

Item

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

### **Update**

**To:**

Councillor Richard Johnson, Executive Councillor for Housing  
Housing Scrutiny Committee 16<sup>th</sup> March 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 January.

The project that has been running for the last 18 months relating to Phase 1 of the Service Review is now being closed as a separate project.

82% of the actions have now been completed and any outstanding actions are being absorbed into the services Operational Plan and Business as Usual. These outstanding actions are mainly relating to either the introduction of the new IT systems or waiting for the appointment of staff into the newly identified posts. The actions to review productivity and efficiency and effectiveness of the Operations team have needed the new Repairs system to be in place for a reasonable amount of time and us operating a full Repairs service (not constrained through the Government restrictions and lockdown). A number of the actions are dependent on the implementation of Orchard Asset and its various modules such as Compliance and Self-appointing Repairs which is in progress. Whilst those relating to risk assurance and procurement have been reliant on the new job roles being appointed to, which again has now taken place.

The restructure has taken place, is being embedded into the service and most of the new or vacant roles have been recruited to.

Therefore, this will be the last update in this report regarding the service review. In future the report will purely be focused on the Compliance Data and be titled as such.

## **4. Compliance Progress report**

### **4.1 Compliance team update**

Following the service review and restructure that identified the need for the development of the Compliance team, this has progressed in recent months. Although we have been unable to recruit permanently to the Property Compliance and Risk Manager role, we were able to appoint an Interim Manager in January. In addition to this we successfully recruited to the two new roles of Fire Risk Assessor and Asbestos Officer/Surveyor. The two existing members of staff whose roles have been transferred to the Compliance team are now working within that team structure and we are about to start the recruitment process for the final role in the Compliance team of Electrical Supervisor.

The Interim Property Compliance and Risk Manager has begun work on a gap analysis and action plan for the team and in the future, I shall bring you further details of this and its progress in the report.

### **4.2 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 but giving regard to those who have a shielding letter. Our officers have been working with Mears to ensure we return to full compliance as soon as possible.

	Jan 20	Feb 20	Mar 20	April 20	May 20	June 20	July 20
<b>Services completed</b>	686	803	642	605	625	781	851
<b>service compliance</b>	100%	100%	100%	99%	99%	99%	99%
<b>overdue within month</b>	0	0	0	2	56	74	56

	Aug 20	Sept 20	Oct 20	Nov 20	Dec 20	Jan 21
<b>Services completed</b>	462	649	561	535	663	688
<b>service compliance</b>	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%
<b>overdue within month</b>	87	85	48	27	10	10

You will see from the table above that we have reduced the number of properties out of compliance and at the time of writing the report this has improved further to 5 properties, 4 of these have future appointments.

#### 4.3 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 at mid-February 297 electrical hard wire tests had been undertaken. Testing is ongoing although gaining access remains an issue.

#### 4.4 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.

Work has commenced with 20 installations completed to date. Surveying and scheduling of installations is ongoing, however gaining access to carry out surveys and work is proving to be an issue for the contractor.

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

Within Kingsway, Hanover and Princess as of the 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 97% of the doors had either been completed or were 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. 85% of the doors have been replaced, the remaining properties are either where we need to use a timber door and are trying to source an appropriate product or there has been no access.

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 start during February 2021 and be completed by June 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. Access has been gained to a number of properties and the findings are being considered by our in-house Fire Risk Assessor.

## 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, but the contractors have continued to experience significant difficulties in gaining access to properties. So far 55% of the original program has resulted in no access but to date 85% of the remaining program has been completed.

## 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, but the contractors have continued to experience significant difficulties in gaining access to properties. So far 50% of the original program has resulted in no access but to date 84% of the remaining program has been completed.

## 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 continuing to work 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 program of work and their home may not meet the Decent Homes standard. If a tenant withdraws from any program 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 program 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](mailto:lynn.thomas@cambridge.gov.uk).