



To: COUNCIL

On: 13 DECEMBER 2018

Report by: LEAD OFFICER

Heading: REVIEW OF HOUSING REPAIRS BY COUNCIL AND OUTSIDE CONTRACTORS

1. Summary

- 1.1 As part of the annual programme of activity for 2017/18 the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board agreed to undertake a review of Housing repairs by Building Services and outside contractors.
- 1.2 This report provides a summary of the overall findings of the review which has taken place across a number of meetings of the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board. The minutes of the meetings are available as background papers.
- 1.3 The review focussed on gathering information from Tenant and Resident Associations, Officers within relevant Service areas and a benchmarking exercise was also undertaken with Councils which have similar housing stock numbers to Renfrewshire.
- 1.4 Findings of the review are detailed at Section 4 and these have identified that customers do not appear to have significant issues with the quality of repairs being carried out within Council stock. When benchmarked against Dundee City, North Ayrshire and East Ayrshire Councils, customer satisfaction levels within Renfrewshire are not significantly lower than these Councils (with the exception of East Ayrshire Council).
- 1.5 The review has provided assurances to the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board that the ongoing reviews of the Facilities Management and Housing Repairs

function will lead to further improvement to the already well performing Service.

- 1.6 The conclusion of the review was that the redesign of the repairs service within Renfrewshire, which is currently being undertaken by Building Services in consultation with the Housing Service is likely to have benefits for both customers and the Council, as evidenced from the experience of East Ayrshire Council.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Council is asked to:
- Note the findings of the review at 4.1.
 - Note the overall conclusion that delivery of the repairs service within Renfrewshire Council by Building Services and its external contractors is operating satisfactorily, and
 - Note that the redesign of the Service within Facilities Management which is currently under way will further improve the customer journey and satisfaction levels for our tenants.

3. Purpose and Scope of the Review

- 3.1 The key purpose of the review was to consider whether robust procedures are in place to ensure that repairs to Council housing stock are carried out to a high standard; are completed timeously and within set targets; properties are not left in a dangerous condition; that satisfactory monitoring and evaluation of repairs is undertaken and that there are measures in place to address unsatisfactory works by both external contractors and Building Services.
- 3.2 The review focussed on existing practices and strengths, taking evidence from Tenant and Resident Associations, Council Officers and other Councils whilst also considering how the redesign of the repairs service within Renfrewshire (currently being undertaken by Building Services in consultation with Housing Services) will impact positively on tenants.
- 3.3 The scope of the review included
- Consulting with Development and Housing Services and Building Services to identify current processes in place to monitor and ensure high standards of work are applied to repairs
 - Inviting responses from at least one other Council on their approach to securing a high standard of repair by Council staff and external contractors.

- Inviting responses from Tenant and Resident Associations on issues where they have concerns regarding the quality of repair works undertaken.
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4. Findings of the Review

4.1 The Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board agreed at its meeting on 29 May 2018 agreed the findings of the review, which are:

- That there was general consensus amongst Tenant and Resident Associations that repairs which are undertaken by both Building Services and outside contractors are completed to a high standard
- No evidence was found to support the notion that properties are being left in a dangerous and unsafe condition
- Customer satisfaction rating of 91.4% for 2016/17, against a national average of 86.2%, would support the view that repairs are undertaken to a high standard
- Integration of all Facilities Management Services, including Housing Repairs is currently progressing through the Better Council Change Programme
- Completed Right First Time Repairs have improved from 78% in 2013/14 to 94.8% in 2016/17, reflecting the benefits of the ongoing integration process
- Benchmarking against three Councils, with similar levels of housing stock, demonstrated that performance is not dissimilar, with the exception of East Ayrshire Council who report higher customer satisfaction levels
- The 'routine' customer journey at this time is under improvement through the service re-design process; however, there are a large number of repeat visits to properties being recorded
- One of the main reasons for high numbers of 'repeat' repairs visits to properties relate to no access visits and boiler/heating issues (35%)
- The integrated approach will simplify procedures and improve repairs monitoring whilst new IT systems will help reduce the number of repeat visits
- East Ayrshire Council have redesigned their Repairs service, which has brought about improvements in services for their customers in addition to efficiencies within the service
- Work within Building Services and Housing Services is currently taking place to re-design how the repairs service is being delivered in Renfrewshire and to procure new IT systems; leading to improvements in the customer journey and realising efficiencies within the Service areas

Information Gathering- Tenant and Residents Associations

- 4.2 The Lead Officer attended a meeting of the Council's Repairs Development Group and the Council Wide Tenant Forum to seek views from tenant representatives, through workshop sessions on how the repairs service is delivered; both good and bad experiences of the service; whether repairs are generally to a high standard and areas for improvement. Whilst not all Tenant and Resident Groups attend these meetings, a series of questions was issued to contacts for all Associations to ensure that the consultation process was as wide as possible.
- 4.3 Customer satisfaction information from 2016/17 was also reviewed to determine whether there was correlation between this and the information which was being obtained from the Tenant and Resident Associations.
- 4.4 On 22 January 2018 the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board heard information from Ms Margaret Dymond, Maxwellton Court, Tenant and Resident Association who presented a positive experience with housing repairs and had not been aware of any issues through her Tenant and Resident Association.
- 4.5 From the information gathered, the key points identified were that:
- Generally positive feedback from Tenant and Residents Associations on the standard and quality of repairs which appears to support the overall satisfaction survey data.
 - Mixed feedback received regarding the quality and standard of repairs by external contractors
 - Potential issues with effective communication of repairs between tenant, Repairs Assessors and Building Services requiring further investigation and repeat visits.
 - Customer satisfaction rate for 2016/17 is 91.4% (approximately 10 % sample) against a national average for local authorities of 86.2%.
 - Completed Right First Time Repairs had risen from 78% in 2013/14 to 94.8% in 2016/17

Customer Satisfaction Results for 2017/18

- 4.6 Repairs performance information was provided in the previous report on 19 March 2018 covering the number of reactive repairs undertaken during 2016/17; a breakdown in the types of repairs; the percentage of repairs completed Right First Time and the overall customer satisfaction level for 2016/17. The customer satisfaction results for 2017/18 reported to the Scottish Housing Regulator, are 98.3%, demonstrating a significant improvement on the previous year's result of 91.4%

Information Gathering- Benchmarking with Other Councils

- 4.7 The Lead Officer undertook a benchmarking exercise with East Ayrshire, North Ayrshire and Dundee City Councils who have similar overall housing stock numbers to that of Renfrewshire and provide a repairs service to residents.
- 4.8 information was gathered on how repairs are monitored for quality and customer satisfaction levels, providing an indication of how customers perceive the service. This information was compared, as far as was possible, with that from Renfrewshire Council.
- 4.9 It was concluded that in comparison to North Ayrshire and Dundee City Councils, Renfrewshire Council's repairs service is performing reasonably well and is similar in terms of performance and service delivery. However, the model of delivery in East Ayrshire Council had been previously redesigned and appears to be providing enhanced levels of customer satisfaction.
- 4.10 The key points from this benchmarking exercise are:
- Renfrewshire Council's repairs service is operating reasonably well and is based on similar delivery processes to that of North Ayrshire and Dundee City Councils. Renfrewshire's customer satisfaction level was 91.7% for 2016/17 with an improved performance of 98.3% for 2017/18.
 - There are a number of properties within Renfrewshire which appear to be resource intensive with high numbers of repairs being necessary during the last financial year.
 - East Ayrshire Council operates a redesigned delivery model which appears to have, for that area, delivered significant improvements to the repairs service, customer journey and satisfaction levels (98.7%).
 - Customer satisfaction levels for the three benchmarked Councils and Renfrewshire Council have been calculated in accordance with Scottish Housing Regulator requirements.

Information Gathering- Renfrewshire Council Officers

- 4.11 Issues which were explored with Council officials included scrutiny of:
- The overall customer journey from first contact with the Council to a repair being satisfactorily completed;
 - Identifying root causes of requirement of high numbers of repeat visits to property
 - Consideration of improvements to ICT systems to reduce duplication of works in the repairs process.

- 4.12 On 29 May 2018 the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board heard information from Gerard Hannah, Strategic Change Manager, Environment & Communities on how the ongoing work to improve the Housing Repairs Service will positively impact on the Service and the delivery of repairs for tenants.
- 4.13 The board also heard information from Gary Craig, Housing Improvement Manager, East Ayrshire Council on how improvements, through redesign of their service has improved the customer journey and efficiencies within their service, which provided a level of assurance that the work currently being undertaken within Renfrewshire will have positive benefits for both the service and our customers.
- 4.14 In terms of ICT improvements, there is currently a procurement exercise taking place to provide a mobile platform which will enable all Building Services operatives the ability to receive tasks in real time. Combined with other ongoing projects relating to stocked vans and improved stores operations, the system will provide greater productivity amongst operatives and will ultimately lead to a better customer journey. The new system is proposed to be in place by the end of 2018.
- 4.15 The new IT systems will permit some immediate benefits such as the use of reminder texting/emails for customers who have appointable repairs and longer term this is expected to significantly reduce the number of visits which result in no access being gained by operatives, requiring repeat visits.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The overall conclusion of the review was that delivery of the repairs service within Renfrewshire Council by Building Services and its external contractors is operating satisfactorily and the redesign which is currently underway will further improve the customer journey and satisfaction levels for our tenants.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** - none
2. **HR & Organisational Development** - none
3. **Community Planning** - none
4. **Legal** - none
5. **Property/Assets** - none

6. **Information Technology** - none
 7. **Equality & Human Rights** - The recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.
 8. **Health & Safety** - none
 9. **Procurement** - none
 10. **Risk** - none
 11. **Privacy Impact** - none
 12. **Cosla Policy Position** - none
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List of Background Papers –

1. Minute of meeting of the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board on 6 November 2017
 2. Minute of meeting of the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board on 22 January 2018
 3. Minute of meeting of the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board on 19 March 2018
 4. Minute of meeting of the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board on 29 May 2018
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