

**REPORT FOR: PERFORMANCE AND
FINANCE SCRUTINY
SUB-COMMITTEE**

Date of Meeting:	18 January 2011
Subject:	Progress on Housing Ambition Plan and Resident Involvement in delivery of the plan
Responsible Officer:	Lynne Pennington, Divisional Director Housing Services
Scrutiny Lead Member area:	Councillor Chris Mote (Policy Lead Member for Safer and Stronger Communities) Councillor Nana Asante (Performance Lead for Safer and Stronger Communities)
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	None

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report details progress made with the delivery of the Housing Ambition Plan in relation to Asset Management (which includes Housing Repairs) and details how residents are involved in helping to shape the housing service.

FOR INFORMATION

Section 2 – Report

Background

2.1.1 The Housing Ambition Plan (HAP) is a two year plan to bring the housing service to the point where our customers believe us to provide one of the best housing services in London. The plan was approved by cabinet in July 2010 and the target completion date is July 2012.

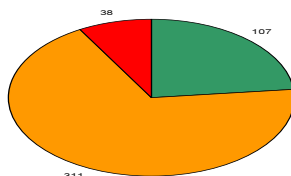
2.1.2 The HAP sets ambitious targets for each division in housing, with additional cross cutting objectives and followed a fundamental review of the housing service in 2009. Residents were involved in the review to help determine where improvements were most needed. The plan contains over 450 individual actions –some of these are single actions or quick wins, but others are more involved - with a number of actions being entire projects in themselves.

2.1.3 The plan also incorporates a number of individual team and management commitments, encompassing all divisions within housing. What makes the plan different from other improvement plans is that these commitments were developed by staff at all levels of the organisation who have signed up to deliver them.

2.1.4 Residents' involvement in developing the HAP included taking part in focus groups during the service review. These groups included residents who were already actively involved as volunteers, and also some residents not previously involved. Residents continue to be involved with the delivery of the plan in a number of ways. One example is for residents to be members of focus groups working to take forward service improvements and set service standards. It is critical to the success of the HAP that we increase customer involvement by reaching out to all communities, at all stages of our improvement journey.

2.1.5 To involve residents more effectively in monitoring the progress of the HAP we have used a traffic light system to enable us to visually report progress on the 456 actions and projects covering the 12 work streams that make up the plan. Residents can see at a glance the progress that is being made through regular reports on progress.

2.1.6 Progress in delivering the HAP is reported pictorially to residents, as they requested, in the format of the pie chart as shown. The green segment represents actions completed, amber those on target and red those that are delayed.



2.1.7 A key part of the Housing Ambition Plan is to increase the number of residents who are currently actively involved in helping to shape the Housing Service, and to ensure that this involvement is meaningful. Part of this aim is to ensure that we work in partnership with more residents to prioritise improvements in the areas that are most important to our residents and begin to develop our “local offers” as required by our regulator the Tenant Services Authority (TSA).

2.1.8 As we move forward in preparing to develop local offers the number of Council led resident involvement activities are increasing, as are the number of residents actively engaged in working with us. We have also launched a review of Resident Involvement that includes reviewing the terms of reference of the Tenant and Leaseholder Consultative Forum (TLCF).

2.2 Current situation

2.2.1 Members have specifically asked for a progress report on the Housing Ambition Plan as it relates to housing repairs and resident engagement. This report therefore focuses on these aspects of the plan. Information is taken from the quarter 2 progress report as quarter 3 has not been assessed at the time of writing the report.

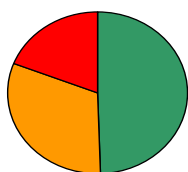
2.3 Housing Repairs

2.3.1 Responsibility for the management of housing repairs and maintenance was transferred from Property Services to Housing in October 2010.

2.3.2 Good progress is being made with the Housing Ambition Plan in relation to repairs. The key achievements and key challenges together with a view of what could have gone better and what’s new for the Asset Management workstream is detailed below. The pie chart below shows how well we are progressing with the individual actions on the plan.

2.4 Repairs & Maintenance

Repairs & Maintenance



This workstream is on target. Delayed actions are being progressed.

<i>Key Achievement</i>	<i>Key challenges</i>	<i>What could have gone better?</i>	<i>Whats new?</i>
<p>Progress Report</p> <p>Planned Investment Gas safety checks still exceeding agreed targets. Process of levelling service rate throughout year almost complete.</p> <p>Waiting list for DFG's addressed and programme for A & A to remove backlog by end of year</p>	<p>Completing restructure following transfer to Housing.</p> <p>Delivery of capital, including Decent Homes Standard, and voids works due to: a)Asbestos issues/challenges, b)back loaded programme which exposes us to delays particularly if adverse weather</p> <p>Improving Aids & Adaptations process</p> <p>Improving customer satisfaction.</p>	<p>Section 20 process</p>	<p>Responsibility for Repairs and Maintenance service passed from Property Services to Housing</p>
<p>Responsive Repairs Subhash Patel appointed as Responsive Maintenance Manager. Improved partnership working between Responsive Maintenance team and Estate Services.</p> <p>Improved repairs service to sheltered housing (as evidenced by positive feedback from tenants).</p>	<p>Improving the rate of "first time fix".</p> <p>Raising customer satisfaction consistently</p>	<p>Embedding performance commitments across the teams.</p> <p>Non productive calls to Access Harrow -relates to chase ups for appointments not kept or jobs not done right first time. There is still room for improvement in this area and we are discussing this with Kier .</p>	
<p>Asset Management Codeman</p>	<p>Identifying and improving the energy</p>		<p>Co-located with Planned and</p>

<i>Key Achievement</i>	<i>Key challenges</i>	<i>What could have gone better?</i>	<i>Whats new?</i>
<p>database now being used to provide forward programming</p> <p>Asset Management Improvement Group set up to provide a forum between AM, residents and Kier Service standards being drafted – voids standards has been reviewed by Asset Management Improvement Group.</p>	<p>efficiency/sustainability of the worst performing of the housing stock.</p> <p>Completing the stock condition survey to 100%.</p> <p>Completion of service standards.</p>		<p>Responsive in Civic 1.</p>

2.5 Performance and Monitoring

2.5.1 The Housing Scorecard is reported to forums including the Asset Management Improvement Group (AMIG) and the Improvement Board. The Asset Management part of this scorecard includes 33 PIs of which 25 relate directly to responsive maintenance.

2.5.2 Due to unresolved IT interfaces, some of the PI data is provided by Kier. In these cases an audit is carried out to ensure that Kier's systems are robust and that the data presented is accurate.

2.5.3 The scorecard provides essential management information as well as providing a measure of compliance achieved with both regulations and customer priorities. Through the AMIG, those issues that customers identified as most important are:

1. Make and keep appointments
2. Job completed at first visit
3. Customer satisfaction with planned works service
4. Customer satisfaction with responsive repairs service
5. Gas servicing

2.5.4 Comment:

1. Currently around 79%. This is below expectations and Responsive Maintenance team is working with Kier to identify problem areas and improvements. This is a two-sided problem in Kier not keeping some appointments but also tenants similarly failing.
2. Currently 87%. This is above target but if improvements already identified are implemented, including completing the exercise to upgrade impress van stocks, then further improvements can be achieved.
3. This is an independent telephone survey currently just over 95%.
4. Also an independent survey currently just below target at 89%
5. If the 6 void properties are discounted, the current performance is 99.93% compliance.

2.5.5 Residents at the AMIG identified priorities and these are embedded in the Housing Ambition Plan:

- To achieve and maintain 100% Decent Homes
- To maintain 99.9% compliance with gas servicing
- To complete 100% asbestos surveys and provide a web-based database
- To complete 100% stock condition survey
- To achieve 90% customer satisfaction with the R & M service
- To keep 95% of appointments
- To comply with all aspects of H & S requirements
- To achieve effective communications before, during and after works

2.6 Future of the Repairs and Maintenance Service

2.6.1 Standards

Standards exist covering several aspects of the repairs and maintenance service including:

- Void standard (under review)
- Re-let standard (under review)
- Repair and maintenance standard
- Decent Homes Standard

2.6.2 Contractual Arrangements

The responsive repairs and maintenance of the Council's stock is currently carried out by Kier under a comprehensive contract covering both Housing and Corporate buildings. Within this contract some 70% to 80% by value is carried out to HRA housing property. This contract covers an initial period of 5 years with an option to extend by a further period of up to 5 years. The initial 5 year break occurs in June 2012.

2.6.3 Setting up a replacement contract would take about one year. A decision needs to be taken within the next three months to allow adequate lead-in time, should some form of new contract be the chosen option.

2.6.4 The Planned investment contract, also with Kier, expires earlier, in June this year. A proposal is to be considered by Cabinet for the replacement of this contract with short term, one year, contracts. One advantage of this proposal is

to bring the planned and responsive contract renewal dates into alignment, thus allowing the possibility of a combined planned and responsive contract, should this be the selected option.

2.6.5 An exercise is starting to consider the options for the continuation of the repairs service from June 2012 onwards and this will need to take account of current performance and the future service standards in the following areas:

- Level of service
- Customer satisfaction
- VFM
- Benchmarking – compare current performance with other housing providers
- Performance – see above – costs, customer satisfaction, quality

2.7 Resident Involvement

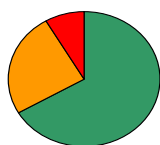
2.7.1 In April 2010 when the TSA standards were launched and the HAP was being developed resident involvement was alive and well in Harrow. However it was clear there were a number of challenges to be overcome if we were to be successful in developing the existing arrangements to meet the regulators requirements.

2.7.2 Currently 12 Tenant and Resident Associations (TRA's) are active across the borough and these groups feed into the formal consultative mechanisms for the Council. We also have estate representatives in areas without a TRA that participate in the formal resident consultation mechanisms.

2.7.3 Each TRA can elect two representatives to the overarching resident groups and estate representatives can also attend. Many of these representatives put in a significant number of hours working with officers on a variety of initiatives and improvement groups. The section of the Improvement Board report on Resident Involvement is below

2.8 Resident Involvement

Resident Involvement



This workstream is on target and has improved greatly since Q1. Delayed actions carried over from Q1 have been completed and new delayed actions are being progressed.

<i>Key Achievement</i>	<i>Key challenges</i>	<i>What could have gone better?</i>	<i>Whats new?</i>
Progress Report TSA report submitted on time having been developed in partnership with residents. Recognised by CLG	Local Offers to be developed by April 2011.	Resident mystery shopping delayed but now expected to commence in December 2010.	TSA to be abolished and unclear exactly how future regulatory function will impact on current plans. Harrow Sheltered Housing Resident

Resident Involvement Recruitment campaign carried out.			Association soon to be formally constituted.
A range of new Resident Involvement activities launched.			Investigating a Tenant Participation Tracker

2.9 Resident Involvement Activities

2.9.1 In addition to the pre existing Resident Involvement mechanisms that were already in place a number of new groups have been set up as part of the HAP. To date our recruitment campaign to engage with more residents has enabled us to involve 140 residents who are new to involvement, to supplement existing groups.

2.9.2 We agreed a vision statement with our residents to be included in our annual report to the TSA. Our interpretation is to include **all** residents living on our housing estates in our improvement journey, not just tenants. Our vision for resident involvement reflects that objective:

2.10 Our Vision for Resident Involvement

2.10.1 The Housing Ambition Plan is targeted to ensure that our customers believe we provide one of the best housing services in London by 2012.

2.10.2 Our ambition is to ensure that we put our residents at the heart of everything we do, as we believe that only by working in an effective partnership can we provide the high standard of services they both expect and deserve.

2.10.3 We will achieve this by providing a menu of options for involvement and meaningful participation by October 2010 which offers a variety of ways for residents to be involved at the level they feel comfortable with and is meaningful to them. We will offer support and training to build the knowledge, confidence and capacity of residents to equip them to help develop local offers and scrutinise performance.

2.10.4 To achieve this vision we have developed, or are developing a wide range of new activities to both involve more residents and help to develop better mechanisms for scrutiny of performance.

2.10.5 Resident Involvement activities that are already taking place or listed in development are detailed in table below

Group	Purpose	Membership
Tenants' and Leaseholders' Consultative Forum (TLCF)	The Council's formal mechanism for consulting residents on changes, improvements and reporting on performance. Meeting quarterly the	2 resident representatives from each of the following: HFTRA,

	group is chaired by the Housing Portfolio Holder	Individual TRA's, Leaseholder Support Group Area resident representatives and the public are also invited to attend meetings.
Harrow Federation of Tenant and Resident Associations (HFTRA)	<p>The hub of activity for our resident involvement. The group has been instrumental in ensuring resident involvement is effective and frequently challenges the housing team.</p> <p>Housing staff and other officers are invited to the group meetings to present reports and to discuss issues that are on the horizon, forthcoming events and new ideas and initiatives. In return residents raise concerns on behalf of their TRA or area.</p>	A resident led group with membership made up from 2 representatives from each TRA in the borough, the Leaseholder Service Group and the area representative.
Harrow Sheltered Residents Association	A group set up in August 2009 with a representative from each of Harrow's sheltered housing schemes. The group is co-ordinated in partnership between Adult Services and Housing enabling information sharing and discussion to take place on issues specifically relevant to older people- such as repairs, the warden service, social care and shop for support. The group became a fully constituted TRA in December 2010	Representatives elected by tenants of each council run sheltered housing scheme in the Borough.
14 Tenant and Resident associations across the borough	Resident led looking at a wide range of issues affecting housing tenants, leaseholders and freeholders	Resident led, chaired by residents but supported, as requested by housing staff
Asset Management Improvement Group	A group looking at driving improvements to the repairs service by working in partnership with officers to develop policies, set performance standards etc. The group have recently developed a new suite of performance indicators based on what is most important to customers.	Residents Kier staff Asset Management staff Access Harrow staff Others as required

	Frequency of meetings increased to monthly	
Leaseholder Support Group	A resident led group dedicated to the services provided to the Council's 1,000 leaseholders. The group were involved in recruiting the Interim Service Manager, have reviewed the service charge process agreeing a new charging module and the billing mechanisms.	Council leaseholders, supported as required by staff.
Estate Services Steering Group	A service specific group originally set up for 12 months to improve external services on estates. The group's work has included a review of the Service Level Agreement for grounds maintenance. Residents have asked for this group to continue meeting quarterly.	Residents nominated by HFTRA
Editorial Panel	A group originally set up to agree the content for the quarterly resident's magazine Homing in, it has recently expanded to include all housing communications, surveys etc with the wider resident body	The portfolio holder, 6 members of HFTRA and staff
Complaints Panel	A group set up to improve the quality of responses to complaints by reviewing closed cases and learning lessons from them	6 residents recruited from people who had recently had cause to make a complaint.
ASB Group	This group has been set up to look at the way we respond to complaints of Anti-Social Behaviour in Housing. The first meeting with the group was held on 28 September.	Residents who expressed an interest in working with us by responding to the consultation on Introductory and Demoted tenancies, that was circulated with the summer edition of Homing In
Income Management Focus Group	Set up in November 2010, the group will look at our current procedures for collecting income and tackling rent arrears. The group will also look to develop service standards for this area of work.	Residents on the database of people who have expressed an interest in working with us in this area and a representative from HFTRA.
Mystery Shopping	A new project to recruit residents to test the quality and consistency of services by telephoning and visiting the Council with a number of "test cases" Training is being held on 24 th	Residents on the database of people who have expressed an interest in working with us in this area are

	January	being invited to attend training.
Rent online Testing	To prepare for the extension of online services to allow housing tenants to access their rent accounts via the authenticated customer portal on the website, tenants were invited to test this new initiative on 8 December 2010, before going live.	Residents on the database of people who have expressed an interest in working with us in this area were invited to attend the test sessions.
Tenant Inspectors	A new initiative in partnership with neighbouring Councils to train tenants to inspect the quality of services such as grass cutting, cleaning of communal areas and window cleaning. Targeted to start in summer 2011	Tenants to be recruited through HFTRA and our database
Developing local offers joint training	Joint training for residents and staff together on how to develop, deliver and monitor local offers	Residents recruited through HFTRA and from our database
Resident Project Meetings	Specific meetings to discuss specifications and programmes of work with groups of residents affected by those works	Residents Asset Management staff Leasehold team staff

2.11 Next Steps in Resident Involvement

2.11.1 Two new initiatives are currently being developed to supplement the list of activities. The first is to develop a Finance sub group to look in detail at options for income generation to the housing team and look at value for money initiatives

2.11.2 The second is to be better at capturing the outcomes of Resident Involvement- so that we can demonstrate more effectively what we do differently as a result of that involvement. For example a number of changes are to be incorporated in to the rents on line system as a direct result of the testing we invited tenants to take part in. A report is planned to go to TLMF in February on this initiative

2.12 Financial Implications

2.12.1 The financial implications of this report are fully covered in the housing ambition plan that was approved by Cabinet in June 2010. That report set aside funds for a second Resident Involvement Officer who will assist with the reporting to TLMF of the work done through other resident involvement activities, and facilitating those groups.

2.13 Performance Issues

2.13.1 Performance Issues in relation to the Housing Ambition Plan are outlined in the Housing Ambition Plan 2010/12 report that was considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 15 July 2010 which are:

A new suite of indicators has been developed and incorporated into a single scorecard which includes national indicators; customer satisfaction indicators; service stream indicators; customer service standards; workforce measures and data quality indicators.

This scorecard together with the relevant team commitment will be reviewed at an individual level during IPAD and one to one discussions; at local and divisional team meetings. It will be reviewed and challenged by the Housing Management Team and by the Housing Leadership Group and generally progress will be discussed, lessons learnt and success celebrated at the meetings of the whole Housing Ambition Group 6 times over the two year life of the plan.

Progress against the scorecard will form the basis of housing's report to the Adults and Housing Management Team, to the Improvement Board, to the Portfolio Holder and to meetings of the Harrow Federation of Tenants and Residents and the Tenants and Leaseholder Consultative Forum and other customer involvement forums to be developed over the life of the HAP. Key measures will also appear in the quarterly Strategic Performance Report to Cabinet.

2.14 Environmental Impact

2.14.1 The environmental impact on implementation of the plan are outlined in the Housing Ambition Plan 2010/12 report considered at the July 2010 Cabinet meeting which are:

Measures included in plan particularly around sustainable homes are designed to have a positive impact on the environment. Specifically all of the housing regeneration schemes being developed in partnership with RSLs are required to achieve Sustainable Building Code 4; Future investment programmes will aim to improve energy efficiency and housing is working with partners to reduce fuel poverty.

2.15 Risk Management Implications

2.15.1 Failure to deliver the HAP is an item on the departmental risk register. However with the controls that are in place to monitor progress and the progress made to date this is currently awarded a low risk rating of D3.

2.16 Corporate Priorities

2.16.1 All of the above initiatives contribute to the corporate priorities, in particular united and involved communities: a Council that listens and leads.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Not required for this report.

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact:

Maggie Challoner

Resident Services Manager

Tel: 020 8424 2473

Email: Maggie.challoner@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers:

None