

## **HEADS OF 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 Housing Management and Housing Options**

#### **Housing and Planning Act implications**

We are working with Council colleagues to understand, shape and respond to the implications of the Housing and Planning Act. Monthly meetings are taking place, where we are talking through areas such as Pay to Stay, the Local Housing Allowance cap for Social Housing, Fixed term tenancies and Supported Housing classifications.

Both the Council and Derby Homes are considering delaying reviews of both organisations Tenancy Strategies until further clarification and guidance is received from Central Government.

Operational Board Members may wish to request a fuller briefing on the Housing and Planning Act as a separate paper for discussion, although at this stage, much of the regulatory detail of implementation remains unclear.

#### **Detailed study of footfall to Sussex Circus Local Housing Office – Chaddesden**

We continue to look at data regarding footfall at Local Offices, to understand both customer demand and resource requirements. As we move forward with the Customer Service Strategy and our focus on Channel Shift, we have decided to identify one Local Housing Office, Sussex Circus, to look at footfall in more detail. We are about to embark on a detailed study of usage and alternate methods of delivery. We aim to run a data collection pilot from 1 September to 31 December and will report our findings with any recommendations to the Operational Board in the New Year. If any Operational Board Members would like to be involved with shaping the review, please let me know.

#### **Milestone House Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) Workshop**

On 30 June residents at Milestone House took part in a workshop, discussing ways in which the Green Lane area of the City could be improved. Milestone House is situated within this area. Residents identified issues holding the area back and put forward suggestions for improvement. The majority of solutions put forward related to helping Milestone House residents keep busy, whilst gaining new skills and useful work experience. Workshop attendees were keen to see physically active projects around the arts, cooking and opening a kitchen and gardening/making things (such as planters).

It is important to remember that the residents of Milestone House are a transient population, and each resident usually moves on within two or three months. THI are considering ways in which feedback from residents can be worked up into responsive projects as part of the overall regeneration of the area.

## **Head of Income Management & Advice**

### **Derby Advice**

#### **Training Programme**

Derby Advice is publishing its 16/17 Training programme in the next few weeks. The programme has been re-focussed on delivering the most popular courses. It also includes a new course called 'Universal Credit –for social housing tenants' aimed at professionals in the social housing sector who are assisting tenants transitioning to Universal Credit.

Last year's programme trained 245 delegates including 68 Derby Homes staff.

### **Income Team**

#### **Tender**

Former Tenant Arrears (FTA) and Sundry Debt Collection: the tender has been advertised and the presentations by companies selected from tender process will be carried out in August.

#### **Networking/Best Practice**

The team continue to attend Housemark Welfare Reform as well as East and West Midlands best practice groups to learn from organisations who have been dealing with Universal Credit for the last couple of years and sharing best practice.

We are now taking part in the CIH Working Together to Collect Projects. There will be five workshops over the next year.

Derby Homes will be hot- desking from the Job Centre Plus every Wednesday from 8 June 2016 to interview Derby Homes tenants who make a claim for Universal Credit. In addition to the above we attended the Bringing in the Money event at Stockport Homes for further learning to improve services.

#### **Money Advice, Income and Advice Surgeries**

These continue to be very well attended and working well in providing support to tenants who need advice and support on claiming housing benefit. We are also delivering a National Lottery funded service in the Derwent area for debt and money advice. These sessions are monthly and are well attended.

## **Head of Housing Investment**

### **The Normanton Project**

Since April 2016 Derby Homes has been working with colleagues from the Council and a representative from Derby University to collate a joint plan of actions aimed at the physical and social environment in a specified area of Normanton and Peartree. This followed a request from the Cabinet Member for Urban Renewal for proposals which

will drive up standards of housing and increase opportunities for residents in the area. Although Derby Homes only currently manages properties on the periphery of the area it has been agreed that some acquisitions will be made as soon as is possible. The driver for these acquisitions is to demonstrate responsible property and tenancy management within an area that now contains the highest level of private rented landlords in the City.

In addition proposals were put forward to include general maintenance of the street scene and property frontages, education of residents and landlords and potential enforcement where this is appropriate. To start this initiative we have worked with the council and partners to initiate a deep clean of Reeves Road and Road Street with the aim of generating pride in the area, engaging with residents and cleaning the street and enabling bins to be moved off the pavements to the alleyways. Derby Homes local office staff joined with the council neighbourhood team to consult with residents over planned works and to assist the removal of vehicles from the streets to enable cleansing trucks to reach all areas.

Derby Homes Communications team, caretakers, maintenance, health and safety staff joined our partners Valliant, who supply the boilers fitted in our homes, and Buxton's Decorators and Streetpride, who carry out the grounds maintenance and cleaning for us in supplying staff over 2 days on 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> July. We had approximately 60 staff on site each day

Works completed on the days included:

- Teams worked with residents to move rear garden refuse to the kerbside
- Refuse collection of about 40 tonnes of waste material with over 50 trips to the tip
- Street sweeping and cleaning
- Clearing of alleyways, some had been blocked for a number of years
- Removal of bins
- Repairing of alley doors
- Painting of windowsills and low level brickwork
- The preparation and fixing of hanging baskets
- Community engagement work by Mash up Theatre, the Hub and Enthusiasm

Over the 2 days we created a buzz and residents positively engaged with staff and each other taking over tasks by sweeping streets themselves and watering new planters.

I would like to offer my thanks to all staff from our partners Valliant and Buxtons who rose to the challenge and got stuck in without a grumble to the shear amount of work that lay ahead on Monday morning. Streetpride provided additional vehicles at short notice showing our ability to co-operate and have a can-do attitude.



## **Repair Service**

### **Day to Day**

At the end of the first quarter 2016/17, performance in terms of 'repairs completed in time' are as follows:

- Emergencies – 100%
- Very urgent works – 100%
- Urgent works – 100%
- Routine works – 99.95%
- Planned works – 100%

Performance for the first quarter is pleasing with all priorities above / better than target.

The 'appointments kept' target ended the first quarter at 100% against a target of 99%.

Tenant satisfaction with repairs remains high and well above target at 99.82% for the first quarter.

Training on the tablet PCs has now been completed except for individual long term sickness. Generally we are maintaining our performance despite some initial teething problems. We are working with the Council's IT team and have put together an action plan to resolve these issues in due course. I am confident that when working to its true potential we will see a step forward in performance.

### **Void Repairs**

During the first quarter this year the team have completed 217 voids compared to 220 for the same period last year. Performance is currently averaging 20.2 days to inspect and complete works. This is due to a very slow start to the year in the number of voids received followed by a significant increase in the month of June. We have now processed these voids and I would expect the relet time to decrease in the coming months.

### **Gas Servicing and Electrical Testing**

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

We will shortly be completing the programme of replacing the LED lighting with only 4 properties left to complete. This should be completed by the beginning of August. The team will then move on to the upgrading of earth bonding in 220 blocks of flats over the next 3 years.

## **Head of Personnel**

### **Apprentices**

The recruitment process, in conjunction with Derby College and Derby Adult Learning Service, for this year's intake of Derby Homes' apprentices has commenced and we are in the process of making our selections and preparing for a

start date of 1 September 2016, there are 4 trade and 4 business administration vacancies.

All current Derby Homes' apprentices are developing well and the trade apprentices have progressed to years 3 and 4 of their apprentice contracts. We have recently also started to see trade apprentices gaining further permanent employment with us. Work with Derby City Council has also commenced to provide a training opportunity at Derby Homes for a care leaver.

### **Customer Service**

Customer Service Strategy – the implementation of this has been hindered by the IT issues we are facing with the Dashboard, this is being investigated and a resolution is being sought. Promotion and relaunch of the Dashboard will commence once the issue is resolved.

### **Head of Service**

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

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