

Corporate Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 27 July 2023

Report of the Assistant Director, Assets

Update on Housing Repairs Service

Exempt Information

Not exempt.

Purpose

This report provides an update on the performance of the housing repairs and voids service, including Key Performance Indicators, tenant feedback data, void performance data, complaints and Member Enquiries.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Committee: -

- Note the content of this report.
- Approve the workplan set out below with any suggested amendments or additions from the committee.

Executive Summary

The housing repairs services carried out circa. 15,000 repairs every year with works to a further circa. 300 void properties per annum. The works are carried out under a Measured Term Contract using a mixture of Price Per Property [PPP] and National Housing Federation Schedule of Rates [SOR].

Expenditure on responsive repairs under the PPP arrangement is £1,809,649 per annum, with expenditure on voids being in the region of £1,300,000 per annum and for the contract year of 2022/23- 288 voids were completed.

Response repairs are reported through the in-house call centre, logged in the Orchard Housing Management system and are then completed by the external delivery contractor, Equans. Response repairs are placed into one of three categories by the call centre, these are: -

- Emergency Repair [ER] - works to be completed within 24 hours.
- Urgent Repair [UR] - works to be completed within 5 days
- Routine Repairs [RR] - works to be completed within 26 days

So far as possible the contractor aims to complete repairs on the first visit to the property, however this is not always possible due to the nature of some repairs. In respect of ER priority jobs the contractor as a minimum is expected to make the property safe at the first visit with follow-up works to be done as soon as possible afterwards.

Void properties are inspected, and a schedule of works agreed which the contractor is then required to deliver. The completion time for void properties is based on the value of the works to be completed and this is set out within the contract.

The contract contains a suite of KPIs that are recorded and monitored on a monthly basis by the contract Core Group, in addition to the agreed contractual KPIs customer feedback data is also collected by the Repairs Call Centre Team, this data tracks the customers overall feedback on the service. It should be noted that that the tenant feedback data will not always track the KPI data due to the nature of the questions being asked, a key example of this would be Right First Time as it is clear that not all jobs can be completed in a single visit but from the tenants perspective, they are quite rightly commenting that the job was completed after multiple visits.

There is no identified backlog of repairs as all repairs reported that are the responsibility of the Council are allocated to one of the categories listed below and issue for completion by the contractor. At any given time, there will be an element of Work-In-Progress [WIP], this is not considered to be a particularly useful metric in measuring contractor performance instead the number of jobs completed out-of-time is used for this assessment.

[The Housing Repairs Policy](#) sets out the priorities for the various repairs categories; this policy is currently in the process of being updated, it is however expected that the repairs categories will remain as they are at present. The policy is publicly available through the Council website.

Since the inception of the contract in April 2020 there have been:

Emergency Repairs [ER]

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Total Jobs	3499	2891	3436
Completed On Time	3324 [94.99%]	2881 [99.65%]	3300 [96.04%]
Overdue	175	100	136
Average days overdue	23	5	22
Average Job Cost	£36.25	£42.31	£54.60

Urgent Repairs [UR]

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Total Jobs	2912	2944	2659
Completed On Time	2664 [91.48%]	2676 [90.86%]	2383 [89.62%]
Overdue	248	268	276
Average days overdue	44	13	23
Average Job Cost	£46.01	£66.19	£65.94

Routine Repairs [RR]

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Total Jobs	6818	7100	7362
Completed On Time	6176 [90.58%]	6440 [90.57%]	6750 [91.68%]
Overdue	642	660	612

Average days overdue	60	31	28
Average Job Cost	£102.92	£154.64	£115.03

OTHER

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Total Jobs	539	925	109
Completed On Time	538 [99.81%]	925 [100%]	107 [98.16%]
Overdue	1	0	2
Average days overdue	60	0	268
Average Job Cost	£325.95	£207.33	£658.42

1060 (circa. 2.5%) jobs have been cancelled due to the tenant not providing access to complete the works.

[All repairs data extracted from the Orchard Housing Management System]

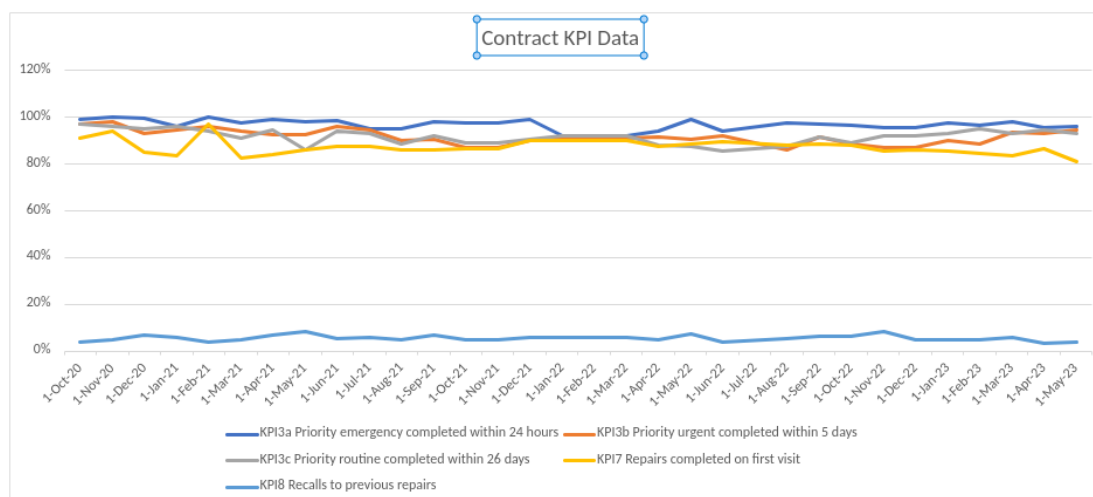
The table below shows voids over the course of the contract.

Value range	Number of voids	Actual completion days	Percentage overdue	Target dates
<£500	86	5.67	20.1%	3 Working days
£501 - £2,000	261	8.375	9.57%	5 Working days
£2,001 - £5000	268	11.48	12.3%	10 Working days
£5001 - £14,999	254	18.6	14.9%	20 Working days/ 28 Calendar days
Exceptional voids >£15k	25	63.36	24%	20 Working days/ 28 Calendar days

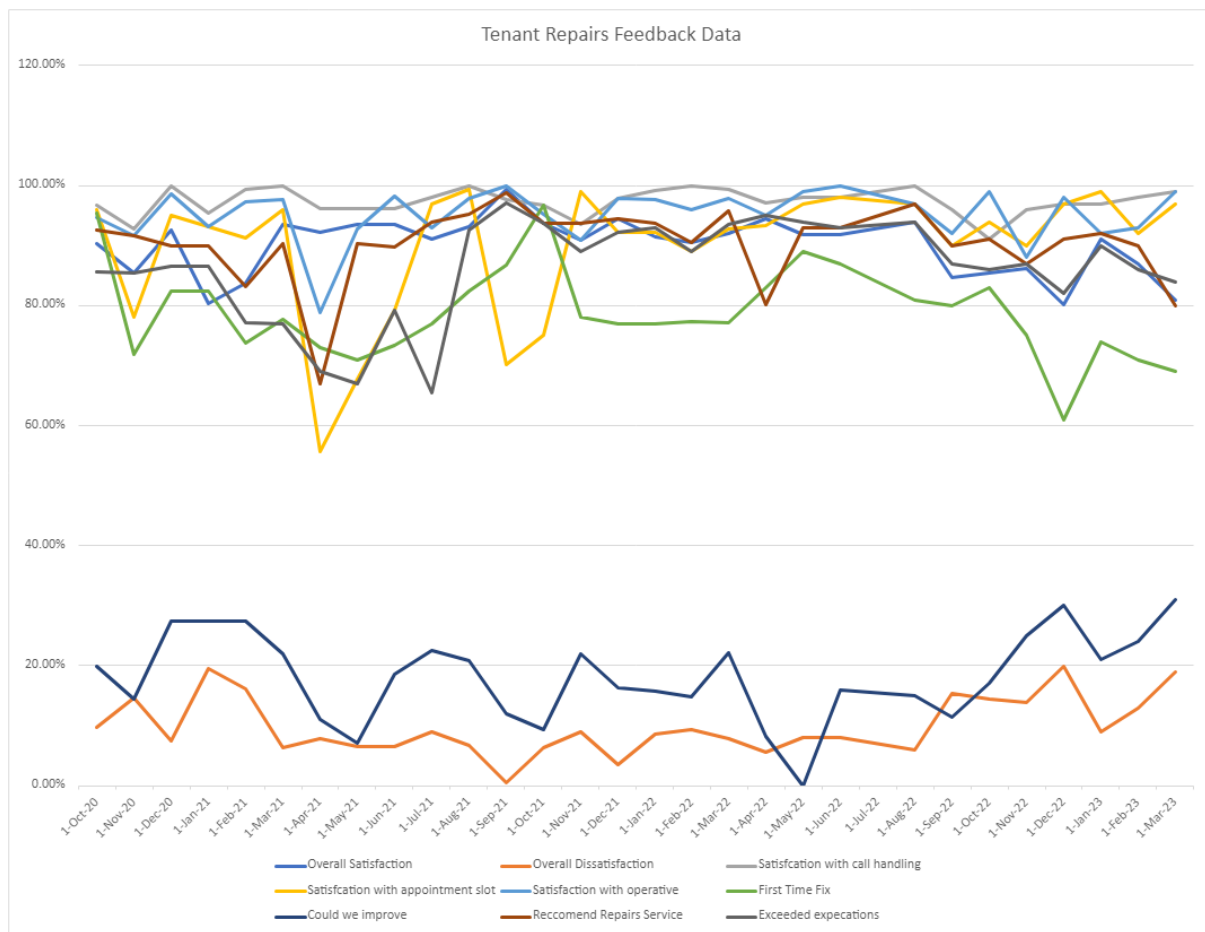
The above table includes all jobs issued related to void works excluding follow-on gas Turn On & Test Target dates are based on works order values and are set out in the contract document.

[All repairs data extracted from the Orchard Housing Management System]

The table below shows the general KPI data over the course of the contract.



The table below shows the general tenant feedback data over the contract: -



As can be seen from the table above the key area for further analysis is in relation to 'First Time Fix'. Whilst it is recognised that improvement is needed the feedback also indicates that further work is needed in relation to communications and addressing expectations around the meaning and definition of 'First Time Fix'.

The table below shows the number of complaints received on a monthly basis.

It should be noted that complaints are received and managed in line with the Corporate Complaints process under the 'Comments, Compliments & Complaints' scheme. The process has been subject to review and is considered to meet the requirements of the Local Government and Housing Ombudsman schemes. At present there is no trend analysis carried out on Tell Us complaints at a corporate level meaning any analysis is done locally.

The table below shows the general nature of the complaints received.

April 2023 - June 2023 [New complaints process implemented)	Stage 1 Complaint	Stage 2 Complaint	Total Complaints	Total Service Requests	Total Compliments
Housing Repairs	31	2	33	28	1
Housing Repairs Gas	2		2	1	
Housing Repairs Planned	1	1	2	5	
Member Enquiries	35				
Total	69	3	37	34	1

Service Area) April 2022 - March 2023	Stage 1 Complaint	Stage 2 Complaint	Total Complaints	Total Service Requests	Total Compliments
Housing Repairs	39	9	48	83	3
Housing Repairs Gas	3	0	3	0	0
Housing Repairs Planned	15	0	15	15	0
Member Enquiries	45				
Total	102	9	66	98	3

* The Member Enquiry category includes a number of general enquiries that don't appear to relate to a specific job, address or service issue.

'Comments, Compliments & Complaints' Category	Total
Time taken to complete repair	57
Communication issues	25
Quality of Work completed	64
General	16

[Data supplied through Corporate 'Comments, Compliments & Complaints' team]

The anonymised nature of the data is such that it has not been possible to identify duplicated contacts where tenants have used both the ['Comments, Compliments & Complaints'](#) process and contact through a Member Enquiry.

These matters are raised through a variety of formal meetings with Equans from operational level meetings with the frontline teams, management team meetings with contract managers and Core Group meetings with senior team members. At Core Group meetings KPI and tenant feedback data is discussed by all parties with a view to identifying any potential trends that required addressing. In response to these ongoing discussions Equans have introduced

changes to their operational teams with the aim of better resourcing the contract. Work has also commenced on the development of a service improvement plan with Equans with a focus on the tenant feedback data. The team will also be conducting specific case studies on complaints where there is a view that matters have not been progressed as they should have.

In response to high profile issues relating to damp and mould a new category of repair was introduced in Early December 2022 this has allowed the repairs team to specifically record and subsequently track this type of issue from the point of being reported to the point at which the job has been completed. This information can also be used to build a picture of instances of Damp & Mould with a view to being able to use the data to identify trends in property or tenure types. To date 206 jobs have been reported in the Damp & Mould Category, of these 183 are considered to have been dealt with to completion. The remaining jobs are considered to be 'Work In Progress' and will be progressed through until completion. On average it takes 23 days to complete works falling into the 'damp and mould' category.

In addition to collating the data on damp and mould we have refreshed and re-released [information leaflets on Damp and Mould](#) that are issued to tenants. Equans operatives have also received toolbox talks on methods of identifying causes of Damp & Mould with a view to being able to provide support to residents. A number of our own staff including those from the repairs team and colleagues in tenancy management attended the 'Condensation, damp and mould – causes and cures' course in April 2023 run by HQN, this course was chosen as Tamworth Borough Council is a member of HQN and HQN have a reputation for delivering high quality training specifically for social housing providers.

The Council has acquired some digital monitoring equipment, to date this has not been deployed but the view is that the two units we have would be deployed at two near identical properties simultaneously, one where the damp is being reported and the other not known to be experiencing damp, this will allow us to identify any differences between the two properties that may be a cause of the damp and mould. When a survey is carried out at a property the Project Officer will work methodically through the key building components to identify any possible sources of water ingress, this could be roof leaks, blocked gutters and pipework; internally they will check that extractor fans are present and that they are working, they will check that there is insulation present and sufficient. Having checked for the building related causes they will also undertake a visual inspection of the premises to check that any tumble dryers are properly vented to the outside and where clothes are found to be drying indoors they will direct tenants to the advice contained with the information leaflet. The tenant will be reminded about the need to properly heat and ventilate the property and where a tenant identifies that they are finding it difficult to pay for heating they will be directed to the tenancy sustainment team for support and advice.

If after their initial investigations the Project Officer is unable to identify the causes of damp, condensation and mould they will make arrangements for a specialist damp surveying company to attend to carry out more extensive investigations and to provide a report back to the Council for action.

In addition to the Comments Compliments and Complaints or Member Enquiries route to resolving repairs related matters tenants have a legal route to seek remedy by way of a Housing Disrepair Claim under s11 of the Landlord & Tenant Act; these will typically involve a solicitor and should generally only be brought about once the normal repairs reporting approach is considered to have failed.

The table below shows the number and general nature of the disrepair claims received on an annual basis. It should be noted that due to the nature of the claim, the complexity of resolving

them and the involvement of third parties some claims span across financial years, some may also relate to events that started before the current contracts were put in place.

2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
25	35 5 claims withdrawn	21 2 claims withdrawn

Data supplied by Disrepairs Officer

Brief Summary of claims

- Complaint not responded to
- Can't get repairs completed
- Poor insulation causing cold spots
- Guttering/hoppers blocked with vegetation (in most cases these had not previously been reported)
- Poor decoration (tenant responsibility under repairs policy)
- Roof leaks
- Windows have reached end of life
- Damp and Mould is generally included in every claim, the extent of this will be variable.
- Leaks not fixed first time.

The Council subscribes to the industry-wide benchmarking tool 'HouseMark' This tool measures several performance indicators including those relating to housing repairs. The table below shows the benchmark data with the figures from Tamworth Borough Council included.

Measure	Quartile 1	Median	Quartile 3	Tamworth result
Proportion of Homes with a Valid Gas Safety Certificate	99.67%	99.9%	100%	99.93% ¹
Proportion of properties with EICR certificates up to five years old	88.37%	95.39%	98.16%	72.73% ²
Emergency Repairs completed (per 1000 Homes)	42.2	53.1	65.1	73.57
Non-emergency repairs completed (per 1,000 units)	183.5	223.7	260.2	215
Proportion of nonemergency repairs completed within target	88.8%	91.4%	94.5%	95%
Satisfaction with repairs (transactional)	87.4%	89%	96.2%	91%

*Table above only includes repairs related measures.

¹ This is a snapshot on a given point in time. Robust procedures are in place to obtain access in order to carry out services, this includes a legal access process.

² A 5-year programme is in place to undertake electrical inspections, there have been access issues in the past but access processes aligned with those for gas servicing have been adopted and at the end of the 5-year programme we aim to have 100% of properties with a valid certificate, at which point the programme starts again.

The section below provides a response to specific questions posed by Members in advance of the meeting, any personal or specific address data has been removed to comply with the provisions of GDPR: -

1. Q - What has been the longest wait for a repair from time of reporting to completion, what was the wait time, what was the nature of the repair and what lessons have been learned?

A – It was not possible to extract this directly from the housing management system, as set out in the tables above the average wait time for repairs is 15.6days across all categories. However as can be seen from the table on disrepairs there will be repairs where the tenant feels that they have not been completed correctly or the same issue has arisen again which leads to the disrepair claim. Some disrepair claims can relate to repairs that were first reported many years ago. Each disrepair claim has to be considered on its own merits but a key factor in these cases will always be ensuring that proper records are kept.

2. Q - Have any properties in the last 12 months been handed over to Residents without the necessary checks and repairs carried out?

A - [It is assumed that this is in reference to void properties. All properties have a gas and electrical safety check carried out this is a legal requirement, and no voids would be considered fit to let without these certificates, EPC's are also carried out if required (these are valid for 10 years.) There have been occasions where the void will be confirmed as fit to let with some outstanding minor works for example a double-glazed unit that has misted up this is not a health and safety issue and can be completed while the new resident is in occupation this can assist in the void turnaround time due to the length of time it takes for the new unit to be manufactured. Tenants will be appraised of the anticipated completion times when the property is let.

3. Q - When a resident has a repair and it's not done correctly how long should it be till it's resolved?

A - If a recall is raised it will be based on the category of the recall for example a priority R (routine) would be commenced and completed within 26 working days/ 32 calendar days these are raised by our in-house contact centre based on the information provided by the resident, if the recall is deemed an Emergency or Urgent by our contact centre the priority can be changed .

4. Q - Also, with the new roofs being put on the houses and the issues with mould why didn't the council ask the roofs to put 4 vent tiles on the roofs, 2 on the front and 2 on the back?

A – Any new roof installed will be designed and installed in line with the current building regulations which will include any requirements around the installation of ventilation.

5. Q – What is the average waiting time for repairs to be completed from time of reporting through to completion?

A – Much of this is answered in the tables above, however the overall average wait time is 15.6 Days across all repairs priorities.

6. Q- Why is the wrong trade being sent out to carry out repairs?

A – Without a specific address to reference this is difficult to answer. Deployment of contractor operatives is often reliant upon the information provided by the tenant and recorded by the call handling team. Whilst best endeavours are exercised to fully diagnose the repair with the tenant there will be occasions when this is unclear. The contractor also employs a number of multi-trade/multi-skilled operatives who are able to take on a wider range of tasks.

Workplan for next six months

In the period to December 2023 the following activities are planned: -

- In depth analysis of 'Comments, Compliments & Complaints' contacts, Member Enquiries and customer feedback data to identify common themes and trends,
- Detailed case studies where a service failure is identified to provide an opportunity for learning and service improvement.

- Analysis of damp and mould reports to identify any patterns in relation to property types or locations.
- Review of voids to separately identify acquisitions and property requiring major works.
- Work with contractor to develop a service improvement plan that targets the keys issues arising from the 'Comments, Compliments & Complaints' and Member enquires process with measurable targets for improvement.
- Production of targeted advice and support to tenants in properties identified as being more susceptible to damp and mould (target to complete this in October)
- Review customer services communications with a view to clarifying customer expectations around timescales and 'first time fix'.

Option Considered

This report provides an update on performance statistics only, no options are arising as a direct result of this report.

Resource Implications

Any additional resource required in order to further review and evaluate the feedback through 'Comments, Compliments & Complaints', Member Enquiries, and customer feedback data will be met from existing budgets.

Legal/Risk Implications Background

There are no specific legal or risk issues arising directly from this report

Equalities Implications

There are no specific equalities issues arising directly from this report

Environmental Sustainability (including climate change)

There are no specific sustainability issues arising directly from this report

Background Information

This report provides a further update to the report to Scrutiny on 20th June 2023 and provides some additional data as requested in that report.

Report Author

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List of Background Papers

None

Appendices

- KPI Data Table
- Customer Feedback Data Table