

Housing Scrutiny Committee

10th October 2016

Introduction of Housing Division Structures

Lead Officer: Charlotte McGraw

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
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1. Purpose of report

This report provides an overview of the changes that have taken place within the Housing Division as part of the Housing Transformation Programme, both to the organisational structure and the changes to service delivery.

2. Briefing

2.1 Background

In September 2014 the Executive were briefed on outline plans for the Housing Division to achieve £10m in savings to contribute towards the 1% rent reduction across the division. A number of improvement projects were already in place Responsive Repairs and Voids and further projects in Tenancy Management, Gas and Planned Repairs followed. To ensure efficiency and best use of resource the projects were bought together under the umbrella of the Housing Transformation Programme (HTP.)

2.2 Drivers for change

In addition to the Government's 1% rent reduction policy, the other main driver for change was the need for improvement within certain areas of housing. The Housing Scrutiny Commission have received specific reports on the improvement projects previously. In summary, the Housing Transformation Programme had identified the following issues in performance;

- Repairs- Significant concerns had been raised by councillors and tenants in respect of service delivery, this included poor communication, lengthy processes, too many visits to complete a repair, repairs took too long and poor customer services. In 2012 there was a backlog of 9000 repairs.
- Gas- In Gas the review identified staff with gas qualifications not using their skills or for staff working outside of the Gas Service going long periods of time without using their skills
- Tenancy Management- Concerns had been raised by councillors, tenants and staff that staff were unable to focus on the delivery of the tenancy management service due to a disproportionate amount of time being focused on dealing with repairs.
- Voids and Property Lettings- a review of the service indicated lengthy void periods. A lack of accountability for the end to end process and the service did not always focus on the needs of the customer.

2.2 Main proposals

The key service proposals within the Housing Transformation Programme were;

- To separate out the repairs function from the tenancy management function to enable staff to focus on their specialisms;
- To group repairs by functions rather than trades;
- To enable tenancy management staff to focus on delivering the 35 key local tenancy management functions;
- To provide a Local Tenancy Management Service to customers within 3 distinct housing areas;
- To reduce re-let time on voids properties;
- To restructure the management of Voids and Property Lettings in order to provide dedicated team leaders for the voids, lettings and technical teams.

2.3 Organisational review

The changes set out to service delivery, set out in 2.2, necessitated the need for an organisational review which included 421 members of staff, approximately half of the housing division. The review commenced in December 2015 and included a detailed consultation period with staff and Unions which ended in April 2016. As part of planning for the implementation of new ways of working from 31st October the recruitment for the new structure commenced in May 2015 and has recently concluded.

As part of the development of a new structure, Heads of Service portfolios have been reviewed and a revised structure chart showing responsibilities is attached in Appendix 1 for your information. Area details for District Managers are included in Appendix 2 for your information.

2.3.1 Changes to Tenancy Management Services

The main changes to the delivery of the tenancy management service will relate to the removal of the repairs function to enable tenancy management staff to focus on the delivery of the 35 tenancy management functions (as reported to Scrutiny on 17th December 2015, contained in Appendix 3.) This responds to the concerns that councillors initially raised that tenancy management staff spent a disproportionate amount of time dealing with repairs. The reduction in the number of staff relates to the removal of repairs and does not represent any reduction in the offer to our tenants.

The main organisational structure change relates to;

- a reduction in the number of managers moving from 6 Area Managers to 3 District Managers. These Managers will manage 3 x Neighbourhood Housing Areas (East, West and South.) Two of these posts have been filled and the first is subject to ongoing recruitment;

- a reduction in the number of Team Leaders from 18 to 10. All 10 of these posts have been filled;
- a reduction in the number of Estate Management Officers (Neighbourhood Housing Officers) from 50 to 38.6. All posts have been filled;
- an increase in the number of Assistant Estate Management Officer (Assistant Neighbourhood Housing officers) from 8.5 to 12. 5.5 posts have been filled and 6.5 will be filled through a recruitment exercise.

The removal of the repairs function from Tenancy Management (and establishment of a separate repairs service) will enable tenancy management staff to focus on the core areas of service delivery. In addition, there will be a specific focus on the following areas;

- Vulnerability- Officers are currently working to establish mechanisms to identify the most vulnerable tenants in each area. District Managers will then be responsible for ensuring that each tenant identified receives a visit from their Neighbourhood Housing Officer within the first 3 months of being identified. The NHO will complete a Welfare Support Access Checklist ensuring appropriate support, be it signposting or referrals, takes place. There will then be a further review 3 months later. Managers will ensure their staff are effectively performance managed to ensure this work takes place;
- Communal Cleaning- based on the Housing Scrutiny Commission recommendations, officers are currently developing a revised procedure and checklist to ensure this is undertaken effectively making best use of resources. Again performance will be managed in this area to ensure compliance;
- Fire inspections- Officers will receive a briefing on the revised process map and a revised procedure will be put in place for go-live. Neighbourhood Housing Officers will also be taking responsibility for the fire safety in sheltered accommodation.

2.3.2 Changes to the Repairs Service

The main change to repairs has been the relocation of the delivery of the repairs service from the Districts to a separate Repairs Service and the grouping of repairs by functions rather than trades. This will mean that services to tenants will be aligned to specific types of work including window and door repairs, kitchen and bathroom repairs, external works etc. Repairs teams will be located around the city although they will provide a citywide service.

The expected key benefits to tenants of the ongoing changes of the RPR improvement programme are:

- Improved service delivery to tenants. Improvements are being made by ensuring repairs are undertaken by teams with the right materials and skills meaning more jobs can be completed at the first visit. We also have amended our working hours which mean we will have more staff working when most tenants

request their repairs to be completed so we can respond quicker to demand. The emergency repairs service is available at all other times.

- Maximising our multi-skilled staff. For example we have changed the way we operate to ensure one service area is responsible for gas, heating and hot water so tenants don't have to have multiple visits. Before if a tenant reported no hot water, if this was a fault on the boiler a gas engineer would be required, and if this was a fault with a radiator a plumber would be required. Now we will have one role that will be able to fix both faults.
- Better trained staff. There are much fewer staff who will be gas qualified. This will ensure all the staff who are gas qualified are regularly undertaking a range of gas work and maintain their capability in this critical area.

This has resulted in the following changes to the organisational structure;

- Creation of 3 Repairs Managers
- Creation of a Gas and Heating Service Manager replacing Gas Services Manager

Since the commencement of the Repairs Improvement Project in 2012 significant progress has been made on reducing the number of outstanding repairs, reducing complaints and increasing the number of repairs completed on the first visit.

2.3.3 Changes to the Voids and Property Lettings

The main change to Voids and Property Lettings has been to create a more joined up service focusing on managing performance to reduce re-let times through dedicated teams focusing on Voids and Property Letting.

The Housing Scrutiny Commission receives regular updates on progress in respect of Voids and Property Lettings.

The key benefits to tenants are;

- Development of a new voids and property lettings process that will directly reduce re-let times and therefore meet housing need as early as possible. It will enable us to accurately inform tenants with regard to their sign up and moving in date. The new Letting Standard will ensure a consistent standard across all our properties and will ensure that all properties meet an appropriate standard prior to letting across all property types. Prospective tenants will be aware of the standard to expect and it will increase tenant satisfaction.
- Kitchen refurbishment in voids is now been carried out where possible by our operatives rather than by contractors. This has brought about a saving in labour costs. This will mean that our capital programme funding will go further and more kitchen refurbishments carried out in our properties.

The key staffing changes relate to;

- Creation of 2 Voids and Property Lettings Manager posts replacing 1 Voids Manager and 1 Property Lettings Manager
- Creation of 1 Property Lettings Team Leader.

Next steps

The new organisational structure will go live from 31st October. Officers have been working to ensure that tenants should not be significantly disrupted by the changes to the housing structure. Implementation Plans are in place to ensure that staff are being appropriately supported and training is in place.

3. Financial implications

The new structure will achieve savings of £1.5m, as previously reported in the business case. Allowing for expected redundancy costs the £1.5m will be achieved from April 2017.

Pete Coles
Principal Accountant, Housing

4. Legal implications

There are no implications arising directly from the recommendations.

Acting Director of Housing
Chris Burgin
 City Hall & Ian Marlow Centre, Blackbird Road

Head of Service

Simon Nicholls

Key Service Areas

Capital Investment
 Housing Development
 Empty Homes
 Voids
 Property Lettings & CBL
 Building Services

Key Priorities

Capital Programme Spend & Delivery
 Affordable Housing Programme & Building
 Reducing Void Loss & CT Costs
 Reducing Carbon Footprint
 Delivery of the Lettings service
 Technical Services Delivery – Planned Maintenance

Headline Project & Service/Staffing Reviews

Voids Improvement Project
 Fire Safety Project
 Tower Block Refurbishment
 Extra Care Schemes
 Housing Technical Service Spending Review
 Subsidiary Housing Company lead

Lead Areas

District Heating System & Engie
 Contract Management
 Division Procurement Plan
 Management of Major Capital Projects
 Water Hygiene
 Asbestos Management (not waste)

Key Meetings /Groups

Affordable Housing Programme Board

Head of Service

Vijay Desor

Key Service Areas

Income Management Team
 Housing & Transport Administration

Key Priorities

Rental Collection of £85m

Headline Projects &Service /Staffing Reviews

Review of Housing & Transport Administration services
 Welfare Benefits Project (UC Roll Out/LHA Cap)
 Pay to Stay & Flexible Tenancies roll out
 HT Phase 3 Delivery
 Project Lead NG – Phase 3 – Rent & Channel Shift

Lead Areas

Income Collection
 Homecome
 Administration

Key Meetings / Groups

ASC Link (housing)
 Northgate Programme Board

Head of Service

Suki Supria

Key Service Areas

Districts - West
 Districts - East
 Districts - South
 STAR (HRA)
 Family Support Service & Corner Club
 Gypsy & Travellers Site Management

Key Priorities

Delivery Lead of Tenancy Management Services
 Targeted delivery of Floating Support Services
 Environmental Budget

Headline Projects &Service /Staffing Reviews

Tower Block Project
 Transforming Neighbourhoods Service - Housing
 Tenancy Management Improvement Project
 STAR Service & Spending Review
 HT Phase 3 Delivery

Lead Areas

LASBU & Anti Social Behaviour
 Gypsy & Traveller sites
 Equal Opportunity Lead
 Estate Services (Grounds Maintenance /
 Play Equip etc)
 Grounds Maintenance

Key Meetings / Groups

PREVENT Board
 TNS Steering Group

Acting Director of Housing
Chris Burgin
City Hall & Ian Marlow Centre, Blackbird Road

Head of Service
Caroline Carpendale

Key Service Areas

Homelessness Prevention & Outreach
Housing Options
Hostels & Supported Housing
STAR (GF)

Key Priorities

Eliminate Rough Sleeping
Delivery of Effective Homelessness Services
Phase 2 Housing GF Spending Review

Headline Projects & Service / Staffing Reviews

Housing GF Homeless Services Spending Review
HB Cap – Supported Housing Model
Project Lead NG – Phase 3
Homeless Strategy Refresh & contracts retender
Housing Register review
Hostel Operational Service review

Lead Areas

Housing Allocations Policy & Management of Councils
Housing Register
Statutory Homelessness
Private Sector Landlord & Tenant Functions
Rough Sleeping
Homelessness Strategy 2013-18
Voluntary Section / Faith Groups

Key Meetings / Groups

Homeless Reference Group
MAPPA 2 & 3
Corporate Parenting
Homelessness Partnership
NSNO Board
Northgate Programme Board
Domestic Violence Delivery Group

Head of Service
Ian Craig

Key Service Areas

Housing Repairs & Maintenance
Home Maintenance
Home Improvement Team

Key Priorities

Delivery lead of highly effective Repairs Service
Technical Services Programme– Repairs

Headline Projects & Service / Staffing Reviews

Responsive & Planned Repairs Improvement project
H&S – (inc Hand Arm Vibration Project)
HTP Phase 3 Delivery
Project Lead NG – Phase 3 – Repairs & Channel Shift
& Mobile working replacement (business lead)
CCTV Replacement

Lead Areas

Divisional & Craft Health & Safety
Leaseholders
IMC Site Management
Severe Weather & Emergency Planning
Disabled Facilities Grants

Key Meetings / Groups

Trade Union Link

Acting Director of Housing
Chris Burgin
 City Hall & Ian Marlow Centre, Blackbird Road

Head of Service
Charlotte McGraw

Head of Service
Martin Clewlow

Key Service Areas

Housing Transformation Team
 Programme Management – HTP
 Homelessness Contract Monitoring
 Business Support
 Programme Management – Technical Services
 Programme Management – Northgate
 Training Centre of Excellence
 Apprentices / Neighbourhood Improvement

Key Priorities

Delivery Phase 2 Implementation Plans
 Develop Phase 3 Spending Review
 Delivery of Channel shift across all service areas
 Divisional Training & Development
 Departmental Project Work

Headline Projects & Service / Staffing Reviews

Northgate Phase 2 - Channel Shift & Mobile Working lead
 Hardware Tablets
 Technical Services Programme
 HTP – Phase 2 Staffing Review & Implementation Project
 Review & Renewal of Mobile Working Solution
 HTP Phase 3 Spending Review & HRA Budget 17/18
 Review of Housing Training Services
 Estate Warden Service review
 Housing ASB Service review

Lead Areas

Performance Management
 Tenant Involvement
 Service & Business Planning
 Programme & Project Management
 Workforce Planning (Craft/Office)

Key Meetings / Groups

Adults & Children's Safeguarding
 Technical Service Programme Board
 Northgate Programme Board
 HTP Programme Board

Key Service Areas

Gas
 Stores & Fleet
 Fleet – Transport (Maintenance)
 Fleet – Transport Operations

Key Priorities

Fleet Management & Delivery of Fleet Reductions
 Deliver Stores savings and improved service
 Technical Services Delivery – Fleet & Stores

Headline Projects & Service / Staffing Reviews

Stores Review
 Review & Renewal of Agresso IT System
 Refugee Relocation
 Corporate Fleet Savings & vehicle Reduction Project lead
 Trackers
 Fleet & Passenger Transport – staffing review
 Roll out of LCC New Boiler installation scheme

Lead Areas

Workforce Planning
 Out of Hours Emergency Repairs Service
 Transport
 Call Centre (TARS) & OOH telephone Contract
 Apprentices
 Waste Management Lead
 Pinnacle Liaison

Key Meetings / Groups

Fleet Steering Group

Appendix 2

Neighbourhood Housing Area	District Manager	Office	Neighbourhood Housing Team Leaders
Neighbourhood Housing Area West	Marie Murray 0116 4545237 marie.murray@leicester.gov.uk	New Parks	Mandy Smith
		Beaumont Leys	Ramila Dhobi
		Mowmacre	Vanshree Raja
Neighbourhood Housing Area East	Suki Supria (pending appointment of Manager) 0116 4545125 Suki.supria@leicester.gov.uk	St Marks	Paresh Chandarana
		St Matthews Neighbourhood Hub	Paresh Chandarana
		Highfields/St Peters	Jay Rughani
		Humberstone	Marlene Blake
		Rowlatts Hill	Andy East

Neighbourhood Housing Area South	Ellen Watts 0116 4546644 ellen.watts@leicester.gov.uk	Braunstone	Sally Morris
		Saffron	Kevin Byron
		Eyres Monsell Community Centre	Kamina Rughani

NB Please note a senior manager will be available to cover out of hours emergencies

Appendix 3

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
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alley ways clear
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communal gardens, maintenance, improvement and removals
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estate warden referrals
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estate warden requests
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fly Tipping
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Garages
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gardens in HMOs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gates (security issues)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graffiti
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grass, shrubs, trees LCC and grass shrubs, trees not LCC
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ground maintenance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspections - Logging jobs (only priority repairs)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illegally parked cars
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pest control - liaise with Environmental Health to carry out block treatments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repair of no-man's land

No	Function/ Tasks
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Car Standing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Footway Cross
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sitex
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted Rent Items
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate and address support needs of tenants in emergency situations e.g. supply fan heaters, bellings, water, groceries
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with and co-ordinate water, gas and electric in emergency situations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide assistance and accompany operatives in cases when tenant is difficult, potentially violent or angry
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resolve unlawful extensions especially over services often where owner occupiers or lease holders are involved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handover of new build dealing with snagging issues - liaise with COW, Development Team, contractor or subcontractors, alarms, water, gas and electric suppliers etc
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gain best solutions for tenants in cases where Occ Health, Environmental Health and other agencies involved and have identified repairs required. (More than repair issue also to do with well-being of tenant)
31.	Right to Buy/Leaseholders management
32.	Tenancy Changes

No	Function/ Tasks
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)