Resident Scrutiny Panel July 2018

Review of management and resident experience of responsive repairs summary report
Report completed by the following Resident Scrutiny Panel Members

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1. Executive summary
Review of management and resident experience of responsive repairs

This Review of the Responsive Repairs Service seeks to understand and evaluate the management, and operational service delivery against tenant and leaseholder service satisfaction and aspirations.

We understand the key objective across the organisation is to achieve top quartile performance levels for all services including the repairs service. The repairs service overall is not yet achieving the
required level across all services provided, but can get there by making some key changes which are included in this report.

The Resident Scrutiny Panel (RSP) completed their last in depth review of the Responsive Repairs service in 2012/13. At that time, 55 recommendations were put forward and 90% were accepted and formed an integral part of the subsequent service improvement plan. As part of this review we can confirm that 80% of the recommendations accepted have either been implemented, become obsolete due to new working processes or are work in progress. This supports the RSP view that the repairs service values the work of the RSP and demonstrates the effectiveness and partnership working with RSP scrutiny monitors.

The RSP Scrutiny monitors have been actively encouraged to be involved with monitoring the implementation of the agreed service improvements following the last review until 2016. The RSP and the RSP scrutiny monitors would like to personally thank and acknowledge the time and support provided by Chris Liffen, Property Services Director who has always shown enthusiasm for resident feedback and working with the RSP.

This review builds on the knowledge and feedback of the Scrutiny monitors. Also this review was selected as a direct result of:

- A request by Chris Liffen to understand why the service is not achieving the higher levels of tenant satisfaction that he aspires for it to achieve
• Feedback picked up from other service reviews and tenant experiences shared with the RSP
• Recent personal experiences of RSP members regarding the reporting and completing of communal repairs
• Wishing to evaluate the impact of the service re-structuring and improvements, and reality checking to understand what is working well and what needs to happen to deliver higher tenant satisfaction.
• Knowing that the responsive repairs service is seen as a very important service used by all tenants and directly impacts on their quality of life and home.

The scope of the review was agreed in November 2017. This was followed by a number of Focus Groups (4) and the reality checking activities were undertaken from January 2018 to March 2018. This review in context has been broad and comprehensive looking not only at the ‘customer experience’ but also at service delivery and processes in more detail. This reflects the willingness of the Responsive Repairs team to work collaboratively with us.

The key findings indicate that the service has positively undergone considerable change. The service is performing better than in 2012 with tenant satisfaction with the quality of repairs currently at 78% year to date. However, there is still room for improvement, so that the high expectations by Homes for Haringey (HfH) and tenants are met.
A total of 33 service improvements are proposed in this report including:

- Stronger management and accountability
- Embedding the culture and values of HfH
- Reviewing and enforcing roles and responsibility
- Completion of the implementation and development of the Service Connect IT system
- Team building, feeling valued and personal performance appraisals
- Learning from feedback and making changes to prevent repeated mistakes
- Working more positively with other teams and services
- Updating policies and procedures
- Improved contractor and supplier management
- Reducing the level of complaints and compensation
- Changing focus from a reactive to a responsive service
- Building maintenance into the service to maintain assets to a high standard
- Grasping opportunities to increase levels of tenant satisfaction with responsive repairs.

Overall, the recommendations are focused on having a visible and hands on management team that needs to work to bring the team together and reap the benefits of new technology, investment in the service, and the support offered by other services.
2. Introduction

The Haringey Repairs Service (HRS) is highly valued by tenants and has undergone significant changes since 2012/13.

At the time of our last review the service was underperforming in many key areas:

- Low productivity compared to number of staff
- Inadequate IT systems that hindered effective management and service delivery
- Firefighting was the norm not allowing for planned approaches and time to put things right
- Repairs were not being completed on time
- Tenant satisfaction was very low due to the time to get work completed, poor customer service and inconsistent quality of the work completed
- The bonus system was not driving the service in a positive fair way and caused concern
- Financial management was poor with over spend a standard
- High contractor costs

Following the review and under Chris Liffen, Director of Property Services leadership, the key service changes have included:

- Work force planning and reduction in operative costs and numbers; 176 operatives in 2012 reducing to 127 in 2017 whilst still delivering over 57,000 repairs a year.
- Effective business planning to meet work demand in a cost effective manner
• Reduced use of external contractors and move to delivering services in-house whilst reducing from over 60 contract partners to just 10.
• Tailored the service to operate with the reduced financial resources leading to a significant saving to the HRA with costs in 2012/13 of £19.9m reducing to a full year spend of £14m in 2017/18
• Between 2012 and 2018 reduced the cost per property by reducing the cost of voids from £4,087 to £3,175 and the average cost of a responsive repair from £185 to £102
• The Bonus scheme was capped and restructured bringing about savings but also driving operative productivity
• Commenced introduction of new technology and replaced outdated systems at no additional cost to HfH by working with a provider to develop a bespoke and market leading system that is being procured by other housing repair service providers.
• Procured a new fleet of vans
• New uniforms worn by all operatives
• Extensive customer care training
• Improved communications and information for tenants regarding accessing the service and tenant repair responsibilities
• Tenants handbook updated (2015)

So based on these changes the RSP has through this review sought to identify the impact and recognise the good things and those that need further improvement.

The service is delivered by a dedicated team including:
- Chris Liffen, Director of Property Services.
- Paul Young, Head of HRS (now left)
- Customer Services Manager (complaints)
- Team leaders
- Quantity surveyors
- Compliance officer
- Back office support
- Operatives

**Our review focuses from a tenant perspective on:**

- How do I as a tenant feel about the service delivered?
- What could be done differently to improve my level of satisfaction?
- How easy is it to report a repair?
- What happens once a repair is reported?
- How does the repair get completed?
- How well was the repair done?
- Was the repair completed to a high standard?

**From a business perspective we have focused on:**

- Is there effective leadership and management?
- Is the improvement plan working?
- What impact have the changes had on service delivery?
- What is it like on the front line?
- Has technology improved the way the service operates?
- Has all the Customer Care training made a difference?
- What do front line and management think of how the service is performing?
• Are the tenant satisfaction results telling the right story?
• Are procedures and policies working?
• What needs to change now to help the service get even better?

We have had a very enjoyable time reviewing this service and it was pleasing that both management and operatives were positive that this review could help them deliver a better service. We hope that we will not disappoint!

3. Table of Recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Priority to tenants</th>
<th>Priority to the business</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Service Connect</td>
<td>Complete implementation of all modules</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>Additional training for HRS team</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>Booking of follow on appointments at tenant homes module</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>Voids module to be completed</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>CRM system required</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>Update Haringey Homes app</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>Provide newsletter and regular briefings for all HRS staff</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>Develop a learning log</td>
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<td>Appraisals and target setting for all HRS</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Review post inspection process</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Ensure that all contractors have an interface to Service Connect and performance information can be validated</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Develop new performance indicators with tenants</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Review Bonus System</td>
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<td>Develop policy for handling leaks</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Review roof repairs process</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td><strong>Complaints management</strong></td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Attend monthly complaint meetings with Feedback team</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td><strong>Operating concerns</strong></td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Planned maintenance programme to be developed</td>
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<td>Operating policies and</td>
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<td>procedures to be updated and held centrally</td>
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<td>Provide additional diagnostic training to the Call Centre</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Look at ways to increase effectiveness of managers and supervisors - look at training</td>
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<td>Put repairs as a standard item on RA agendas</td>
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<td>Continue to expand having multi trade operatives</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Call Centre</td>
<td>Provide overview session for management and supervisors on call handling</td>
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<td>26</td>
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<td>Process all emails received within 5 working days</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>Vehicles</td>
<td>Ensure that new vehicle contract takes into account feedback from operatives</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>Communal repairs</td>
<td>Reduce from 10 days to 5 to log a communal repair</td>
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<td>29</td>
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<td>Provide a direct telephone line for Communal Repairs</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>Engagement opportunities</td>
<td>Have a call back facility for tenants waiting a long time to report a repair</td>
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4. Conclusion

The findings from this review highlights the current position that responsive repairs is not achieving the best repairs outcome for tenants, staff and other HfH services, which is reflected in the feedback, level and range of complaints, and low morale of trades and management. Time to invigorate team working, enforce policies and procedures, establish a listening and learning culture is required to restore confidence, pride and optimism for the future.

There is frustration and disappointment that the responsive repairs service has declined, but this can be resolved through strong visible leadership, reinstating management tools such as Performance Management Conversations to drive individual performance, accountability and responsibility at all levels.

This is a very visible service with high demand, increasing expectations and a real opportunity to work not in isolation, but remember that your customers are not only tenants and leaseholders, but

| 31 | Member of repairs team to attend Resident meetings when requested | H | M |
| 32 | Provide DIY training workshops | M | L |
| 33 | Update Tenants Handbook | H | M |
also other colleagues in the repairs service and other parts of the business. Embrace the strong support that was identified to positively contribute to make repairs effective, efficient and able to respond to high demand and expectations.

The commitment and passion from tenants, Councillors, Board Members, staff and all the Executive team is clear. All want to help and contribute by providing feedback, support and ideas to help get that customer experience back to a level that reflects the demands and expectations to ensure that homes are maintained and repaired to a high standard.

The responsive repairs service is the most important and frequently used service that tenants access and receive. So issues around accessing, reporting, getting there on time, completing the work right first time, minimising chasing to get work completed and making sure the job is completed to a good standard are key to increasing tenant satisfaction in a more consistent way.

The RSP recognise and welcome the return of Chris Liffen back to the service, and are confident that this is a positive way forward. Credit must be given to David Sherrington for caretaking over the last year, and his identification of opportunities to address a number of issues affecting performance.

Restructuring and introduction of Service Connect has understandably impacted on the service, and once the implementation of technology is complete we look forward to seeing increased tenant
satisfaction, confidence restored with those in the repairs service and across the business.

There are many good things happening and the next 12 months will see positive changes, and a new beginning.

The RSP hope that this review detailing a number of findings and recommendations is helpful and look forward to working with you to monitor service improvement.