms, water services delivered by specialist contractors.

General out of hours emergency services for domestic premises are provided by the in house direct labour organisation while the heating partnering contractor provides the emergency cover for sheltered heating installations.

The budgetary contribution to repairs from the HRA was reduced from £5.89m in 05/06 to £4.74m in 06/07 in line with the Options Appraisal and it is understood that further reductions will be made in successive years. The service therefore faces the challenge to optimise service delivery in an environment of reduced budgetary provision.

There has also been difficulty in recruiting permanent personnel into key vacant posts and turnover of temporary staff has been high. However repairs team has benefitted from a degree of stability in recent months with the appointment of additional professional staff.

Improvements in the housing repairs service have been witnessed in two key areas over the last twelve months. The proportion of repairs classified as urgent has reduced from over 75% to approx 50% and average times to complete void repairs have fallen contributing to a reduction in void turnaround times.

The alignment of the Housing Minor Works team within the Property Group has enabled the team to (i) increase the level of pre and post inspection of repairs carried out (ii) scrutinise contractor proposals and costs more closely and (iii) follow up on repair issues, concerns or complaints on behalf of tenants and leaseholders.

However, it is recognised that there remains further scope for improvement. The Harrow Integrated Property Services Partnership will commence in July 2007 and will deliver extensive improvements in maintenance services.

In the meantime, the following interim initiatives and measures are also being implemented to enhance the quality of service delivered to tenants:

(i) Engagement of Brent Housing Partnership in February 2007,

Brent Housing Partnership have been appointed to provide the additional strategic and operational support necessary to embed and build upon the improvements achieved to date. Brent Housing Partnership will supply key qualified management and technical staff to work within the Housing Minor works team over an initial three month term. They will also assist in preparing the service for the new partnering arrangements in July 2007.

(ii) Access Harrow

Further initiatives include improvements in the responsive service delivered by Access Harrow. Procedures and processes are therefore currently being developed to assist in this regard.

Decent Home Delivery

The main works undertaken in 2005-06 was to bring 252 No miscellaneous (non estate based) properties up to Decent Homes Standard.

The programme for 2006-07 incorporates the delivery of Decent Homes Standard works to approximately 528 Estate based residential property. We are also continuing to install replacement doors and windows into houses and flats in accordance with current programmes.

A major contract of £3m of Decent Homes works to Council Housing stock has been let with Apollo (London) Ltd following a competitive tendering exercise. The contract started in January 2007 and will run until May 2007. The work is currently on programme and approx 258 No properties will be completed by the end of this financial year.

The change of kitchen suppliers from Moores Furniture Ltd to Premier Kitchen Company has caused no detrimental effect on the contract Programme. The new kitchen units are being delivered to site to meet the project programme and the quality of units and fittings has been equal to the previously selected range.

Regular site meetings are held with residents and resident associations in attendance which maintains a dialogue between the Contractor, Harrow staff and Residents. Issues of planning, progress and quality are discussed in detail and the project is developing with the co-operation of all parts involved in the process.

Works are currently progressing and it is expected to spend the finance allocated for the capital programme this financial year.

Looking forward, the 2007-08 Decent Homes programme as presented at the January forum has been injected with further finance.

After July 2007 it is expected that all work will be commissioned through the Harrow Integrated Property Services Partnership Contractor who will, in partnership with the Council, provide the Decent Homes works up to and beyond 2010.

Progress on The Harrow Integrated Property Services Partnership (HIPSP)

- **Background & General information**

This report updates the TLCF on the progress of the delivery of the HIPSP project. The TLCF will recall that on 30th October 2006, a progress report was tabled at this meeting and the project is on schedule to be delivered and mobilised around July 2007. This will be subject to the Council being satisfied that proper contractual conditions are set and consultations have been undertaken.

Briefly the Council intends to rationalise the way it delivers all forms of repairs and maintenance services to its buildings. At present these are delivered via a range of contracts with diverse suppliers that can make the service seem at times poorly co-ordinated. The contract covers non-housing work including schools as well as repairs to your homes.

The Council also feels that it has not in the past always achieved the best value for money from its property contracts and is seeking to reduce the number of contractors who undertake repair works. It intends to do this by awarding all minor repairs works to one contractor and having the option to have the same contractor deliver

major works such as the decent homes standard. Major works could be supplemented by a limited number of other contractors to provide depth if required.

The minor works contract will be for 5 years extendable at the Council's option to 10 and the major works contract will be for 4 years.

- **The position reached to date**

The project has stimulated considerable market interest so that the Council has received tenders back from all bidders invited. Tenders were received on 29th January. The companies that returned bids were as follows:

**Minor works
(repairs and maintenance)**

Morrison Facilities Services
Mitie Group Limited
Kier Building Maintenance
Mears Group

Major works

Apollo Group
Breyer Group
Kier Building Maintenance
Lakehouse Construction
Mansell
Mears Group
Mitie Group
Rok Ltd

The initial appraisal by the evaluation team has concluded that all bids except that of Rok Ltd are compliant and can be considered by the evaluation team. Tenders will be fully evaluated during February with recommendations being formulated for March.

- **Early relevant matters to report**

The evaluation process is to include input from resident representatives and other stakeholders which will have a real impact on the final award to service providers. The process was begun with the consultation forum held on 25th January 2007 and the Project Team wish to extend thanks to resident representatives who attended.

Clearly the evaluation needs to be carried out within accountability structures and by the time the forum receives this report analysis of the customer service and other relevant proposals should be under consideration by resident representative and other stakeholders.

- **Future activities**

The timetable objective is:

Mid-February - Evaluation team compile short list of companies that pass the first evaluation gateway

February (third week) bidder's challenge sessions for short listed companies

Note: It is the intention to invite resident's representatives on the evaluation panel to these.

End February – complete evaluations

March – take up client references

April – present final recommendation to cabinet

April – June – mobilisation period (subject to cabinet approval of appointment)

July – start contracts

The above programme is ambitious but realisable. Leaseholder consultation will be undertaken in accordance with relevant legislation, it is likely that this will be undertaken in March.

- **Consultation opportunities**

The Interim Head of Property Services has set up fortnightly meetings for relevant Council Members to come and discuss matters with the Project Manager and other relevant members of the Project Team. If any members of the panel would similarly like to avail themselves of a more detailed consultation opportunity, this can be undertaken by contacting Sheron Laughlin on ext. 2523 or via email sheron.singh@harrow.gov.uk

The Tenants & Leaseholders Consultative Forum on 24th January incorporated details of the 2006/07 programme and the proposed 2007-08 programme.

SECTION 4 - CONTACT DETAILS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

Contacts:

Responsive repairs:

George Ogunsi, Service Manager – Minor Works and Facilities
020 8424 1014

Decent Homes Programme:

Steve Parker, Service Manager – Major Works and Adaptations
Tel: 020 8736 6846

Harrow Integrated Property Partnership

Richard Berry, Project Manager

Tel: 020 8424 1523

Background Papers: