

Report to: Housing Review Board
Date of Meeting: 23 January 2020
Public Document: Yes
Exemption: None

Review date for release None



Subject: **Update on Integrated Asset Management Contract**

Purpose of report: Our new Integrated Asset Management Contract commenced on the 1 July 2019.

This report will update Members on progress as we enter the 7th month of our new contracting arrangement with Ian Williams Ltd.

Recommendation: **For information only**

Reason for recommendation: To ensure Members are up to date with new contracting arrangements covering the maintenance of our housing stock
Officer: Victoria Farrow, Property and Asset Manager

Financial implications: As mentioned within the body of the report, consistent and quality monitoring of the contract is required to ensure the financial benefits that are expected from the PPP and PPV contracts are achieved.

Legal implications: There are no issues raised in the report on which Legal Services need to comment at this time.

Equalities impact: Medium Impact

We have involved tenants throughout the process through the Housing Review Board, tenants groups and as part of the evaluation process. We have continued to involve tenants throughout mobilisation through tenant groups and through direct representation on a number of working groups.

Climate change: Medium Impact

We have engaged with Ian Williams as one of our key Partners in relation to their Carbon Footprint and this work is ongoing.

Risk: High Risk

Not having sufficient contracting arrangements in place presents risks to management and maintenance of tenant's homes.

Links to background information: <http://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/2742359/combined-hrb-agenda-240119.pdf> (Item 10)

<http://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/2602364/combined-hrb-agenda-200918.pdf> (Item 11)

<http://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/2532954/combined-hrb-agenda-210618.pdf> (Item 13)

<http://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/2317941/combined-hrb-agenda-110118.pdf> (item 11)

<http://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/1973368/combined-hrb-agenda-120117.pdf> (item 14 and 15)

<http://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/2022994/combined-hrb-agenda-090317.pdf> (item 11)

<http://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/2140883/combined-hrb-agenda-150617.pdf> (item 9)

<http://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/2197069/combined-hrb-agenda-070917.pdf>(item 10)

[p://eastdevon.gov.uk/](http://eastdevon.gov.uk/)

<https://democracy.eastdevon.gov.uk//ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=152&MId=162&Ver=4> HRB March 2019

<https://democracy.eastdevon.gov.uk/documents/g288/Public%20reports%20pack%2020Jun-2019%2014.30%20Housing%20Review%20Board.pdf?T=10> (item 11)

Link to Council Plan: Outstanding Homes and Communities
Outstanding Council and Council Services

1. Background

- 1.1 At the meeting of the June 2019 Housing Review Board, The Acting Housing Lead gave a detailed presentation of the work that has been undertaken to renew our repairs and maintenance contract since 2016. This has been an extensive project where the Board have played an important role in setting the direction and overseeing governance matters as we have moved towards putting in place our new contracting arrangements.
- 1.2 An intense mobilisation process ended on June 30th which enabled us to commence our new contracting arrangements from the 1st July 2019. In order to deal with the transfer smoothly we set up an interim contracting arrangement just prior to the switchover, the aim of this was to predominately help with the management of void properties.

- 1.3 Mobilisation presented many challenges, particularly with setting up interfaces between our systems and those of Ian Williams in order to ensure the flow of information in the most efficient ways. Work in this area has not finished and as part of early monitoring the Housing Systems Manager remains focused on this area working closely with Ian Williams.
- 1.4 We have continued to experience challenges with staffing in the Property and Asset Team, at the end of November we saw the departure of the Property and Asset Manager who we have immediately replaced. We have also now recruited temporarily into the position of Senior Technical Officer- Responsive Repairs and Voids. We have some additional staffing challenges within our team of Maintenance Surveyors, with one case of medium term sickness currently under review and another position that has recently become vacant. Recruitment in this area is being prioritised in order to continue to take steps to stabilise the team.

2. Current Position

- 2.1 As set out in the September (2019) update report, we cited early concerns over the management of void properties that were leading to longer void times. This was for two reasons, firstly a higher number of voids than have been experienced over previous years and secondly properties coming back to us in a considerable state of disrepair therefore requiring increased works to be able to re-let the property. We have seen limited progress in this area and although properties are coming back, we are still experiencing longer than expected void times. It should also be noted that there have been a number of issues with the quality of voids coming back that upon inspection has meant our Officers have not signed off works and the contractor has had to be recalled. Although some of these issues have been relatively minor, in some cases this has still led to additional delays in tenants being able to move into properties.

We have also experienced cases where EDDC staff have signed off properties which were not up to standard leading to complaints and damage to our reputation. Initial investigations into this shows high work levels due to staff sickness and understaffing had reduced the quality of work. This is being addressed as a priority. Reactive Repairs and Void management roles and responsibilities are currently under review and changes are being implemented which should strengthen the team and improve performance.

- 2.2 Following the escalation of concerns, Ian Williams made the following commitments in order to improve performance;
- Operatives working overtime including during the holiday shut-down period
 - 3 additional operatives seconded from Bristol division to work on voids only
 - Additional support from sub-contractors to assist in dealing with the back-log
 - Additional Voids Contracts Manager being recruited on fixed term contract due to consistent increase in void volume
 - Managing TUPE staff to embed new and improved ways of working

These measures will improve performance however this will take time to show results.

- 2.3 We are continuing to monitor daily the success of these additional measures to improve void management with some success. We had 72 voids before Christmas which has been reduced to the low fifties with all now having return dates. This is being monitored closely and all possible support is being given. EDDC staff will be attending toolbox talks with IW void operatives to ensure a thorough understanding of our standards and expectations. Two experienced Planned Surveyors are due shortly to be seconded to the Reactive team to concentrate solely on voids until the end of March. This should provide the extra drive and forward motion that is required.

2.4 Over the last 3 months we have seen an increase in complaints that relate to the repairs and maintenance service. Some of these complaints have had significant reputational damage due to use of social media. As always, each complaint has been fully investigated and the general themes have centred around the following;

- Condition of property at signup – not meeting our void standard
- Items not identified at void – poor surveying
- Repairs/investment promised but not delivered
- Contractor not attending appointments or not following up when further work needed
- Poor communication throughout the process

Actions are being taken to improve our Repairs Service in all areas and embed the new contract. The changes have produced a 'shiver' in our service delivery however there is a clear direction of travel to improvement and a willingness from both parties to achieve these improvements.

Dialog is good and close working relationships are starting to show improvements, particularly in Voids where the Temporary Senior Technical Officer has taken control and is providing clear and consistent direction.

We have also received a number of compliments from residents who have had positive experiences of our delivery and who have taken time to feed that back to us. Analysis has shown that of the 1022 repair jobs raised in December, only 0.04% of jobs required a call back.

2.5 Out of Hours performance has been good, however there have been a few failings where miscommunication has resulted in a service to residents below that which we expect. We have investigated and learnt from these as a team and improvements are being implemented where necessary. Christmas and New Year provided another obstacle which was managed well and no escalation was required to EDDC staff. A total of 384 out of hours emergency jobs were raised to Ian Williams and 21 emergency jobs to Liberty Gas during the bank holidays.

2.6 KPI monitoring is currently being aligned. EDDC and IW produce separate KPI reports however we are now working on streamlining and joining up the data for future publication and scrutiny. This is now being done as a matter of urgency and will again help to manage future performance.

3. Key Performance Indicators

3.1 A summary and up to date review of KPIs for month 1-7 will be provided at the meeting.

Further monitoring will be provided to the Repairs Service Review Group for KPI performance and monitoring.

4. Resident engagement

4.1 An update was given to the Repairs Service Review Group which was also attended by the Scrutiny Panel. An outline of current performance and difficulties encountered on both sides was given and discussions were held regarding improving performance. Ian Williams also attended this meeting and gave their support and assurance to future improvements.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 After a good mobilisation phase where energy and focus is normally high, performance has struggled to be consistently high. It has been clear that establishing a working norm on both sides has been more challenging. Three areas are now being targeted to improve performance, namely Voids process and delivery, Reactive repairs processes and KPI/Contract management. It must also be recognised that much higher than anticipated numbers of reactive repair requests, voids and lack of investment has also impacted smooth delivery.