

HOUSING IMPROVEMENT TEAM ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23

NAME OF HIT: Maintaining and Improving Homes

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITY DURING THE YEAR:

2022/23 was a challenging year for repairs and maintenance in general due to both increased costs of materials plus ongoing issues with Contractors and their workforces. (This includes an extensive resource for a dispute resolution with the outgoing Unplanned contractor which is still ongoing.) It is worth noting that the Unplanned Repairs contract is constantly evolving. As it progresses, we identify better and more efficient ways of working with the Contractors which will be crucial to new contracts in the future. We also have a new Reactive Repairs Officer on the contract with a wealth of practical knowledge which can be shared with others. He will receive extensive training on damp and condensation which will allow us to deal better internally with emerging issues in this area.

Lots 3 & 4 (Forfar/Kirriemuir & Brechin/Montrose) was taken over by contractor QAPM following the departure of MPS. Not only did they undertake repairs in these areas, they also assisted with working through the backlog of repairs left by MPS. They have required the full year to bed into the contracts but have been working well with no significant issues on the Unplanned repairs and customer feedback is extremely positive. Any issues that are raised are responded to promptly.

Lots 1 & 2 (Arbroath & Carnousie/Monifieth) Although these contracts are working well with no significant issues on the Unplanned side, there are a significant number of outstanding Voids. Discussions are ongoing to find ways to resolve this.

Work is underway to consider separate Unplanned and Voids contracts put in place as they are equally as important as each other. This should speed up the Voids process and get the properties ready to a letting stage as quickly as possible.

Procurement of Asset Management Software:- Although we underwent a full tender process for this, the resulting bids were extremely close. There was a winning bid, however, as the scoring was so close, there was a strong possibility of challenge from other Contractors. After consultation with Procurement, the decision has been made to consider a direct award from a Framework. This is currently with IT and Procurement to progress.

We have been looking at resource for this new system and this will be considered as part of the Asset Review which is currently taking place.

We require a prioritisation process for capital investment to enable us to prioritise all capital improvement projects. This would review all relevant evidence to make

objective informed decisions and compare projects to produce a better return on investment. It would enable us to track all completed and planned investment works in a co-ordinated approach, irrespective of funding source or scale of works. Regular review of trends will ensure we keep up with nationally changing situations in setting priorities.

Identifying improvement measures from tenant satisfaction surveys:- Unplanned R&M Contract includes for Tenant Satisfaction Survey to be completed monthly by a 3rd party agency, Knowledge Partnership. We have seen a huge overall increase in customer satisfaction since the change in Contractor on Lots 3 & 4. There are some recurring negative comments around using the Access Line with lengthy waiting times to get through. Some areas of concern are contractors turning up without appointment or not showing ID but this is being addressed with Contractors. There are many compliments from the monthly survey which are staff and contractors.

These surveys sit separately from the 3-yearly Tenant Satisfaction Surveys which cover the whole of the Housing Service. The next satisfaction survey will be carried out this year.

Identify/develop procedures for any improvement measures with regards to flagging up vulnerable tenants:- We are currently working on a draft Community Benefit Plan for CHT's. Contractors were asked to complete a Community Benefits Project Plan (CBPP) as part of their tender submission. One of the areas covered was Community Learning & Support Activity (Handyman service to support vulnerable tenants and life skills transfer). The CBP seeks to provide all staff with information on the requirements in relation to tenant support through the CBP delivery via the Unplanned Repairs Contract. New SoRs have been created to allow for HO's to refer tenants who need help. A draft flow chart has also been prepared to send to CHT.

An Angus Council Tenancy Inspection Protocol was implemented in August 2022 and has been developed to provide guidance relating to inspection of Angus Council properties where concerns have been raised relating to home conditions. A pathway was implemented on Northgate to record concerns and actions taken and briefings were completed with housing staff and Housing, Health and Social Care Strategic Planning Group.

We are currently working on producing some clearer guidance for staff and enquiries have been made with the Health and Social Care Partnership to establish some additional funding to cover the costs of property clearances and cleans due to these not being covered by welfare payments. We have committed an initial budget of £5,000 from the Rapid Rehousing Transition Fund to cover costs until a full budget is established. It is hoped that both the CBP and Strategy projects can be linked to offer as much help as possible to vulnerable tenants.

PRIORITIES FOR NEXT YEAR: (Note: Some of these are recurring actions year to year as they are ongoing contracts.)

1. Ensure full compliance with SHQS safety requirements
2. Continue to monitor Contract Performance Framework testing to use both the quantitative and qualitative data to identify improvements. (23/24 will be the first full year of works carried out without the historical issues/backlog from outgoing contractor);
3. Progress Asset Management Software tender and implement new system;
4. Continue to compare and update improvement measures identified from previous Tenant Satisfaction Survey using updated survey results;
5. Continue to develop procedures for any improvement measures with regards to flagging up vulnerable tenants;
6. Develop Fire/Flood damage to tenanted properties procedure and protocol.

PROGRESS AGAINST CHARTER OUTCOMES

Outcome 4 - Social landlords manage their businesses so that tenants' homes, as a minimum, meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) by April 2015 and continue to meet it thereafter, and when they are allocated, are always clean, tidy and in a good state of repair

The Actual Charter Return 2022-23 was 56.66% meeting SHQS. This has fallen due to several issues:-

- Previous Electrical Testing/LD2 Contractor went into receivership without completing additional properties given to them. Also, they did not provide completed certification to log as expected so, the data was not complete or accurate. We therefore had to revisit properties to check if complete.
- Existing Contractor is struggling with paperwork and certificate checks. Despite having carried out more installs than have been reported, we cannot report them as compliant until we have paperwork/certificates.
- There were difficulties with access to properties during Covid and beyond.
- Lack of appropriate management tool. Implementation of the new Asset Management System will enable more accurate reporting.
- Many properties which were compliant at July 22 thereafter exceeded their 10 year lifespan so became non-compliant. This affects figures as they then are added onto contract to be redone, thus increasing properties as non-compliant.

We are addressing this by:

- Working with the Contractor to increase his resource to clear backlog of certificates;
- Providing more clerical support internally to clear the backlog of certificates to get systems up to date;

- Working with IT to bulk upload information to ensure SHQS reporting is more accurate;
- Prioritising the new asset management database that would be able to record completed works, works in progress and upload certification.

Our current contract has approx. 7 months left but we are in the process of tendering an addition contract(s) in summer 2023 to increase output. We are confident this will see us back to 100% compliant by the start of next year. This contract will also take into account all the properties that are exceeding their 10 year lifespan and therefore becoming non-compliant again. We will be able to predict those months before they fail so we can replace prior to this to maintain compliance

Outcome 5 - Social landlords manage their businesses so that tenants' homes are well maintained, with repairs and improvements carried out when required, and tenants are given reasonable choices about when work is done.

Average time to complete emergency repairs: This was 9.32 hours in 22/23. This is a reduction from previous year however, we suspect that inputting errors are still contributing to misreporting. We are also reviewing the current 2 hour response time to ensure this is realistic and in line with other authorities, particularly noting our geographical makeup. This will be discussed with our Tenant Participation Group.

Average time to complete non-emergency repairs: This was 9.34 days in 22/23 and is inline with the national average.

Repairs right first time; This was 80.17% in 22/23. A significant increase from the 28.97% in the previous year due in part to the new Contractor appointed to replace MPS.

Tenant satisfaction with Repairs: This was 99.76% out of 3,819 transactions surveyed. Once again, a reflection of the change of contractor.

Overall, progress in terms of both charter outcomes and performance has been curtailed by several factors. However, we are seeing good progress with the Unplanned Repairs and customer satisfaction is high. We hope to see an improvement in emergency repairs statistics once we have a more realistic response time in place to take into account the geographical area of Angus.

HIT CHAIR: Lynne Maciver, Team Leader Housing Technical: 31/08/2023