

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

- **Housemark accreditation of Anti-Social Behaviour Service**

I am delighted to advise the Operational Board that Derby Homes has passed the Housemark accreditation review of our Anti-Social Behaviour Service. The review considered 7 commitments and 44 building blocks. As with all reviews, a number of recommendations have been made, which we are now developing into an action plan. The action plan and fuller details of the accreditation will be the subject of a separate report to the April Operational Board, where you will have the opportunity to influence the priority of the recommended actions.

- **Recruitment of Complex Needs Housing Management team**

Recruitment to the newly formed Complex Needs Housing Management structure is underway, with a number of posts being advertised both internally and externally. The purpose of the Complex Needs structure is to ensure that we are able to help tenants sustain their tenancies, through a variety of interventions, tailored to their individual needs.

Levels of service will be assessed through a formal needs assessment, and will range from help with setting up a first time tenancy all the way through to supporting those who may need intensive intervention for a period of time.

The team is being led by Lorraine Testro, Tenancy Sustainability and Safeguarding Manager.

If the Operational Board would like more details of this service, Lorraine could be invited to a future meeting to expand on this area of work.

Head of Income Management & Advice

Income Team

- **Restructure**

Barbara Peach who is currently our Rental Control Manager has been successful in securing the Income Manager (North) post to cover Julie Eyre who is taking up the position of Welfare Reform Income Manager for 2 years. Caroline Hancock who is currently the Rental Control Team Leader has secured the position of Rental Control Manager to cover Barbara's post for 2 years. Recruitment has commenced for the Rental Control Team Leader position. A four week handover has started with managers starting in their new posts from 1 March. The new post of Money Advice

Manager will be re-advertised. The posts of Project Officer, Income Recovery Officers (various to backfill current vacancies and new posts within the new structure) and Income Assistant are currently being advertised.

- **Universal Credit**

This started in Derby on 25 January 2016. There is not expected to be an initial influx of cases but a gradual stream. We will have our specialist officers to learn about these and cases build up links with the local job centre to best identify these cases to be able to support them to be in a position to pay the rent. Training has been provided by a DWP representative in this area to the relevant teams. We have been learning from other organisations and their experiences on dealing with universal credit cases and feel in a confident position to manage them following an initial increase in arrears that all the other organisations have experienced. This increase depends on whether the tenant is already in arrears but even the ones who are not will be paid at least 5 weeks in arrears.

- **Illegal Money Lending**

We are supporting the re-launch of the Illegal Money Lending service in the Derby area. Training will be provided for front line staff and also later on in the year there will be a presentation at a staff briefing. Articles will also be going in Derby Homes News and they will be attending any community events that we are associated with.

- **Debt Collection Sundry Debts**

We are preparing the tender to outsource sundry debt (former tenants arrears, court costs, rechargeable repairs) collection in our search for a new debt collection agency as the current contact has come to an end.

Derby Advice

- **Derby's' Night shelter**

A Welfare Rights Officer from Derby Advice is attending an advice/support session each Wednesday morning at Derby's Nightshelter. The purpose of Derby Advice staffing the session is to help homeless residents of the shelter to resolve issues to do with benefits/sanctions/and budgeting that is preventing them from moving on from their current situation. The shelter Co-ordinator has praised the professionalism and the great outcome that the Derby Advice staff have achieved

- **MacMillan Cancer Care**

Derby Advice has received confirmation that Macmillan Cancer Care will extend the funding for specialist Welfare Rights advice at Derby Royal for a further year. This decision was based on the excellent outputs achieved in 2015. The project has seen 180 patients living in Derby city and has helped them to claim benefits worth £461,702.20

- **Derby City Council's Budget Consultation**

It was proposed as part of DCC' budget consultation to reduce the general fund budget for this service and to stop services for non-council tenants. This service is funded by both Housing Revenue Account and General Fund. Following feedback from the budget consultation a decision has been made to defer any budget reduction decisions until 17/18.

Rental Control

- **Rent Variation**

The team are currently working on the rent variation processes for 16/17.

- **Home Contents Insurance**

The team are working on increasing the take up of home contents insurance. This is being promoted through Derby Homes News, social media and at sign up. Any suggestions on how take up could be improved are welcome.

Head of Investment

- **Grounds Maintenance by StreetPride**

After a difficult grass cutting season, Winter maintenance works has gone very well. We've also managed to keep around five staff working on one-off improvement works, re-planting and overhauling worn out shrub beds, removing some unwanted and overgrown beds, and clearing garage sites. All sites will be finished in plenty of time for grass cutting to start in early March, or even February, so this year we'll be off to a good, smooth start. And this year we'll have all the mowers, equipment and Derby Homes liveried vehicles from the start (it's hard to believe but we've only just taken delivery of the big grounds maintenance trucks!). Chris Fraser from StreetPride will be at the meeting to update on progress and plan and to listen to feedback and queries, as will Ben Scott, our 'tree man'.

- **Whitecross House Refurbishment**

We've done a lot of consultation with the residents and local staff and the refurb and remodelling project is now well underway. External improvements, including fencing and layout improvements have been done. The foot path across the rear is being closed off to create a secure rear garden and courtyard area for residents. A scooter store is being provided, with charging points. Work is just starting to install a new fire sprinkler system throughout the building and flats. Some areas are being remodelled to create a bigger kitchen, a new laundry room and an improved common room. After that we will be installing a new door entry system, new LED lighting throughout, redecorating all the common areas and finally installing a new passenger lift. All together, this will result in a sheltered housing scheme to be proud of, providing the peace of mind of security and safety, as well as modern, attractive, well maintained facilities.

- **In-house new build**

Our build team are just starting a wave of new sites at Coronation Avenue, Peel Street and Whitecross Street. Coronation Avenue, the site of the former Ashlea Hostel, is a bigger site, with 15 new houses and flats, and we are working jointly with the Council. Our own workforce is currently working on the Nightingale Road conversion of the derelict Co-op building into smart, new Derby Homes flats. They will move onto some of the new sites when our subcontractors have built some of the first house shells, when we will begin fitting out the insides. We have just handed over 11 fantastic new bungalows and houses at Alum Close, Hillcrest Road and Seymour Close.

- **Insulation work to reduce fuel bills and energy use**

We've just identified bungalows at Alum Close that were previously believed to be built using an aluminium non-traditional construction system, with a later refurbishment and insulation scheme. But to make sure we did some investigation of the wall structure in an empty property – and were surprised to find they are built using the 'Wimpey no-fines' concrete construction method, without added insulation. Given the name of the close, maybe the original plan was for aluminium bungalows in the post-war period, but the plans got changed to a different method of non-traditional construction. Anyway, we will now be insulating the bungalows without delay and expect that to be finished this year. We normally dry-line homes to insulate solid walls internally, but these bungalows really suit external wall insulation, with insulated render, which will also be less disruptive for elderly residents.

Our drylining programme, using our own workforce, still goes well and we are working in some of the last estates. We should be finished by later summer or early autumn, depending on take up. A final 'mop up' scheme will be offered for those who didn't sign up the first time. If you know anyone who missed out, please try and persuade them – it's a week and a half of disruption and some redecoration to save typically hundreds of pounds a year. We've also now finished wall insulation to the last remaining non-trad type of houses, the 'Trusteels' found mostly around Alvaston and Allenton.

Head of Repairs

- **Day to Day**

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

- Emergencies – 100%
- Very urgent works – 99.70%
- Urgent works – 99.91%
- Routine works – 99.98%
- Planned works – 99.86%

Performance in the third quarter is pleasing with all priorities on or above target except for planned works. This is because of not completing two jobs in time on the planned works priority. Due to prolonged inclement weather, which has severely affected our roofing and fencing teams, we have struggled to complete jobs on time. We have in January employed two new roofers and we believe this will alleviate the current problems.

The 'appointments kept' target ended the quarter at 99.83% against a target of 99.75%.

Tenant satisfaction with repairs remains high and well above target at 99.71% for quarter three.

Further testing is continuing on the tablets to enable us to introduce them as early as possible in the fourth quarter. We believe this will also help improve our performance.

- **Void Repairs**

During Quarter three the team have completed 216 voids compared to 299 for the same period last year. Performance remains consistent in terms of turnaround times, currently averaging 16.1 days to inspect and complete works. The increase is down to the

Christmas closure increasing the average days and we expect the average days to reduce in the fourth quarter.

We have now completed and handed over all void properties to the YMCA. With regard to decorating difficult to let properties we have now completed decorations on four properties. It would appear that we do not have many difficult to let properties at the current time.

- **Gas Servicing and Electrical Testing**

At the end of Quarter three, both the Gas and Electrical teams are on target and have achieved full compliance. Gas servicing and electrical periodic testing both finished the quarter at 100%.

The LED light programme in communal areas is progressing well and we expect it to be completed by the end of the financial year.

Head of Personnel

- Customer satisfaction with the Customer Service team remains high. Call waiting times are, for the second month running, reducing which may be a result of the new team members recruited in November.

	Call waiting times Year to date	% of inbound call answered year to date	Customer satisfaction with CST year to date
Nov	146 seconds	81.1%	98.75%
Dec	138 seconds	81.97%	98.89%
Jan	136 seconds	82.27%	96.8%

- From January 2016 we no longer take rent payments over the phone due to Payment Compliance regulations.
- The team is working together to promote the Customer Service Strategy which will be implemented from 1 April. We have seen already an increase in customer contacting us to request services via the website and email.
- The Customer Service Standards have been revised and will be presented to the Operational Board.