

6. BUILDING SERVICES - HOUSING REPAIRS

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services providing an overview of Housing Repairs and performance details. Appended to the report was the Building Service performance indicator report.

The report advised that Building Services was the council's in-house building contractor, carrying out responsive repairs, maintenance and refurbishment of council properties. The service consisted of two teams, the Contracts Team who undertook project work associated with the Housing and General services capital programmes, and the Repairs Team who carried out responsive repairs and maintenance to both housing and non-housing properties.

The service had a total staff of 468 FTE including 53 apprentices and an annual expenditure in the region of £26,000,000. The service also actively engaged with a number of partners such as local sub-contractors and trade suppliers, Health and Safety Executive, Finance and Estates, Gas Safe Register and National Inspection Council for Electrical Inspecting Contractors.

The main activities for Building Services in 2018/19 were:

- Responsive repairs and maintenance to housing and non-housing properties, including an emergency standby service.
- Gas servicing and repairs.
- Project works associated with Housing and General Services Capital Programmes.

The report went on to advise that the Building Service Repairs team carried out a total of 47,154 housing responsive repairs with 45,221 completed within the target timescale for the period of 2017/18 to council housing stock.

The service and the tenant's panel had developed a tenant's handbook to provide guidance to tenants on all aspects of housing repairs.

The report went on to provide details on the Repair Journey which included the following:-

- How to request a repair
- Planning a repair request
- Carrying out the repair request
- Post Inspections

The Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services explained that the service performance was regularly measured through a suite of

performance indicators in line with the council's performance management framework, using the Pentana System.

Building Services Performance Indicators were representative of a range of activities delivered by the service and included statutory, public performance and management indicators, including measures of customer satisfaction.

The service also submitted performance to the Scottish Housing Regulator on an annual basis and completed benchmarking activity with the Scottish Housing Network and Association for Public Service Excellence.

The report recommended that the Committee:

1. Note the contents of the report and appendix;
2. Provide feedback on the Housing Repairs performance; and
3. Identify any recommendations for performance improvement.

There then followed extensive questions by the Committee in relation to customer complaints, staff retention, the viability of in-house repairs, revisits, multitasking, void property repairs, responsive repairs, maintenance survey of properties, tenant's handbook, and repairs that were recharged to the tenant.

It was explained that staff retention was difficult as terms and conditions within the council were not always as favourable as those in the private sector. In relation to the viability of in-house repairs the committee was advised that outsourcing was more expensive and therefore the service had started to look at recruiting in-house again.

It was also explained that a number of repairs that required revisits, on occasion was unfortunately due to poor workmanship or tenant misunderstanding, however many others were down to the availability of utility companies, scaffolding companies, the complexity of a repair or the need to co-ordinate follow on services. However it was noted that the service had recruited two scaffolders that were able to deal with certain repairs, which would save time and money.

The issues in relation to revisits, availability of utility services and follow on services generated a number of customer complaints as customers were not always being kept informed of other service availability, timescales and progress. However, it was also noted that there had been a 12% reduction in customer complaints and the service was committed to continue to make improvements in this area.

The Committee noted that the officer undertook to provide comparative figures from other local authorities in relation to the time taken from a property being handed back to being re-let.

Information was also provided in relation to particular repairs that were rechargeable to the tenant and that further information would be provided

to the Committee on the recharge recovery success rate.

Finally, the Committee noted that the service was undertaking a review of the repairs policy.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.