

Item

## **Estates & Facilities Service Review View and Compliance**

### **Update**

**To:**

Councillor Richard Johnson, Executive Councillor for Housing  
Housing Scrutiny Committee 23 June 2020

**Report by:**

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**Wards affected:**

All Wards

This report is for information and not for decision.

### **1. Executive Summary**

The report provides an update on the Estates & Facilities Service Review and information on compliance related work within the service, including a summary on gas servicing, electrical testing, recent audit actions and fire safety.

### **2. Recommendations**

The Executive Councillor is recommended to note the progress of the service review and compliance related work detailed within the report.

### **3. E&F Service Review Update**

An in-depth service review was conducted in 2019 with the external support of the East of England Local Government Association (EELGA). That review included the engagement of staff widely across the Estates & Facilities service.

This review is not primarily a 'savings exercise' (unlike the Housing Transformation Review of 2017). However, it is appropriate to consider how the Council can get the best value out of its existing maintenance budgets for the benefit of the tenants, particularly on external contractors in connection with response repairs and voids (where in principle, we should seek to internalise work as far as it is operationally practicable and commercially rational to do so) and we need to become both more efficient and effective in the service we deliver.

As such, there is a compelling need for change and this underpins my mission for the service, "To be a customer focused and business-like Estates & Facilities Service that manages and maintains the Council's housing stock and other buildings in a safe, efficient and financially sustainable manner."

The review is intended to help modernise the Estates & Facilities service in line with this mission, and so assure its sustainability.

Priority areas for action identified included:

- Reducing cost of repairs by improving efficiency whilst upholding our commitment to professional standards.
- Improving appointment system and customer experience.
- Utilising operatives time more effectively through improved scheduling of work.
- Income is maximised, through appropriate skillsets in the teams and rechargeable repairs identified and income recovered where appropriate.
- Reducing void time, to allow faster re-occupancy for people on the housing needs register
- Appropriate allocation of and accountability for work.
- Assuring compliance across the service.

The proposal made within the staffing restructure build on the themes identified during an independent review and subsequent team engagement events – these are:

1. Structure: Right people are doing the right jobs and appropriate resourcing
2. Responsibility and accountability: More accountability with staff responsible for explaining what they have done and why, ownership and pride

3. Efficiency and Effectiveness: Improved outcomes within constrained resources through improved productivity, team working and better IT
4. Performance Management: Deliver what we promise, better customer service and demonstrable value for money
5. Risk Management: Compliance and assurance
6. Communication and Engagement: Right information shared at the right time and full involvement of internal and external stakeholders

Capacity and capability building are important, so that staff can develop suitable skills and there is deepened knowledge within the team to ensure service resilience. In line with this, in developing these proposals, we have reviewed:

- The overall structure of the team.
- Job roles and responsibilities.
- Assessed the changes in service delivery both now and in the near future.

Building for the future is also important and we will be establishing enhanced career progression opportunities such as apprenticeships to bridge gaps in service delivery and aid succession planning across the workforce.

A staffing restructure has been proposed and formal Consultation paper published on 18th February, which provided staff with the opportunity to comment and give feedback. The approval and implementation of the proposals has been delayed for two reasons – the volume of useful feedback which I wanted to be able to digest and consider properly and the Government restrictions placed upon us due to the Covid -19 pandemic and the complexities that we faced with the situation at the time. The restructure will be implemented this year.

## **4. Compliance Progress report**

### **4.1 Electrical Audit**

The Electrical audit that was undertaken in April 2019, it identified a total of 16 actions (3 High and 13 Medium priority), 15 of the actions have been completed with the remaining one is reliant on and can only be completed with the introduction of the Orchard Asset module later this year. The Orchard

Asset module will provide us with additional functionality that we do not currently have within the existing software we use.

The action that is not completed is:

Action No.	Action Required
1.	Upon completion of void inspections, all electrical certificates should be processed on AM Tech and the final copy should be included in IDOX against the property reference.

The actions that the audit identified and have been completed were:

Action No.	Actions Required
2.	<p>A report will be generated from Orchard which highlights void properties and the date of inspections and this should be reconciled to copies of valid electrical certificates.</p> <p>Audit recommends this report is generated on a monthly basis and used as a control to reconcile the number of void properties to electrical certificates enabling the service to take appropriate action for any certificates not received/not yet processed.</p>
3.	An electrical inspection shall be ordered in all cases where there is no inspection date, or where an inspection has not been completed for 10 years.
4.	<p>There should be a formal process in place where a minimum sample of 10% of the monthly inspections is reviewed by an independent engineer within the team.</p> <p>It is acknowledged that at the time of Audit reporting, a spreadsheet has been prepared and 1 inspection per engineer has been carried out]</p>
5.	<p>Void procedures will be developed and include details of the voids process that staff need to adhere to when carrying out electrical inspections.</p> <p>Procedures should include details of the process to follow when an inspection fails or when any remedial works are required to the property following an inspection.</p> <p>The procedures should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> details of quality reviews,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> processing of certificates within the AM Tech system</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> inclusion of certificates within IDOX.</li> </ul>
6.	The final Service Specifications for Electrical Hard Wire Testing should be issued to TSG as soon as possible so they can start to provide the necessary information to the Council as per the additional requirements that have been included within the revised Specifications.
7.	<p>Details of all contractors and sub-contractors used by TSG should be recorded on a Register to confirm adequate checks have been undertaken to confirm engineers are suitably qualified and are members of an approved organisation.</p> <p>This should be updated as and when new contractors are employed and</p>

	discussed at the monthly contract meetings.
8.	Where engineers are self-employed and operate on their own, there should be a formal mechanism in place whereby TSG reviews at least 10% of all inspections undertaken by an individual engineer.
9.	Linking to MAP 8 above, a formal quality review process by TSG should ensure electrical certificates are reviewed as soon as possible following an inspection to ensure any areas of non-compliance are addressed immediately.
10.	The Service should review whether the 14 days specified within the Service Specification is adequate. Upon completion of the inspections, certificates should be uploaded into CEMAR promptly and this should be checked by the Council officers to ensure certificates have been received, or further investigated if they have not been received.
11.	Management need to monitor the number of properties that have had access issues and undertake joint working within the Council to try and gain access to properties where possible. If there is no opportunity to complete inspections, the team should consider what preventative action can be taken to mitigate future risk.
12.	There should be a formal Quality Review process in place where at least 10% of all inspections undertaken by an engineer has been reviewed by an independent engineer. Details of any Quality issues should be provided to CCC and discussed at the contract meetings.
13.	The process of Quality Reviews should be detailed within the Service Specification and any issues arising should be discussed in the monthly contract meetings.
14.	Audit recommends the Service generate and analyse management information to identify the: <input type="checkbox"/> Number of electrical inspections undertaken in the month for both Voids and HWT. <input type="checkbox"/> Number of properties Passed/Failed – (This is a suggested recommendation and Management should review whether this information will be useful to them). These management indicators should be reported to the 'Management Team' to monitor the testing and compliance status of HRA properties and help budget for any future works to the properties.
15.	All issues that remain unresolved should be raised as an 'EWN' and consolidated into a 'Risk Reduction' action plan with TSG to ensure any non-compliance certification issues are resolved and addressed to minimise these issues recurring in the future.
16.	The performance data provided in the monthly contractor's report should be reviewed with the data held within the CEMAR system and any differences are investigated.

## 4.2 Gas Audit

The Gas Compliance audit that was undertaken in May 2019, it identified at total of 13 actions (8 High and 5 Medium priority), 12 of the actions have been completed with the remaining one is reliant on and can only be completed with the introduction of the Orchard Asset module later this year. As previously stated, the Orchard Asset module will provide us with additional functionality that we do not currently have within the existing software we use.

The action that is not completed is:

<b>Action No.</b>	<b>Action Required</b>
10.	Introduction of an IT system to reduce the use of spreadsheets

The actions that the audit identified and have been completed were:

<b>Action No.</b>	<b>Action Required</b>
1.	Gas Engineers Registration Records <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Produce new register for all gas engineers (DLO, contractors and quality reviewer) including name, license number, expiry date, qualifications, training records/dates.</li> <li>• Copy of all engineers GasSafe Register ID cards to be retained on file</li> </ul>
2.	Quality Reviews – Contract <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formalise gas quality assurance process/contract. Undertake tender process to formalise quality assurance process – consider joint procurement with SCDC.</li> </ul>
3.	Quality Reviews – Inspection Reports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality inspection reports obtained/retained against property address.</li> <li>• Record any quality issues that have been raised to ensure resolved promptly.</li> </ul>
4.	Quality Reviews – Inspection Reports Summary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central record of properties that have been quality reviewed, including when and whether any issues identified.</li> <li>• Create new job in Orchard, with completion only entered on receipt of quality inspection report. Report to be put on IDOX.</li> </ul>
5.	Mears Servicing Records <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss with Mears whether they can reschedule servicing dates based on new installation dates.</li> </ul>

6.	Gas Certificates  Periodic checks to ensure LGSRs are being filed against correct property address/UPRN.
7.	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) Records  • Periodic quality checks on performance data of KPI information given by Mears.
8.	Meaningful KPIs  • New KPI: Number of day's property without valid certificate.
9.	Peter Cowell Properties – - Omitted from LGSR Service Record  • Formal mechanism/process between Development and E&F (and other areas) to ensure details of any changes in assets are provided so service records are updated.
11.	LGSRs – non-compliance  • Update manual process of checking LGSRs • Explore possible systems that identify any non-conformance issues from LGSRs
12.	LGSR Record  Review LGSR spreadsheet to ensure fully updated.
13.	LGSR Reconciliation to Mears records  Complete list of Council properties to be periodically reconciled to property records held on Mears system.

#### 4.3 Gas Servicing

Mears are contracted to complete our gas servicing and maintenance. The table below shows their performance since January 2020 and prior to January they have constantly achieved 100% compliance. The month of April includes the change of approach for gaining access in line with the Covid-19 Guidance issued to take in consideration those tenants that were self-isolating and shielding.

	Jan 20		Feb 20		Mar 20		Apr 20
<b>Services completed</b>	686		803		642		605
<b>service compliance</b>	100%		100%		100%		99%
<b>overdue within month</b>	0		0		0		2

#### 4.4 Electrical Testing

78% of the programmed electrical testing was completed for financial year 19/20, the remaining 22% were not carried out due to no access from tenants. We have identified this as a cause for concern and are putting in place with our contractors newly worded access letters and an incentive scheme. If the tenant responds to the contractor and arranges an appointment, they are entered into a prize draw.

All properties that are planned for electrical testing this financial year have been ordered with contractors.

#### 4.5 Fire Safety

The Council's Fire Safety Strategy was approved by the S&R Committee in October 2019, as part of the strategy we have developed a Fire Risk Management Group (FRMG) who will ensure that the recommendations and other fire related issues are considered and implemented as appropriate and necessary to fulfil the commitments set out in the Fire Safety Policy.

As part of this preparatory work our Fire Safety Advisor was instructed to review the Grenfell Tower Enquiry Phase 1 Report Overview that was published in October 2019. The objective was to look at the recommendations made in this report in relation to the Council's Housing stock. The Council, along with other social landlords, acknowledges that it will need to respond appropriately to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry report and has been proactive by making progress with some of the areas raised by the inquiry recommendations through fire risk assessments and fire safety advice received.

Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Service (CFRS) have formed their own working group in response to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry report. They have been approached to attend June's FRMG meeting to establish productive liaison and communication channels. This will facilitate any outstanding work the Council needs to progress to implement the recommendations where they are relevant to the Council's buildings. This includes sharing information about the higher occupancy flats, considering evacuation plans and better signage and numbering of floors. Other work includes engagement with tenants and residents of sheltered schemes to improve fire safety awareness including evacuation procedures. Given the national attention on fire safety in modern residential buildings, closer working with the HDA, including in the



early stages of new build projects, is being developed to deliver appropriate fire safety standards.

The initial work the Council has identified it needs to undertake from the phase 1 review:

- Many of the inquiry recommendations will require close working and liaison with Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Service, who themselves need to respond to the recommendations made. This is to share information for the higher occupancy residential buildings especially Hanover Court which is 'high rise'. Decisions need to be made concerning evacuation plans, signage and any additional information regarding the constructional and fire protection features of these buildings.
- To initiate this work, CFRS have been invited to be part of the Fire Risk Management Group which meets again on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2020.
- Flat entrance doors and frequency of inspection has yet to be defined legislatively but we anticipated that regular checks will be required. CCC are waiting to have this confirmed later in 2020. This matter and the implications have been considered ahead of any announcements. In the meantime, checks of fire doors generally in all non-residential buildings are being incorporated into the new format fire safety management plans.
- A program for replacing fire doors and remedial fire safety actions from fire risk assessments is ongoing.
- Tenant engagement and provision of fire safety information is to be provided through fire safety information and talks to residents in sheltered schemes and through additional fire safety input for Housing Services community teams.
- Ensuring that there is a joined-up approach between the developer and CCC with new build flats and their fire safety strategies has begun and will be developed through 2020/21.

At the end of January 2020, the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government published 'Advice for Building Owners of Multi-storey, Multi-occupied residential Buildings'. This is a document that consolidates the 'Advice Notes' so far issued by government following the Grenfell Tower fire as issues emerged and guidance was provided.

The document has been reviewed and a briefing note provided to the Council. This highlights previous recommendations from those individual advice notes and any new recommendations based on fresh guidance from MHCLG.

We have a comprehensive fire risk assessment schedule and fire safety programme of works in place. The recommendations from the fire risk assessments are recorded and programmed in accordance with the risk assessments.

The Council have increased the frequency of the Fire Risk Assessments it undertakes and completes more detailed surveys when the type 1 assessments provide evidence to support this.

During 19/20 we delivered the following fire safety measures:

- Installation of 1781 heat detectors. The Council has made a commitment to install heat detectors in the kitchens of all Council homes to provide additional protection in the event of fire. This is over and above the legal requirement for existing dwellings. It is expected that this programme will be completed in March 2022.
- Replacement of 1318 smoke detectors. Smoke detectors are replaced every 10 years in line with the recommended lifespan of the devices. The Housing Health and Safety Rating System requires that there should be "sufficient properly designed and appropriately sited smoke and/or heat detectors with alarms in dwellings."
- Replacement of over 100 non-compliant fire doors and surveys of around 400 doors ready for installation of new fire doors
- Survey, design, and tender of fire safety improvements to 188 maisonettes - commencement of work was delayed by Covid 19

There were unavoidable delays in the authority's ability to order Fire Doors during 2019 because of national debate about the standard of fire doors which would be subject to the Government agreeing satisfactory certification following the Grenfell fire.

The following fire safety measures have been ordered with our contractors and are being programmed for delivery in 20/21:

- Installation of internal fire doors and fire protection to 188 above ground floor maisonettes
- Installation of external fire doors to over 300 fire doors at Hanover Court, Princess Court, Kingsway flats and other flats
- Continuation of the programme to replace all no-compliant “Manse” fire doors
- Installation of new emergency lighting in blocks of flats in the Hawkins Road estate
- Improvements to vents and glazing facing onto escape routes in 84 locations
- Continuation of the heat detector installation programme to all properties
- Continuation of the smoke detector replacement programme
- Fire compartmentation works to houses that have been converted into flats

## **5. Implications**

### **5.1 Financial Implications**

There are no new financial implications directly relating to the content of this report.

### **5.2 Staffing Implications**

There are no new staffing implications directly relating to this report. The service review restructure holds staffing implications that are dealt with through the organisational change policy, formal consultation, and implementation process.

### **5.3 Equality & Poverty Implications**

There are no new equality and poverty implications associated with this report. An EQIA has been developed for the service restructure and is included within the formal implementation papers.

### **5.4 Environmental Implications**

There are no new environmental implications directly relating to the content of this report.

## **5.5 Procurement Implications**

There are no new procurement implications directly relating to the content of this report.

## **5.6 Consultation and Communication**

Consultation with tenant and leaseholder representatives is an integral part of the Housing Scrutiny Committee.

## **5.7 Community Safety**

There are no new community safety implications directly relating to the content of this report.

## **6. Background Papers**

Background papers used to compile this report:

- a) Gas Compliance Review Audit Report
- b) Electrical Compliance Review Audit Report
- c) Estates & Facilities Service Review Consultation Paper

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact Lynn Thomas, Head of Housing Maintenance and Assets, Tel: 01223 457831, email: [lynn.thomas@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:lynn.thomas@cambridge.gov.uk).