

Item

Estates & Facilities Service Review and Compliance

Update

To:

Councillor Richard Johnson, Executive Councillor for Housing
Housing Scrutiny Committee 19th January 2021

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 and fire safety work.

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

This is a further update to that provided during the last Housing Scrutiny Committee in September.

The service review has consisted of more than the restructure of staff, we identified 6 themes from a series of consultation and work shop events with the staff within the service, tenants reps, and colleagues across the organisation that we work closely with, based around the four guiding principles of:

- Customers
- Business
- Value
- Risk

These themes were:

- Structure
- Responsibility and Accountability
- Efficiency & Effectiveness
- Performance Management
- Risk Management
- Communication and Engagement

Within these themes we identified action plans to achieve the transformation required within our service delivery and behavioral and cultural change of staff to achieve the improvements within the service in the six identified themes that 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.” There have been 74 actions identified, me and the Estates & Facilities Service Managers have been working on these actions during the past year and so far, we have completed 72% of them. A proportion of the remaining actions are relating to embedding the new repairs scheduling system and the implementation of Orchard Asset modules and will be updated over the course of their roll out.

We have continued to actively recruit to the newly identified posts and existing vacancies within the staffing restructure that was approved in July. We have now advertised all posts except the trade apprenticeships, these are being worked upon with local colleges and will be advertised in the spring 2021. A number of new staff have already joined us with others due to start early next year. Some posts are being re-advertised where we have been unable to appoint to the roles in the previous recruitment process. The members of staff that were given notice of redundancy have now left the organisation.

4. Compliance Progress report

4.1 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. From April – September we changed the approach for gaining access in line with the Covid-19 guidance issued at that time to take in consideration those tenants that were self-isolating and shielding. Since September we have been following our usual approach in obtaining access for gas servicing. Our Officers have been working with Mears to ensure we return to full compliance as soon as possible. You will see from the table below that we have reduced the number of properties out of compliance and at the time of writing the report this has improved further to 14 properties, 7 of these are in the process to gain access.

	Jan 20	Feb 20	Mar 20	May 20	June 20	July 20
Services completed	686	803	642	605	625	781
service compliance	100%	100%	100%	99%	99%	99%
overdue within month	0	0	0	2	56	74

	Aug 20	Sept 20	Oct 20	Nov 20
Services completed	462	649	561	535
service compliance	99%	99%	99%	99%
overdue within month	87	85	48	27

4.2 Electrical Testing

All properties that are planned for electrical testing this financial year have been ordered with our contractor TSG Building Services. Due to Coronavirus the start of work was postponed until 1/8/20. All tenants have been contacted and to the end of November 243 electrical hard wire tests had been undertaken. Testing is ongoing although gaining access remains to be an issue for the contractors despite the implementation of the incentive prize draw.

4.3 Fire Safety

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

1. Installation of internal fire doors and fire protection to 188 above ground floor maisonettes.

A pilot study identified some additional works to internal walls, the program has commenced with all tenants being written to and the first batch of surveys undertaken. These results have been provided to officers to review and remaining surveys are ongoing.

2. Installation of external fire doors to over 300 fire doors at Hanover Court, Princess Court, Kingsway flats and other flats

Within Kingsway, Hanover and Princess on the 3rd December, 97% of the doors have been either completed or in progress/booked. We are currently working with colleagues in City Homes where we have been unable to gain access to the other 3% of flats. Progress is now being made in completing fire doors within the other flat blocks in the program.

3. Continuation of the program to replace all non-compliant "Manse" fire doors

The program to replace these doors is now almost complete.

4. Installation of new emergency lighting in blocks of flats in the Hawkins Road estate

This work has been tendered and will be completed as part of a larger structural works project; at this stage the electrical works are anticipated to take place during February 2021.

5. Improvements to vents and glazing facing onto escape routes in 84 locations

Our Officers are currently working with our contractors to determine the extent of the work required at the various locations, all tenants are being written to so access arrangements can be made.

6. Continuation of the heat detector installation program to all properties

Due to Coronavirus the start of these works was postponed until 1/8/20. All tenants have been contacted by the contractors and to the end of November 30% of the program has been completed. The contractors have been experiencing difficulties in gaining access to properties.

7. Continuation of the smoke detector replacement program

Due to Coronavirus the start of these works was postponed until 1/8/20. All tenants have been contacted by the contractors and to the end of November 30% of the program have been completed. The contractors have been experiencing difficulties in gaining access to properties.

8. Fire compartmentation works to houses that have been converted into flats

This work has been ordered with our contractor, who have written to residents requesting to arrange access. Access has been obtained to one property but unfortunately access has not been gained to other flats and therefore no work has commenced yet. Officers are working with the contractors to obtain access.

When major capital work taking place in line with the Decent Homes Standard is proposed to tenants, they have the option to refuse or decline replacement or installation where there is not a detriment to the fabric of the building. However, where the work is of a health and safety nature or forms part of legislation, such as gas servicing, urgent asbestos removal, fire prevention, electrical work (where the installation could be dangerous) this is not the case.

Our contractors use an agreed four-stage contact process with tenants via letter or phone call. Once contractors have completed this process, and access is not arranged, the properties are returned to the Council.

Where tenants tell us they do not want work completed, we ask them to sign a "waiver form." In the waiver form, the tenant acknowledges that they will be removed from the scheduled programme of work and their home may not meet the Decent Homes standard. If a tenant withdraws from any programme of heating work, electrical work, or work to address an identified HHSRS hazard, they are informed no other Decent Homes work will be completed until we are allowed access to do the heating, electric or HHSRS work.

If there is no response, then a final letter is sent that reminds residents that their tenancy agreement requires them to agree access. If there is still no response, then the property is removed from the scheduled programme of work.

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) Estates & Facilities Service Review Consultation Paper
- b) Estates & Facilities Service Review Implementation 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.