

SERVICE UPDATE

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

Director of Housing Services

Another Award for Parklands View Extra Care Scheme

In my last update I was delighted to advise that we had been shortlisted for the TPAS Awards 2019 in the Excellence in Engagement in Support and Care category in recognition of our success in engaging with and involving our customers at Parklands View Extra Care Scheme.

This time I am once again delighted to advise that we have won the Elderly Accommodation Council's Gold Award for the East Midlands in the Regional Housing for Older People Awards 2019. We will now be heading to Manchester on 21st May for the National Awards. Fingers crossed.

Refurbishment of Community Rooms

We are continuing with our major programme of Community Room Refurbishments. This is a three year plan that is seeing all rooms get freshened up with a new coat of paint, new furniture and updates to kitchens and floorings where needed.

Five of the rooms (Whitecross House, Tintagel Close, Humber Close, Fairdene Court, and Boyer Street) have been completed and have re-launch events taking place in March and April. Five further rooms have been completed, but are awaiting new furniture (Watermeadow Road, Streatham Road, Donington Close, Glengarry Way and Coleville Street).

Refurbishment is currently underway for Slaney Close and Filbert Walk and the next five rooms (Oakleigh Avenue, Max Road, Churchside Walk, Coniston Crescent and Craddock Avenue) will be scheduled in 2019/20, with the final five to follow (Acorn Close, Centurion Walk, Holly Court, Kestrel House and Rebecca House).

Council Corporate Safeguarding Board

We have been invited to sit on the Council's newly configured Corporate Safeguarding Board. Our Tenancy Sustainment and Safeguarding Manager Lorraine Testro will be taking up this position to represent Derby Homes.

Young Peoples Diversionary Activities

During the half-term period in April, we are holding two events as part of our action on Customer Priorities. This is in response to feedback from the Customer Survey. The events are targeting the Sussex Circus area and areas in Allenton. They will bring together a range of partners who are delivering activities for young people (10-17 years old). At the same time, the events will allow residents to speak to key agencies about

any issues they have in their areas and staff can explore (and in some cases challenge) perceptions of anti-social behaviour.

100 Years of Council Housing in Derby

We are currently planning ways to raise awareness of the 100 year milestone of Council Homes. This is happening everywhere across the country in relation to the implementation of the "Addison Act" 100 years ago, which paved the way to larger scale council housing, but we want to tell the local story for Derby and also look to the next 100 years. We would love to hear ideas from tenants as to the best way to do this. Operational Board Members are very welcome to come and share their ideas with colleagues in the Hub and/or myself

Head of Operations (Income Management & Customer Services)

Customer Service and Equalities

We have undertaken more recruitment as a number of Customer Service Advisors have moved on from the team. The new team members are currently going through the pre-employment checking process and we are looking forward to them starting with us.

The new opening hours for general enquiries have been implemented from the beginning of March, this seems to be working well and we have seen an increase in customers contacting us for general enquiries between 9am and 3pm and in online activity.

We are currently working on a brand new telephony script which will have a much greater functionality and bring together a number of Derby Homes services, all accessed via the one phone number 01332 888777.

Incentive schemes update

The 24/7 campaign has been running since August 2018. Customers who have registered for "My Account" are entered into monthly draws. This initiative has now rewarded 233 customers with a Lenovo Tablet. The final draw will take place in April 2019.

The second year of the "Get Online Incentive Scheme" concluded on 31.03.2019. An update on the number of customers who qualified in the second year will be presented on the next Head of Service update.

Customer Communications

Work is starting to plan the Summer edition of Derby Homes News. Current ideas are to do a theme around a "Century of Council Housing", celebrating 100 years of the Addison Act and telling the story of council housing in Derby.

Awards

Over the next month, staff are attending the Resolve Anti-social Behaviour Awards, the Tenant Participation Advisory Service Awards. We are shortlisted for partnership work in city centre homelessness work (Proactive Engagement and Enforcement Partnership, PEEP) and engagement work at Parkland View, respectively.

Involvement with the website redesign and intranet rebuild is continuing.

The team has also been carrying out work for the National Federation of ALMO's (NFA) annual conference, including submitting an entry for their photo of the year competition and a display board highlighting a particular project.

Rental Control

Annual Rent Variation completed and all notices issued on time. All of the New Year direct debit profiles have been completed. Work is under way to compare and balance charges along with preparation for the end of year reports. Testing is also being carried out for the new release of Open Housing. New procedures and internal processes are being developed to deal with both new build and with Derby City Council purchasing a high number of former Right To Buy properties.

Leasehold

Ground Rent and Estimated Service Charge completed and issued on time. The team is preparing consultation events to capture the leaseholder's views in readiness for the new policy.

Derby Advice

We have completed the restructure for Derby Advice and are on the process of working through the recruitment necessary to put the new structure in place. We have successfully recruited to the Senior Welfare Rights Officer post and the Welfare Rights Triage Officer post in recent weeks.

The 18/19 Derby Advice training programme has now been completed. 72% of the attendees on the courses were Derby Homes staff. Other attendees were Derby City Council staff and third sector employees (who are paying customers).

97% of attendees rated the tutor knowledge as excellent and 96% of attendees rated the overall courses as excellent.

The "D2N2 Money Sorted" project was due to end 31/10/2019 but we have recently had confirmation that it has been extended until 31/01/2020. The Big Lottery have been impressed with the depth of work that the project has been able to do with the most financially excluded residents in the D2N2 area. They have also praised the tangible improvements in participants financial capability and wellbeing. Our staff member has worked exclusively with financially excluded individuals in Derby city.

Income Management

The current rent arrears position is just over £1.55M. Although the rent free week at the end of March will have a big bearing on the final figure we expect arrears levels to be well under the end of year target of 1.72m

The 'Rent-Free Week' is expected to produce a reduction of around £250 to £300k putting us in a position where the final figure for the arrears will be around the £1.25M to £1.3M range and considering the challenges of austerity and welfare reforms this is a good outcome.

The other Doris indicators are also expected to be on or better than the year end targets.

We will continue to look for more efficient ways of working and although Mobyssoft said at this point in time they not feel their product will add value to what we do, we will continue to monitor their developing product so it integrates more with our computer system to save logging in and out of systems or having two screens.

Although the recruitment in the team is complete and the team was at full strength there have been some absences which we will need to plan for. Consideration is being given to how we can plan and move forward to maintain the service. A meeting has been arranged in April to look at this.

Currently there is an issue with housing benefit overpayment recovery being registered on sub accounts which is effecting some rent account balances and a solution to this is currently being investigated with IT and Housing Benefits.

Welfare Reform

From 15 May 2019, benefit rules are changing for mixed-age pension couples. In most circumstances this means that both members of a couple will need to have reached State Pension age to be eligible to make a new claim to Pension Credit or Housing Benefit. If household circumstances change on, or after, 15 May 2019 and 1 partner is below pension age, tenants may be subject to the new Pension Credit and Housing Benefit rules. Depending on their new circumstances, entitlement to one or both may end. The Department for Works and Pensions have sent letters to tenants affected explaining the issue however if there is no change in circumstances then they will not be affected .

The process of moving existing claimants who receive the six old style legacy benefits to Universal Credit is known as Managed Migration. Harrogate has been chosen to pilot the Managed Migration of up to 10,000 claimants in July 2019 once regulations have been passed in Parliament. Full Managed Migration for the whole country is expected to be completed by December 2023. It depend on how the pilot goes but we do not think Derby's migration of existing legacy benefit claimants is not likely to be before 2020

As at 1st February 2019 we have 975 Universal Credit claimants:

- Families – 512
- Couples – 56
- Singles – 407

Head of Repairs

Day to Day

At the end of February 2019, performance in terms of 'repairs completed in time' is as follows:

- Emergencies – 100%
- Very urgent works –99.90%
- Urgent works – 99.93%
- Routine works – 99.73%
- Planned works – 98.35%

Performance up until the end of February is generally pleasing with all priorities above / better than the 99% targets other than planned works. There has been a continued improvement in performance in the last few months on planned works 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 21 appointments.

Tenant satisfaction with repairs remains high and above target at 99.65% up until the end of February. During the month of February out of 3552 surveys sent out only 11 were dissatisfied.

We have generated rechargeable repairs up to the end of quarter 3 realising £24,289.09.

We currently have 7 live disrepair cases.

Void Repairs

Up to the end of February, the Voids Team has completed 513 active voids compared to 595 for the same period last year. Performance is currently averaging 15.06 days cumulatively to inspect and complete works.

The total number of void works carried out both active and passive is 722 voids compared to 772 voids last year.

The current average time is only slightly over target although we are confident of meeting the target at year end.

Gas Servicing and Electrical Testing

At the end of February 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 February the Gas team carried out 13,138 services.

The Electrical Testing Team for the same period have carried out 2592 Periodic tests.

We attained high levels of first time access for gas servicing which so far this year averages 81% which is slightly down on the target of 82%. Over the next 12 months, we are also looking to trial a staggered working pattern with some of the gas service engineers so that they will be starting later and finishing later so that we can carry out services early evening for working families.

We continue to work with the new gas and electric servicing module and despite early teething problems the numbers of issues have reduced. We are hopeful that in the coming months this new module will help us gain service improvements.

The new initiative to fit gas and electric cookers for new tenants has now started on void properties. We have fitted a number of cookers and so far the initiative is working well.

We have now purchased the gutter cleaning machine and arranged training for relevant staff. We are planning to start working with the machine from early April.

Head of Governance & Corporate Support

Employee Development

We are now working towards this year's intake of Apprentices, the apprenticeship vacancies will be advertised during April and May, with the recruitment and selection processes taking place during the summer, in time for a start date of September. We will be taking on a total of 15 new apprentices, see below:

- 1 Painting Apprentice – 18 months apprenticeship
- 1 Electrical Apprentice – 4 year apprenticeship
- 1 Joinery Apprentice – 2 year apprenticeship
- 2 Plastering Apprentices – 2 year apprenticeship
- 1 Floor layer Apprentice – 18 months apprenticeship
- 3 Gas Engineer Apprentices – 18 months apprenticeship
- 4 Housing Apprentices – 1 year apprenticeship
- 1 Customer Service Apprentice – 1 year apprenticeship
- 1 Procurement Apprentice – 2 year Higher Apprenticeship

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

Clare Mehrbani, Director of Housing Services:

Tel 888596 Email clare.mehrbani@derbyhomes.org

Steve Bayliss, Head of Repairs:

Tel 888774 Email steve.bayliss@derbyhomes.org

Shaun Bennett, Director of Investment & Maintenance:

Tel 888545 Email shaun.bennett@derbyhomes.org

Taran Lalria, Head of Governance & Corporate Services:

Tel 888608: Email taranjit.lalria@derbyhomes.org

Background Information: None

Supporting Information: None