

Housing Scrutiny Commission

Commission Meeting : 17th December 2015

Review of the Local Tenancy Management Service

Assistant Mayor for Housing: Cllr Andy Connelly
Lead Director: Ann Branson

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
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1. Summary

- 1.1 Housing Scrutiny Commission has been briefed on three major service reviews within the Housing Transformation Programme and has received reports on the outcomes of reviews of the Repairs Service and the Voids Service.
- 1.2 The outcome of the Local Tenancy Management Review is covered by this report. There are no proposals to change the level of service to tenants, but there will be a better definition of the services to be provided from a local base and ways in which they can be delivered more efficiently have been identified.
- 1.3 The location of local housing offices is still being considered as part of Transforming Neighbourhood Services Programme which has a consultation programme as it moves around the City.
- 1.4 There will be a (organisational) staff review which is not within the scope of this Commission however members may wish to note that subject to staff consultation the 6 Area Managers are to be replaced with 3 Neighbourhood Housing Managers and the tenancy management service will be managed in three areas from the summer of 2016 (map in Appendix A). This internal change does not affect the decisions on area offices.
- 1.5 While this report makes no proposals to reduce the level of tenancy management services, this issue will need to be considered as part of the budget setting for the next four financial years in response to the 1% rent reduction. This issue will be considered in budget reports which Housing Scrutiny will be invited to comment on as part of the budget process.

Key Recommendation of this Report

- 1.6 That the Housing Scrutiny Commission notes the outcome of the Tenancy Management Review.

2. Tenancy Management Service Review

- 2.1 The Housing Division is responsible for the management of over 21,500 council properties in Leicester. The Tenancy Management Improvement Project was set up to carry out a service review with an aim to, "**Identify**

service efficiencies and service improvements to ensure the best use of resources including buildings, for tenants and residents to access local tenancy management services”.

2.2 Section 4 and 5 of this report provides more detail on the service and process changes being proposed to improve the services we offer to tenants, leaseholders and residents.

The Service Proposal:

- An effective local tenancy management service that meets the needs of our tenants, delivered from locations across the city.
- The Neighbourhood Housing Manager will be the main point of contact for Ward members and will lead on responses to multi-service local tenancy management and repairs enquiries and complaints for their housing area.
- Three distinct Housing Areas in the City for the purposes of the delivery of the local tenancy management service. See Appendix A.
- The service will cover approximately 35 tenancy management functions and tasks, (there is no reduction in the range of services that will be delivered from a local base). See Appendix B.
- The service will aim to identify tenants most in need, reviewing vulnerable tenants at regular intervals, escalating concerns as necessary and dealing with growing issues such as hoarding.
- The service will continue to respond to recommendations to improve the quality and standard of communal cleaning.
- The Local Tenancy Management service will be part of the Transforming Neighbourhood Services Programme.
- There will be a review of tenancy management processes and procedures to ensure we provide services in the most efficient and effective way, with a focus on improving online and telephone facilities in order to improve responses to service requests.

2.3 As part of the service review a number of engagement events and workshops were held with tenancy management staff and tenants to gather information about the service. Communication briefings were also sent out to a range of stakeholders including elected members to make them aware of the service review and its aims.

2.4 Workshops were carried out with staff at all levels and they were asked about:

- Their views on the service
- If they thought there were areas for improvement
- If there were areas where there was an increase or decrease in service demand

2.5 Through these workshops all the tenancy management functions and tasks that are currently carried out were identified.

2.6 An analysis of the estimate of time tenancy management staff spent on different functions indicated that a significant amount of time was spent on

dealing with repairs issues.

- 2.7 The main feedback from staff was that they felt that they had the minimum amount of time to carry out tenancy management tasks, they also highlighted a number of areas for improvement.
- 2.8 A presentation on the project was also given to the Tenants Forum and tenants were also given an opportunity to discuss their views on the Local Tenancy Management Service and where they thought it needed to be improved.
- 2.9 Feedback from Tenants Forum and complaints data highlighted that tenants felt staff did not always have enough time to get back to them about service requests.
- 2.10 A Tenants and Customer Survey was also carried with over 100 visitors to housing offices across the city. The findings of this were that most people who used the offices lived nearby, so tenants living further away from offices tended to use them less often. Most people had access to online facilities and a significant proportion said that they would like assistance to use online services.
- 2.11 Based on all the information gathered throughout the service review the project team were able to identify areas for service improvement and efficiencies.

Key Recommendations of the Service Review

- 2.12 The review supports the separation of the line management of the repairs function. This will allow tenancy management staff to focus on tenancy management tasks and functions.
- 2.13 The service review has identified approximately 35 main functions and tasks that are expected of the Local Tenancy Management Service, the service will need to review processes and procedures to ensure the service is operating as effectively and efficiently as possible. There is no proposal to reduce the service offer. Some repairs responsibilities will continue to sit with tenancy management, see Appendix B for the full list of functions and tasks that the service will be responsible for in future. Key service changes and process changes are outlined section 4 and 5.

3. Office Review

- 3.1 We have been working closely with the Transforming Neighbourhood Services Programme to explore options for housing offices across the city.
- 3.2 Options for the 3 Housing Offices in North West (Jersey Road, Home Farm, Aikman Ave) and STAR offices in the area are being explored.

- 3.3 Current Transforming Neighbourhood Services proposals also include withdrawing Customer Services staff from the Saffron Office. Neighbourhood Services Assistants will provide the front line service in place of the Customer Service staff at the Pork Pie Library.
- 3.4 The Saffron Housing Office will be used for booked appointments.
- 3.5 Transforming Neighbourhood Services will look at the East of the City during 2016.

Key Recommendations of the Office Review

- 3.6 The Local Tenancy Management Service and the responsive repairs service will be delivered from the following locations across the city:
- St Matthews Community Centre (public access)/St Marks (staff base for tenancy management and repairs staff only)
 - Beaumont Leys (Home Farm) and Mowmacre (Jersey Road) offices subject to TNS (public access and staff base for tenancy management and repairs staff)
 - Humberstone and Rowllatts Hill offices subject to TNS (public access and staff base for tenancy management and repairs staff)
 - Saffron Pork Pie Library (public access)/Saffron Office (appointment only and staff base for tenancy management and repairs staff) and Eyres Monsell Community Centre and Housing Office (public access and staff base for tenancy management)
 - New Parks subject to TNS (public access and staff base for tenancy management and repairs staff)
 - Braunstone Housing Office (public access and staff base for tenancy management and repairs staff)
- 3.7 The front of house for housing services will be in shared service centres where possible. Some offices will be staff bases only to enable the delivery of the Local Tenancy Management Service and the responsive repairs service.

4. Service Changes

- 4.1 In order to support offices changes we will be improving our online and telephone facilities. Service users will also need to be encouraged and supported to use these channels. A number of respondents to the tenant's survey said that they would like help to access online services. The new Neighbourhood Service Assistants working at the multi-service access centres will be able to offer this kind of assistance.
- 4.2 With the introduction of Northgate, business processes are already being streamlined so that service requests can be dealt with more promptly. In

2016 we will be improving and expanding services that tenants are able to access online including the development of an online tenant's account.

- 4.3 We will also be working with the Customer Service Centre to improve scripts for the local Tenancy Management Service.
- 4.4 A report and action plan on recommendations to improve communal cleaning was presented to the Housing Scrutiny Commission and to the Assistant Mayor for Housing Councillor Connelly. A project has been set up to take these recommendations forward.

5. Process Changes

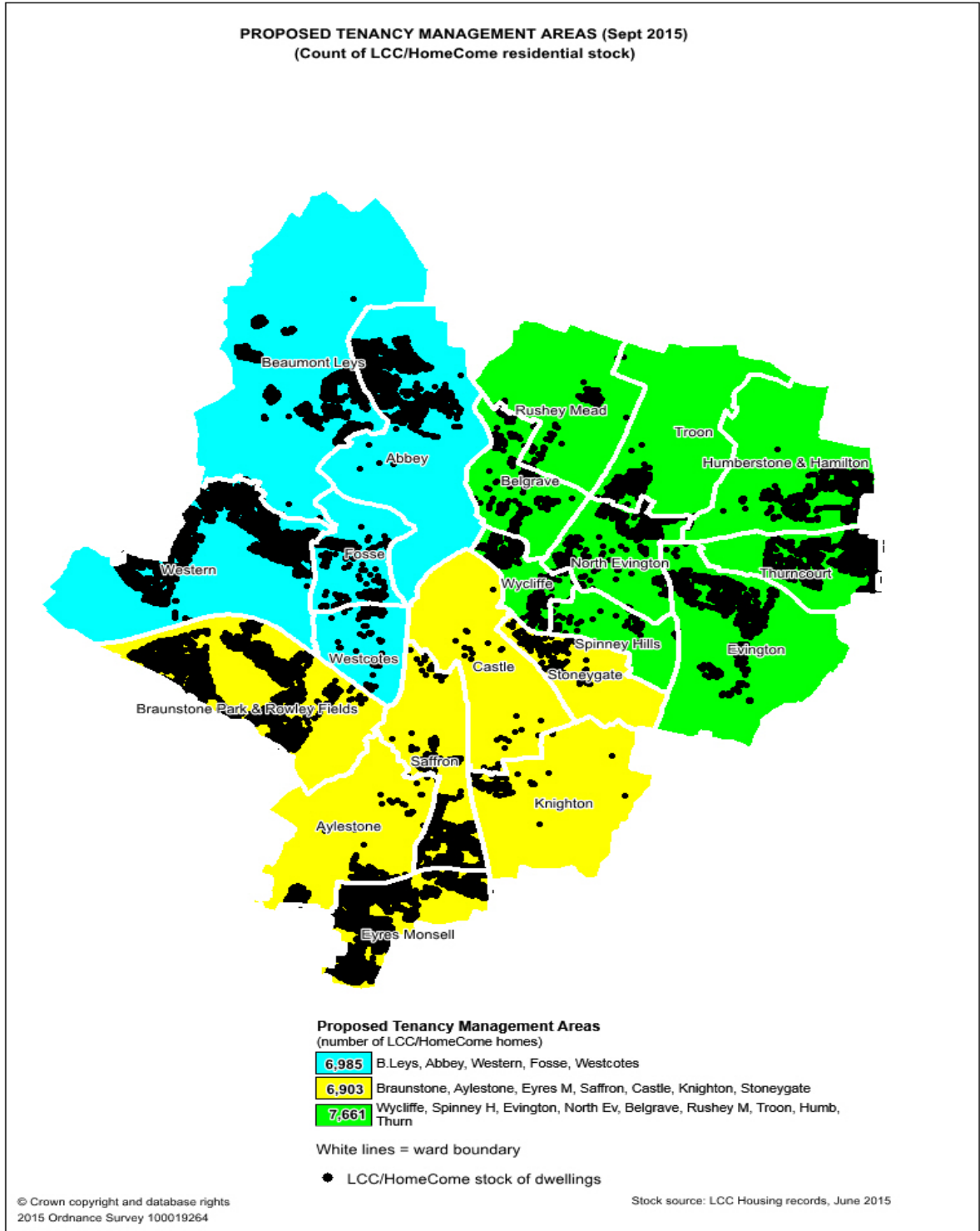
- 5.1 There are a number of areas where process changes will be made, in some of these areas improvement work has already started:
- 5.2 **Business Processes** – As part of the Phase 1 implementation of Northgate we are automating more and more of our business processes so that service requests are dealt with more quickly and efficiently. The new system will make it easier for staff to answer customer enquiries at their first point of contact.
- 5.3 **Fire Safety** – A new process map on how we deal with fire safety has been drawn up.
- 5.4 **Tenancy Visits** – A review of tenancy visits has been carried out. A simple triggers checklist will be developed for repairs operatives who visit nearly all tenanted properties throughout the course of each year. If they pick up any concerns they will alert tenancy management staff who will take the necessary action required to address them.
- 5.5 **Vulnerable Tenants** – Local Tenancy Management Officers in future will be expected to take a lead role where vulnerable tenants have been identified. Tenants will need to be referred to appropriate support agencies and the support received will need to be monitored. Officers will also need to carry out VARMs (Vulnerable Adults Risks Management), where vulnerable tenants have multiple needs. There will be close working with STAR where tenant behaviour may lead to losing their tenancy.
- 5.6 **Revised Performance Indicators** – As part of the review we will look to revised performance management indicators for the new service area.

6. Financial Implications: Peter Coles

- 6.1 Efficiency savings and savings arising from the Organisational Review will be reported in the HRA Budget Setting Report.

Proposed Tenancy Management Areas

Managers will be the key point of contact for Ward members on multi –service local tenancy management and repairs issues for their areas and will co-ordinate responses on these types of enquiries and complaints and lead on complex cases. Please see map below which shows the three new proposed tenancy management areas.



Appendix B

Local Tenancy Management Service – Summary of Proposed Future Functions and Tasks

No	Function/ Tasks
1.	Abandoned Properties/Unlawful Occupiers/ NTQs
2.	Access to Files Requests – vetting all files as suitable to supply
3.	Anti-Social Behaviour - includes working with partners such as LASBU/ case conferences
4.	Building Responsible Officer Duties
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire Alarms -Test, log repair, ensure on service contact • Fire Inspections/progressing work from risk assessments • Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water Hygiene Checks
5.	Communal Cleaning – regular checks on standard of cleaning
6.	Complaints (non- repairs)
7.	Councillor/MP enquiries
8.	Damp Enquiries – advice, assistance on condensation issues and referrals
9.	Decants – re-housing of tenants in an emergency/crisis management and structured
10.	Domestic Violence Cases
11.	Estate Management
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abandoned vehicles • Alley ways clear • Communal gardens, maintenance, improvement and removals • Estate warden referrals • Estate warden requests • Fly Tipping • Garages • Gardens in HMOs • Gates (security issues) • Graffiti • Grass, shrubs, trees LCC and grass shrubs, trees not LCC • Ground maintenance • Inspections - Logging jobs (only priority repairs)

No	Function/ Tasks
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illegally parked cars • Pest control - liaise with Environmental Health to carry out block treatments • Repair of no-man's land • Signs (reporting if damaged)
12.	Evictions and arranging storage
13.	Environment Projects (identifying areas for improvement) planning specifications and consultation with tenants and ward councillors
14.	Exchange of Contracts - Sign ups (still under discussion)
15.	First Visits
16.	Gas Gain Entry for gas/repairs and recharges
17.	General Enquires (incorrectly referred customers/ tenants just contacting the service)
18.	Home Come Inspections
19.	Harassment Cases
20.	Insulation Requests
21.	Insurance Claims and Risk Management enquiries
22.	Key Control - safe key control on door entries
23.	Management Case Transfers
24.	Mutual Exchanges
25.	Capital Programmed works enquiries and investigation
26.	Project based work – steering groups
27.	Property Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alteration to property • Car Standing • Footway Cross • Sitex • Targeted Rent Items • Unauthorised alterations
28.	Rechargeable Work
29.	Petitions
30.	Repairs Related Tasks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report jobs where required. Liaise on behalf of tenant. Encourage tenants to report repairs on line and via telephone. • Investigate and address support needs of tenants in emergency situations e.g. supply fan heaters, bellings, water, groceries • Liaise with and co-ordinate water, gas and electric in emergency situations • Provide assistance and accompany operatives in cases when tenant is difficult, potentially violent or angry • Resolve unlawful extensions especially over services often where owner occupiers or lease holders are involved • Handover of new build dealing with snagging issues - liaise with COW, Development Team, contractor or subcontractors, alarms, water, gas and electric suppliers etc • Gain best solutions for tenants in cases where Occ Health, Environmental Health and other agencies involved and have identified repairs required. (More than

No	Function/ Tasks
	repair issue also to do with well-being of tenant)
31.	Right to Buy/Leaseholders management
32.	Tenancy Changes
33.	Tenancy Conditions (Enforcement)
34.	Tenant and Resident Involvement
35.	Vulnerable Tenants (Dealing with issues such as hoarding/referrals to support services such as STAR, Social Services, OT)