

“The Beast from the East”

Beast from the East

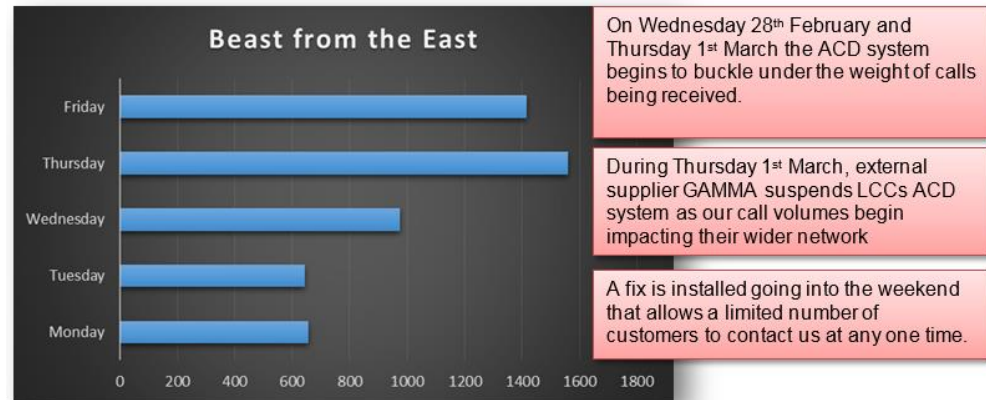
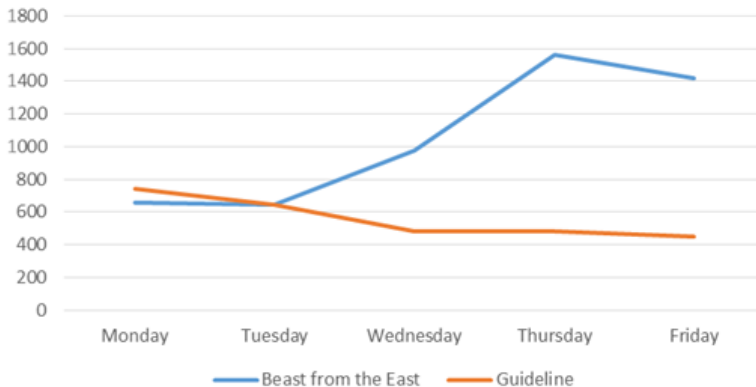
- During week commencing 26th February 2018 much of Europe and Britain experienced extreme cold weather with temperatures been recorded at below -10 degrees.
- Households throughout the country were experiencing boiler failures due to the condensate pipe freezing where the pipe runs externally to a drain.
- Unfortunately Leicester was not exempt from this severe weather and therefore many of our tenants were also suffering with the same problem.
- The last time we were struck by a similar scenario was 2009, some 9 years earlier.

Repair Calls Received

IT issues mean we cannot fully know how many customers were trying to contact us – many were not able to get through.

At peak, customer support received a minimum increase of 225% in repairs calls compared to numbers usually expected.

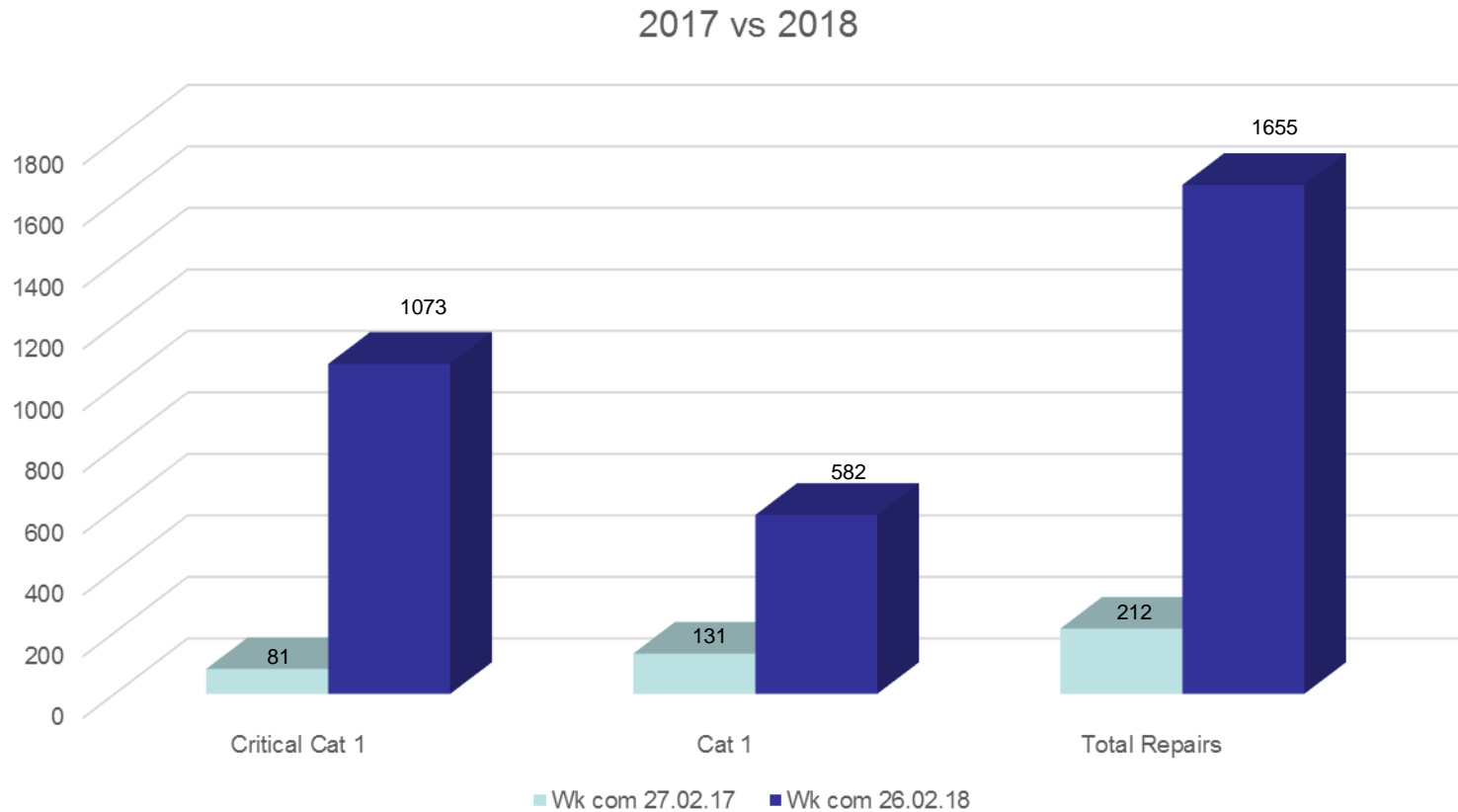
Call Volume during the Beast from the East



- At peak – Customer Support had over **100** calls queuing across the phone lines
 - 5 calls within the queue would be normal
 - 25 would be busy
 - 30 & 40 would be exceptional.
- 5 new calls were arriving in customer services every minute, each call takes approximately 5 minutes to handle, therefore in the time it took to deal with 1 x call, 25 new calls were arriving in the queue.
- The ACD system handles calls to many other areas of the local authority – Customer Support is just a snapshot of the overall call volume being handled by the system.



Boiler Repair Requests Received



An increase of 1443 jobs compared to the same week in 2017 - 780% increase in demand!

Actions taken to maximise resources

- All Annual gas Safety checks were postponed moving all Engineers onto essential repairs.
- All other non essential repair works were also postponed
- Gas trained staff from our voids section were drafted in to help
- An additional 200 Fan Heaters were purchased and other non Gas trained craft staff were used to deliver to the most vulnerable
- Many craft staff worked very long hours to get to as many customers as possible.
- In addition to the normal 2 x out of hours engineers over the weekend we secured additional commitment as follows:
 - Friday Evening 12 x Engineers taking 165 jobs
 - Saturday 8 x Engineers taking 140 jobs
 - Sunday 7 x Engineers taking 115 jobs.
 - **Total additional jobs = 420**

The Thaw – it eventually came!

- Whilst the volume of repair requests were still relatively high towards the beginning of week com 3rd March the chart below shows these soon tailed off towards the end of the week.

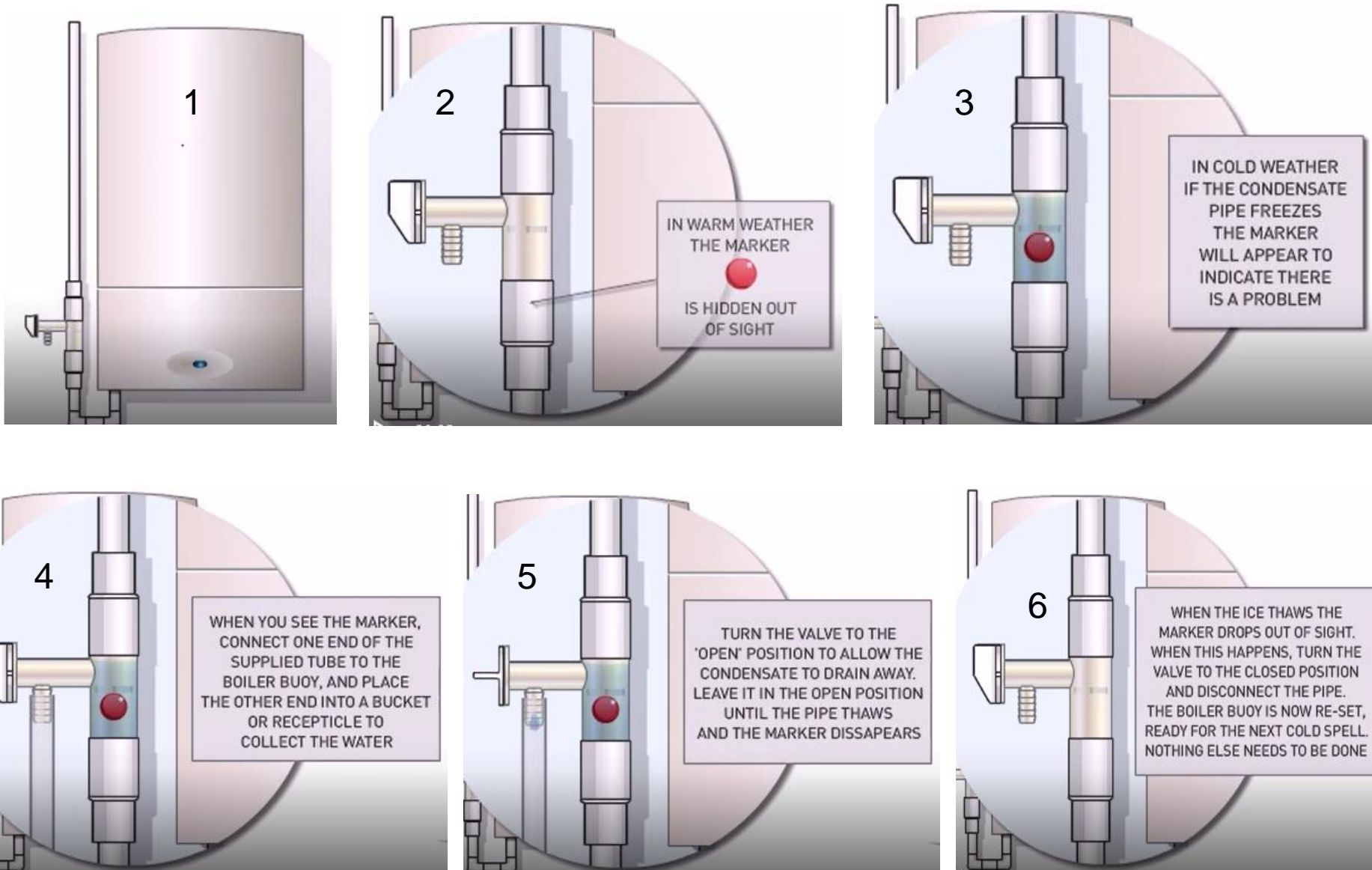
Priority Critical & R1	Status	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday (til 13:45)
		03 March 2018	04 March 2018	05 March 2018	06 March 2018	07 March 2018	08 March 2018	09 March 2018
Emergency Totals	Total	188	7	228	116	90	66	33

- The next part of our challenge was to return to over 500 properties to reinstate the condense pipes.
- These were cut internally near to the boiler, this was then re-routed and extended in most cases down into a bucket below the boiler. By doing this it bypassed the external frozen condense.
- A new Product was sourced the “boiler buoy” this was only launched in February 2018. These were installed into the internal condense pipe of these properties.

Boiler Buoy

- To date approximately 650 boiler buoys have been installed
- All Gas & Heating Engineers carry 2 x boiler buoys as van stock
- All new boiler installations where the condensate pipework has to run externally will have a boiler buoy fitted
- The boiler buoy will not stop a condensate from freezing but it will allow the end user to operate the boiler buoy should we have another extreme weather event.
- Users are advised how to operate the device when installed and user instructions are left with the customer.
- What is a boiler Buoy

The boiler buoy – what does it do



Other Additions – Housing Website & Video

- Specific guidance is now provided to tenants on how to unblock a frozen condensate pipe.
- In support of this advice there is also a web link for tenants to watch a video produced by Worcester Bosch.
- Prior to this advice being added to our web page both legal services and risk management were consulted.
- At the time of the incident a decision was made not to offer advice as we had grave concerns that some of our customers could potentially injure themselves. There was the potential for the message to be delivered inconsistently.
- The majority of our combination boilers are fitted in airing cupboards which are generally located on the first floor and therefore the condense pipe is at high level and cannot be reached from the ground.
- See link below

<https://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-community/housing/council-tenants/housing-repairs/emergency-housing-repairs/>

Any Questions