Appendix 3

Leeds
CITY COUNCIL

Scrutiny Working Group – Environment, Housing and Communities

Housing Repairs – 26 September 2018

In attendance

Cllr Barry Anderson
Cllr Ann Blackburn
Cllr Dawn Collins
Cllr Peter Gruen
Cllr Paul Truswell

Officers in attendance

Neil Evans - Director of Resources & Housing
Rob Goor - Responsive Repairs Service Manager
Simon Costigan - Chief Officer, Property & Contracts
Sandra Pentelow - Principal Scrutiny Officer
Helen Gray - Governance & Scrutiny Officer

Apologies were received from Councillors P Grahame and A Khan

Purpose of the working group

1.1 At the Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities) meeting held 28th June 2018, some Members raised concerns regarding housing repairs services, responsiveness and outcomes; and contracted services provided by MEARS. The Board established a Scrutiny Working Group to consider the performance of both Mears and Leeds Building Services and provide comments or recommendations if necessary.

1.2 Supporting documents provided to the working group included

- Report providing a summary of the existing repair arrangements
- Key Performance Indicator Data, September 2017 – July 2018 for Leeds Building Services / Mears Repairs

Background

1.3 The existing repair arrangements in place across the City were initially introduced following a procurement exercise undertaken in 2011 for four packages of work;

- Responsive, voids and planned works in West
- Responsive, voids and planned works in South
- Gas service and maintenance in West
- Gas service and maintenance in South

At that time, the service within the East of the City was already being undertaken by the Internal Service Provider (ISP), Leeds Building Services (LBS).

1.4 All four contracts in West and South were awarded to Morrison Facility Services (MFS) on an initial contract period of 5 years. In 2012 Mears Group PLC bought out MFS and all four contracts were 'novated' from MSF to Mears

1.5 The Working Group received detail of the various extensions of time awarded to the contracts and the current contracting arrangements as at September 2018.

1.6 The Working Group considered and compared the performance data recorded for LBS and Mears against the following targets during the period September 2017 to July 2018:
RR1 Same Day Fix
RR2 Repairs Completed Within Target (Including Minor Adaptations)
RR3 Appointments Kept (Including Minor Adaptations)
RR6 Customer Dis-satisfaction with the service provided by the Workers who carried out the repairs.
Customer Satisfaction with the service provided by the Workers who carried out the repairs.

Discussions of the Working Group

1.7 The working group discussed/made observations on the following

- Comparisons of the skills base and staff retention of the Mears and LBS workforce
- The entry level qualifications required, opportunities for training and in-house apprenticeship programmes and links to the Employment & Skills Service
- The role of ward Councillors in local housing matters; such as estate walkabouts; and report-back mechanism/follow up work on any identified repairs to Members
- Stock control and stock requests
- The limitations of and plans to replace the current ICT system
- The intention to create a business plan, including a review of the service and its capacity, to support future steady growth of the service
- The future delivery of homes and extra care housing by LCC
- The satisfaction survey methods undertaken impartially by LCC contact centre

Outcomes of the Working Group

1.8 The working group recognised the role of the contract performance management structure in influencing performance and encouraging consistency through the monthly operational meetings established to discuss performance data and identify areas for improvement.

1.9 The working group acknowledged the complaints process in place operated by LCC Housing Services which placed the onus on the relevant contractor to respond directly to the complainant in the first instance. If dissatisfaction remained, LCC would escalate the issue.

1.10 Members identified the need to be provided with figures showing the total number of homes covered by these contracts, the number of complaints received, the number

of complaints escalated and the number of complaints made to the Local Government Ombudsman. This information will be circulated to all Board members.

1.11 The working group recognised the steps being taken. The working group also recognised that further work is still to take place.

1.12 The working group raised the following areas as requiring focus going forward:

- The need to identify issues through the diagnostics centre, put things right quickly enough and well enough
- The need to ensure the right staff, with the relevant skills and equipment are available quickly enough
- The management of how complaints are escalated and resolved
- The arrangements for out of hours services
- Review how compensation payments are calculated for loss of time/stress caused as a result of a complaint
- To review the issue reporting/progress tracking mechanisms of matters raised during walkabouts
- A review of the services which LCC LDS could realistically provide as the service grows and a review of in-house capacity to support the growth of LBS
- Outcome of the implementation of the change programme
- Outcome of the implementation on new ICT systems and support
- A review of Mears working practices to identify possible efficiencies to benefit tenants and whether Mears has the opportunity to compare its performance against other service providers
- A review of the availability of local information for ward councillors – a one-stop app

RECOMMENDATION

a) To note the contents of the report, the information provided at the meeting and the discussions
b) To report back to Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities) in due course
c) To request a further report be provided to Members after implementation of the ICT, to provide updated housing repair data; overview of the replacement ICT system and outcome of consideration of the Business Case with proposals for the future.

1.13 Post Meeting Note: - Further information has been requested on behalf of the working group regarding outline dates for the implementation of improvement measures and impact assessment. This is currently (as at 16 November 2018) in pre-project planning stages. Approximate dates will be provided in the next month and once received will be shared with all members of the Scrutiny Board so enable the Board to determine when a review could next be scheduled into the work programme.