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Report of Chief Executive of Belle Isle Tenant Management Organisation

Report to Inner South Area Committee

Date: Wednesday 20th June 2012

Subject: Belle Isle Tenant Management Organisation Service Delivery Update

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No City & Hunslet Beeston & Holbeck Middleton Park
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. Belle Isle Tenant Management Organisation (BITMO) is the provider for housing and estate management services for nearly 2,000 homes within Belle Isle neighbourhood of South Leeds.
2. The details contained within this report are intended to provide the Inner South Area Committee with an update on how BITMO are contributing at a local level to the key city wide service delivery priorities and how we are engaged in partnership work to improve local services that are responsive to the needs of local communities.
3. The details contained within this report are also intended to provide the Inner South Area Committee with an update on BITMO current performance and levels of customer satisfaction.

Recommendations

The Area Committee are asked to;

- Note the content of the attached report and raise any issues
- Consider the proposal that BITMO submit a similar update report every six months

1.0 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of the attached report is to provide Members of the Inner South Area Committee with an update on areas of activity and performance.

The report will also highlight areas of joint work that are currently ongoing between BITMO and other Council services to deliver a comprehensive service that is responsive to the needs of individual local communities.

2.0 Background information

Belle Isle TMO is the largest estate based Tenant Management Organisation in the country.

Belle Isle has, for nearly a quarter of a century, been at the forefront of resident led service delivery in Leeds. This began in the late 1980s with Belle Isle North Estate Management Board. Nearly 15 years later, in 2004, BITMO was founded following the conclusion of the Right to Manage process which included an extension of the management area, to encompass the Belle Isle South estate. A successful ballot of all tenants in the management area underpinned this change. The estate ballot was repeated in September 2009 and delivered a resounding confirmation that BITMO continued meet with tenant satisfaction and should continue. In line with the management agreement this ballot will be repeated every 5 years. BITMO's responsibilities under this Management Agreement are summarised in the table below.

Table 1: Summary of BITMO responsibilities under the Right to Manage
Collection of rent on behalf of Leeds City Council. BITMO - also manages the process of managing rent arrears for current and former tenants
Managing the letting of all Council properties on Belle Isle.
Tenancy management and enforcement in Belle Isle.
Management of day to day repairs and maintenance in Belle Isle properties.
Management of capital investment in Belle Isle properties.
Community development and tenant involvement in Belle Isle.
Management of supported housing services (Sheltered)
Monitoring of Grounds maintenance work in Belle Isle
Management of forestry work

BITMO is owned by its shareholding members. Eligible shareholding members are Leeds City Council tenants or leaseholders who reside within the BITMO management area. Shares cost ten pence. The Board of Management comprises;

- 12 elected tenant or leaseholder members

- 6 co-opted members
- 2 local Councillors nominated by the Local Authority

3.0 Main issues

3.1 Partnership working

3.1.1 Middleton Park Neighbourhood Improvement Board

BITMO is a member of the emerging Middleton Park Neighbourhood Improvement Board which is due to meet for a second time in May 2012.

3.1.2 Belle Isle Connecting Communities

BITMO have supported the Connecting Communities Project in Belle Isle an initiative led by Local Ward members aimed at developing community participation. The project has seen small grants awarded to emerging community groups and has also provided capacity building training for groups and individuals.

3.1.3 Joint Working With The Police and Leeds Anti Social Behaviour Team (LASBT)

BITMO contribute resources to the South Area ASB team which is made up of staff from LCC, Police, Victim Support, Arson Task Force and the noise nuisance team.

BITMO is represented on both the Hate Crime and Domestic Violence MARAC and the bi monthly Crime and Grime Meeting.

BITMO is also working with the Area Committee Community Safety Co-ordinator and the Neighbourhood Policing Team to provide support to burglary victims in Belle Isle.

3.1.4 Local Schools

BITMO has a strong connection with local schools in the area. BITMO serve as Community Governors at both Windmill and Low Road Federation and Clapgate Primary Schools. BITMO also has a good connection with the South Leeds Academy (see below)

Windmill Primary School Children have also helped produced two short films for BITMO Annual General Meetings and have also helped edit and produce BITMO's neighbourhood Newsletter (Bits 'n' Pieces).

3.1.5 Older Peoples Housing Services

BITMO manages a total of 112 units of sheltered accommodation in Belle Isle Circus and Broom Nook. In addition BITMO has the ability to provide 'floating' support to those people requiring Sheltered support within their own home.

In order to ensure that the service provision is delivered based on individual need individual Support Plans are undertaken on a regular basis to change the service provision, or bring in additional support providers, dependent on the needs of the customer.

In order to allow existing residents to remain in their current homes, and avoid relocating, BITMO has spends approx £250k every year delivering adaptations work.

3.1.6 Environmental action

BITMO is a client within the Grounds Maintenance Contract and is represented on the Grounds Maintenance Programme Board and the Grounds Maintenance Monitoring operational meeting. BITMO staff monitor the performance of Continental Ltd throughout the Belle Isle area.

BITMO has a team of 6 Estate Caretakers who undertake environmental work, void clearance, minor repairs and the regular weekly cycle of cleaning the 3 storey flats and maintaining the West Grange Land and Multi Use Games Area.

For the purposes of environmental work, Belle isle has been divided into 4 quarters and the Estate Caretaking Team work within each quarter for 3 weeks by rotation.

In 2012/13 the Estate Caretakers will be involved with the monitoring of the Grounds Maintenance Contract and the footpath inspection process.

The Head of Housing Management has met with Ward Councillors and the Service Manager of the Environmental Services South Locality Team to look at how services can work more closely together to further improve the environmental condition of the Belle Isle Estate

3.1.7 Employment Initiatives

Under the terms of the Belle Isle repairs and maintenance contract Morrison FS have committed to 1 apprentice per year of the contract. This apprentice has been appointed for the year 2011/12 and the recruitment process for 2012/13 is currently underway.

In addition through this contract BITMO are encouraging Morrison FS to develop a closer relationship with the South Leeds Academy Construction Centre.

BITMO continue to offer regular work experience opportunities The South Leeds Academy, most recently in April 2012.

3.1.8 Energy Efficiency

BITMO have completed insulation (cavity and roof) space to all properties in Belle Isle where this work can be undertaken.

In 2011/12 BITMO undertook a major single glazed window replacement project. It is proposed to extend this project in 2012/13 in order to complete the replacement of all single glazed windows with more efficient double glazed units.

3.1.9 Empty Properties – increasing council stock

Since 2010 BITMO have been actively returning former Council accommodation to the council's lettable stock. Former offices on Winrose Drive have become 2 one bedroom flats and a former community house on Broom Road has been converted to 2 two bed family houses.

More recently BITMO have gained planning permission to return two large family houses (4 and 5 beds) on Windmill Road to Council housing stock.

3.1.10 The Former Belle Isle Library

BITMO are currently in negotiation with LCC to lease the former Belle Isle Library site. Plans are at a very early stage and feasibility and consultation is still ongoing.

3.2 **Operational Performance**

3.2.1 Repairs and Maintenance

The Belle Isle Repairs and Maintenance contract is managed by BITMO on behalf of LCC. The contractor, Morrison FS has been in place since October 1st 2011.

Headline indicators at this point in time are that for the period October 2011 to end of March 2012:

- Morrison has completed 94% of all jobs on time – this performance has been maintained for the last three months.
- BITMO have post inspected 100% of all work completed in void/empty properties, on adaptations, investment and planned work
- BITMO have post inspected approximately 10% of day to day repairs
- BITMO are generally satisfied with the standard of work undertaken by Morrison and similarly have not experienced any increase in complaints about appointments not kept or the quality of work from tenants.
- BITMO and Morrison have been able to resolve those complaints we have received, quickly
- There are now early indications that value for money savings will be realised on this contract. Any savings will be invested in Planned Maintenance Priorities.

3.2.2 Re-structure

BITMO restructured its staffing team in 2011.

In 2012 BITMO have been able to realise a 5% reduction in management costs

and therefore have increased their repairs budget by 6%.

3.2.3 Anti Social Behaviour

Anti Social Behaviour in Belle Isle is dealt with by the Leeds Anti Social Behaviour Team (LASBT) based at Landmark Court. They also have a central performance team who collate performance information relating to the teams. LASBT are currently dealing with 13 open cases of ASB within Belle Isle. BITMO and LASBT staff meet on a monthly basis to review ASB cases and breaches of tenancy cases.

3.2.4 Resident Engagement

There are a number of active community groups in Belle Isle which are jointly supported by Local Ward members and by BITMO. These include groups in the following areas;

- Aberfields and Newhalls
- Brooms
- Rosedales

BITMO also support two sheltered housing resident groups in Broom Nook and Belle Isle Circus.

In addition BITMO also convene a Tenant Consultative Panel approximately 4 times per year – recent subjects include future use of the former Belle Isle Library site and future web site content. Future subjects include satisfaction with the repairs service.

3.2.5 Local Ward Member Engagement

Historically two out of three Middleton Park Ward members sit of the BITMO Board. These Members are nominated by the Inner South Area Committee.

Since January 2012 the BITMO Chief Executive and Head of Housing Management have prepared a headlines report for all Ward members and have diarised a monthly briefing meeting to address priority areas raised by Members.

3.2.6 Staff Engagement

The BITMO Board recognise the importance of investing in staff;

- The Third annual Staff conference highlighted areas where staff think we are performing well and areas where we need to work on.
- New Staff Appraisal system is now place to ensure continuous improvement and development
- Reports show that BITMO now has the lowest level of staff absence in 7 years (average 9 days per person per year)

3.2.7 Customer Satisfaction

BITMO are heavily reliant on high levels of customer satisfaction. Every 5 years BITMO must carry out a Ballot to ask tenants if they are satisfied with the TMO and if the TMO should continue. The last ballot of this nature was in 2009 with BITMO gaining a 90% yes vote on a 35% turnout. (The next ballot is planned for 2014).

The most recent STATUS survey that was conducted in 2010 reported overall tenant satisfaction at 75%, which was the highest recorded in the City of Leeds at that time. BITMO utilise its tenant and resident Board members, tenant panel members and local Ward members to constantly gauge opinion and satisfaction.

3.2.8 Capital Programme

Plans are currently being developed to mobilise this year's Capital programme which stands at £2,228,900. Key areas of spend within this years programme includes:

Work to maintain decency = £50k

Adaptations = £250,000

Fuel poverty & energy efficiency (Windows, boilers etc) = £1,174,300

Environmental Work = £116,000

4.0 **Corporate Considerations**

4.1 **Consultation and Engagement**

4.1.1 BITMO has a formal structure to deliver a full range of consultation and engagement activities with its tenants. This includes;

- Tenant led Board
- Tenant Consultative Panel
- Local Community Groups

4.2 **Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

4.2.1 BITMO aims to work within the terms of the Equality Act 2010 which brings together all previous equality legislation into one Act. This important piece of legislation helps to ensure that everyone has the right to be treated fairly at work, or when using services. It protects people from discrimination on the basis of 9 protected characteristics: race, gender, disability, religion and belief, sexual orientation, age, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships and maternity and paternity.

4.3 **Council policies and City Priorities**

4.3.1 The work undertaken by staff from BITMO is intended to contribute to priorities set out in the following policies;

- Vision for Leeds
- Children and Young Peoples Plan
- Safer and Stronger Communities Plan
- Health and Well being Priority Plan

- City Regeneration Priority Plan

4.4 Resources and value for money

4.4.1 BITMO receives its income from the HRA via the Council through a Management Fee based on the Modular Management Agreement under the Right to Manage Regulations.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.5.1 All decisions taken by the Area Committee in relation to the delegated functions from Executive Board are eligible for Call In.

4.5.2 There are no key or major decisions being made that would be eligible for Call In.

4.5.3 There are no legal implications as a result of this report.

4.6 Risk Management

4.6.1 There are no risk management implications in this report. The priorities reflected in this report are monitored through BITMO and where appropriate risk management processes followed.

5.0 Conclusions

5.1 BITMO have recovered from a very difficult position in early 2009 and can now demonstrate;

- Good levels of tenant satisfaction
- Increasing tenant involvement and community involvement
- Effectively managed repairs and maintenance contracts
- Significant improvement in the management of rent arrears
- Highly responsive local caretaking service
- Positive relationship with key partners and stakeholders
- Improving audit reports in all key areas of operation

6.0 Recommendations

6.1 The Area Committee are asked to;

- Note the content of the attached report and raise any issues
- Consider the proposal that BITMO submit a similar update report every six months

Background documents ¹

None

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available for inspection on request for a period of four years following the date of the relevant meeting. Accordingly this list does not include documents containing exempt or confidential information, or any published works. Requests to inspect any background documents should be submitted to the report author.