

SERVICE UPDATE

This is a joint report prepared by Heads of Service. The report provides Operational Board Members with a general overview and update on current issues.

Head of Operations (Housing Management & Housing Options)

MINISTRY OF HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT BIDS

Since my last update we have been very busy responding to two bid opportunities in supporting the work we do in co-ordinating the Cities response to Homelessness, on behalf of the Council. The two bid windows opened in October 2018 with very short deadlines, both being dates in November. The bid opportunities being offered are the 'Rapid Rehousing Pathway' and 'Private Sector Access Scheme'.

Both bids required Urgent Cabinet Leader approval, with approvals being both requested and obtained on time. Both bids are now submitted and we await to hear whether we have been successful. We expect to be notified towards the middle of December.

If successful these two bids combined would bring over £1000, 000 of additional money into the City to help people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, with a key focus on preventing homelessness at its earliest opportunity. This is on top of the £700,000 secured earlier this year, through the Rough Sleepers bidding round covering 2018/19 and 2019/20 which is currently funding the Rehousing Engagement Support Team (REST) to deliver outreach and inreach services to rough sleepers, alongside the opening of the Churches Nigh shelter early this year from 1st October instead of 1st December.

More detail on the content contained within the bids is available to Operational Board members, if requested.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING – PUBLIC PROTECTION

Local Office staff continue to develop and strengthen relationships with relevant Council services to deliver additionality and ensure effective joined up outcomes. We are working closely with the Public Protection team at present to develop effective relationships to help tack anti-social behaviour and fly-tipping.

Public Protection Officers are a team that work under Environmental Protection – commonly still known as Environmental Health – and have enforcement powers under the ASB, Crime and Policing Act 2014 which we don't have. They are able in particular to issue fixed penalty notices for fly tipping. As a result they are able to support us in delivering a customer priority, and in general to work with housing staff to keep estates free of litter and to deal with individuals, cross tenure that are responsible for fly-tipping.

In addition they have recently been supporting the ASB team to deal with a problem of youths congregating. In this they are able to fulfil the sort of role that Derby Homes former Community Watch Patrol were able to do, acting as a visible deterrent. The Public Protection Officers are a relatively new presence on estates and we are working with them to develop ways in which we can work together.

STONESDALE COURT PLAY AREA REFURBISHMENT

In partnership with Derby City Council and Veolia Environment Trust Working, the play area at Stonesdale Court, Off Keldholme Lane, Alvaston, has now been renovated and refurbished.

Our Youth Forum were involved with this project from start to finish, carrying out the local consultation to collect resident's views, assisting in the delivery of workshops in local schools to create the play area signage, and helping to plan and deliver the opening event which took place on 31 October.

The opening event was a great success, attended by many local families eager to enjoy the new play equipment.

The play area was officially opened by the Deputy Mayor and Mayoress, and we were also joined by local councillors, Maria Murphy and the Youth Mayor. Our Youth Board again played a key part in co-ordinating activities on the day, such as cupcake decorating and arts and crafts for local children.

Head of Repairs

Day to Day

At the end of Quarter 2, performance in terms of 'repairs completed in time' is as follows:

- Emergencies – 100%
- Very urgent works – 100%
- Urgent works – 100%
- Routine works – 99.7%
- Planned works – 97.93%

Performance up until the end of September is generally pleasing with all priorities above / better than the 99% targets other than planned works. There has been an improvement in performance in the last couple of months and we are working hard to try and ensure the target is achieved by year end.

We are currently unable to report on the Appointments Kept Target due to issues with reports having to be rebuilt since the implementation of Open Housing. It is worth noting though that so far this year we have only missed 13 appointments.

Tenant satisfaction with repairs remains high and above target at 99.67% up until the end of August. During the month of September out of 1518 surveys sent out only 6 were dissatisfied.

We have generated rechargeable repairs up to the end of quarter 2 realising £9,365.

We currently have 6 live disrepair cases.

Void Repairs

Up to the end of Quarter 2, the Voids Team has completed 323 active voids compared to 341 for the same period last year. Performance is currently averaging **16.3** days cumulatively to inspect and complete works.

The total number of void works carried out both active and passive is 442 voids compared to 447 voids last year.

The relet time is continuing to reduce month on month and we are confident this improved performance will continue. For example during the month of September the relet time was 10.6 days.

Gas Servicing and Electrical Testing

At the end of September both the Gas and Electrical teams have met target and have achieved full compliance. Gas servicing and electrical periodic testing both finished at 100%.

Up to the end of Quarter 2 the Gas team carried out 8064 services.

We attained high levels of first time access for gas servicing which so far this year averages 80% which is slightly down due to the school holiday, this should be back up to target by the next report.

The go live date of the Open Housing Service Module is still on track for the 14th January. Testing is still ongoing and once the system goes live it will mean that all Gas Servicing will be raised in the Open Housing system and information will be recorded on the system so customers and co-workers can see the individual services booked and all the certification will be completed and stored electronically.

We have carried out the tenants consultation at Kestrel house to install air source heating within the properties as we have at Rivermead house. This system has proved to be a success on cost saving and customer satisfaction.

Due to issues with the tenants service charges and delays in issuing a revised figure the work will now be starting after the Christmas break and will last approximately 6 weeks

Operations (Income Management & Customer Service)

Income Management

The full universal credit service for new claimants is now in full flow; Migration of existing claimants on the live service to the full service has been completed. Our co-location at the Job Centre continues with Derby Homes Officers available on a daily basis for new claimants who are also Derby Homes' tenants to discuss rent and Council Tax payments. Monthly strategic meetings continue to be held between the Job Centre managers to discuss any issues that may arise and come up with the best way to deal with them.

We continue our attendance at Housemark welfare reform groups as well as East and West Midlands best practice groups to learn from other organisations who have been

dealing with universal credit and about best income collection practices around the country.

The triage-style approach to dealing with new universal credit claimants is working well with the Welfare Reform Team carrying out the initial setting up for Universal Credit claims and then passing the cases on to Income Recovery Officers for monitoring. Income Recovery Officers are then monitoring and supporting the tenants, making sure the rent is paid and signposting them to services that may be able to support them if they are struggling.

We continue to look for more efficient ways of helping us address the additional workloads that will come from universal credit claimants being personally responsible for paying the housing costs (rent) to Derby Homes. This includes looking deeper into the Mobysoft's RentSense product and Orchard's product. Depending on findings, we will be putting forward a business case for the product.

Rental Control

Preparation is under way for annual rent variation, Year End and New Year Direct Debit payment profiles.

We're working with the IT Projects team on the introduction of paperless Direct Debits.

We're currently in the process of recruiting to the vacant Rental Control Assistant's post.

The Former Tenant Arrears and Sundry Debt Policy review is also on the agenda at this meeting.

Leasehold

We are working with the Customer Engagement team on a consultation plan for leaseholders, prior to writing a new policy.

The first quarterly repairs statements have been sent out. These have been issued to give leaseholders timely information on communal repairs and to try and reduce the number of queries we receive.

Derby Advice

Roll out of Universal Credit training

As part of the Derby Advice Training Programme for 18/19 we are offering a training session each month for Derby Homes and Derby City Council staff on universal credit training and they are fully booked until the end of the current programme in March. The sessions that have already been delivered have received excellent feedback. In addition to this, one member of staff has visited 7 team meetings to do a 1-2 hour briefing on Universal Credit – again these have received very positive feedback. We have some further requests for UC sessions and expect this demand to continue in 2019

Welfare Rights Officers at Derby Advice are experiencing a demand for help in challenging decisions that the DWP have made in relation to Universal Credit. This is a growth area of work and we have an additional temporary staff resource starting in Derby Advice in Jan 2019 to help address the capacity issues that UC is creating.

In order to address the specialist benefit needs of guests at the Winter Night shelter, staff from Derby Advice are available on a rota basis to answer specialist queries each Wednesday morning. This is timed to fit with the guest support mornings.

In October, a team member from Derby Advice staffed a stall at a Sight Support event that raised the profile of both Derby Homes and Derby Advice amongst Derby residents with sight issues. At the event we spoke to 20 individuals about the service we offer and gave relevant advice.

Customer Service and Equalities

The Customer First strategy has been audited by Central Midlands Audit Partnership. A closing meeting has taken place which praised the work to date and listed three issues/recommendations, all of which have been accepted. We are awaiting the full report and recommendations.

The 24/7 campaign is progressing well, to date three draws have taken place, and 188 customers have been informed they are winners of a tablet. The number of registered users for MyAccount is now at 3,616.

The new Complaints, Comments and Compliments policy has been implemented from 1 November and was presented to Derby Homes' managers at a briefing in November.

We met with members of the DACP and Customer Voice to discuss the role of Designated Person/Tenant Panel role in regards to complaints. Working with this group established a process and checklist and [updated this information on the Derby homes website](#).

We've met with again with the Customer Voice and DACP to discuss the new Customer Service standards and gather their feedback.

We also presented the Customer First Strategy to the Youth Panel and consulted with them on young people's views.

We are currently recruiting two new full time Customer Service Advisors. This is to keep pace with demand for services in the Customer Service Team.

Customer Communications

Website

We are working with the Council on a combined design review of both websites (derby.gov.uk and derbyhomes.org). This should result in a redesigned website and inform a web style guide and best practices for content. The review will utilise the latest User Experience (UX) principles to enhance the User Interface (UI), content and visual appearance.

Annual Report

The customer Annual Report has been published and is available online only using the same software as last year. The focus this time is on putting the customer first and transparency. We've cut out a lot of unnecessary statistics and prioritised things more likely to be of interest to customers. It also features link to all the performance reports for the year. This year, the report was published before the AGM and promoted to customers through Facebook and Twitter. You can read it at this link:

<https://spark.adobe.com/page/UwQQt266CvIAr/>

Following on from the agreement of the new Customer Priorities in August, we've begun to work with managers to support promotion of the priorities and some of the key actions in the related work plan. The most recent edition of Derby Homes News was delivered at the end of October. It had a big focus on the Customer First strategy and the launch of the new Customer Priorities.

If Board Members or others would like to discuss this report ahead of the meeting please contact

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