

REPORT TITLE – FIRST SIX MONTH OF HOUSING REPAIRS SERVICE
REPORT OF CHIEF OFFICER: BUSINESS, CONTRACT & STREET SCENE SERVICES



Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

A Borough to be proud of

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL WARDS

1. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To provide a position statement on the internal provision of the Housing Repairs Service during the first six months of its operation.

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Scrutiny Commission endorses the progress made by the Housing Repairs Service during its first six months of operation.

3. **BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT**

- 3.1 On 7 December 2010 the Council agreed to provide the Responsive Repairs Service 'in house' following its outsourcing for a number of years. The main reasons for doing so were to gain direct control of the service and ensure value for money. The service transferred from the previous contractor to the Council on 29 September 2011. The Service will be focussed on achieving the following vision:

Provide a housing repairs service that meets the needs of our Tenants and exceeds the Decent Homes +1 Standards for Repairs and Maintenance.

4. **IN-HOUSE RESPONSIVE REPAIRS SERVICE**

- 4.1 The main objective during the introduction of the new internal Responsive Repairs Service was to ensure that service delivery was at least provided at the same level as the previous contractor. As a result, administrative matters would be secondary to the delivery of the service. As you would expect, the contract transfer was not without issues but irrespective of the transfer situation, the focus was on ensuring that service delivery was sustained.

- 4.2 On transfer, the following number of employees transferred with the contract:

- Administrative staff – 4 out of 9 contracted positions (44%)
- Front line staff – 13 (one resignation) out of 21 contracted positions (62%)

Although the number of staff that transferred provided an opportunity for future development in the medium term, this low number of transferring staff provided a staff shortage in the short term. To combat the shortage of staff operationally, sub-contractors were utilised to provide support to empty (void) properties for the first four months (September – December 2011). This obviously placed unnecessary pressure on the individuals involved and resulted in lost time due to non-attendance.

- 4.3 Detailed below are the financial elements (included as part of the transferring contract scope) for the last six months of the previous contract and the first six months of the Council's service:

¹ Achieving the decent homes standard, ensuring the stock meets health and safety requirements and providing a value for money service balancing responsive and planned maintenance.

- Cost from April to September 2011 (previous Contract) – £ 1,162,000
- Total Cost of service from September 2011 to March 2012 (in-house) – £ 955,000

This shows that the internal service cost £207,000 less than the previous contractor. It should be noted that the in-house figure includes the set-up costs for the new service as well as saving from vacant posts whilst they were recruited. This includes costs for work in progress associated to the financial year 2011/12 as well as incomplete works associated with the previous contractor (paragraph 4.4 contains further detail).

- 4.4. Detailed below are the number of repairs (by type) that have been completed during the last six months of the previous contract and the first six months of the Council's service:

Type of Repair	April – Sept 2011	Sept 11 – March 12
	No. 2	No.
General Dwelling	3775	4891
Major Voids	88	156
Kitchen	44	46
Minor Void	4	2
PVC Doors	19	21
Enhancements	7	85
Bathrooms	54	64
Room enhancements	1	7
Kitchen works	16	23
Roofing	45	33
Environmental	67	85
GRP doors	44	3
Ventilation	3	22
Timber door replacement	43	41
Flooring works	7	17
'Other'	5	11
Total	4,222	5,507

2 – Data taken from latest information provided by Contractor. Figures do not include recalls.

A planned set of 'handover' dates for transferring responsibility of repairs from the previous contractor to the Council were agreed to assist with a seamless transfer and to ensure that no agreed works were left incomplete. It should be noted that on 29 September 2011 190 repairs (including 11 'void' properties) were incomplete. The table above identifies that 1,285 additional repairs were carried out. This figure includes additional 'added value' repairs that have been carried out whilst the employee was at the property. The initial Business Case agreed by Council was based on approximately 4,500 repairs being carried out in the first six months. So additional repair works have been carried out whilst still remaining in the Business Case amount.

- 4.5 The number of recalls to return to incomplete / unsatisfactory repair works has reduced from 3% with the previous contractor to 1.85% with the new internal service. As well as providing an indication of improved service quality, this also improves operational efficiency.
- 4.6 As mentioned in paragraph 4.2 above, void properties for the first 3 to 4 months of the contract had been sub-contracted. The decision was taken following recruitment to vacant posts to cease the sub-contracted position from December 2011. As the table indicates in paragraph 4.4 there has been an increase in the number of 'void'

properties during the second half of the year compared to the first six months of 2011/12. The overall number of void properties for the year however, remains similar to previous years. There have been operational capacity issues within the service and additional support has again been commissioned from sub-contractors. A target date of August 2012 has been set to return the number of 'void' properties to the usual level.

4.7 Customer satisfaction for the first six months of the service has been 92% this comprises the following:

- October – 91%
- November – 89%
- December – 91%
- January – 91%
- February – 93%
- March – 94%

It should be noted that the previous contractor reported 93% satisfaction for the final six months of the contract.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (TO)

5.1 None arising directly from this report.

5.2 It is worth noting that the Council is now in the process of procuring a new Housing Responsive Repairs computer system – due for implementation later this year – which will help greatly in managing the business and assessing the cost and effectiveness of the service. This will enable the reporting of costs on a per job basis. The figures used within the body of this report have been extracted from the Council's financial system after an analysis of the relevant expenditure codes.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS (AB)

6.1 None raised directly by the report

7. CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Decent, well managed and affordable homes – To support residents to maintain the condition of their homes.

8. CONSULTATION

8.1 An initial consultation was carried out with Tenants during January 2011 the feedback from the survey have been used to design the set-up for the new in-house service.

9. RISK IMPLICATIONS

It is the Council's policy to proactively identify and manage significant risks which may prevent delivery of business objectives.

It is not possible to eliminate or manage all risks all of the time and risks will remain which have not been identified. However, it is the officer's opinion based on the information available, that the significant risks associated with this decision / project have been identified, assessed and that controls are in place to manage them effectively.

There are no significant risks associated with this report as it provides a position statement on the first six months of operation.

10. **KNOWING YOUR COMMUNITY – EQUALITY AND RURAL IMPLICATIONS**

An initial consultation was carried out with Tenants during January 2011 the feedback from the survey have been used to design the set-up for the new in-house service.

11. **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into account:

- Community Safety implications
- Environmental implications
- ICT implications
- Asset Management implications
- Human Resources implications
- Planning Implications
- Voluntary Sector

Background papers: Responsive Repairs Business Case – December 2010

Contact Officer: Mike Brymer, 01455 255981

Executive Member: Councillor Michael Mullaney