

Committee:	Governance Audit and Performance	Date:	30 March 2022
Title:	Update on Housing and other Council property Repairs & Maintenance and Capital Improvement issues, inc Health and Safety works		
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Summary

1. Concerns about the management and delivery of housing and other council property repairs and maintenance, capital improvements works, and particularly health and safety works were raised with the Committee late last year, on the back of an Internal Audit Report, and following an outbreak of legionella in a council owned property. The Council Chief Executive shared with elected Members his particular concerns about not being immediately able to gain the necessary degree of confidence he required around the delivery in particular of works relating to health and safety.
2. Following extensive investigation into the handling in particular of health and safety aspects of the services provided to the c3,000 council housing stock, as well as council offices, Officers can report that the necessary substantial improvements have been delivered in the reporting and monitoring of health and safety requirements, covering legionella, gas and electricity checks, fire checks, cladding and lift maintenance.

Recommendations

3. To note this report.

Financial Implications

4. None specific to this report. Provision for both repairs and maintenance and proactive capital improvements in the Council's housing stock is fully funded within the Housing Revenue Account.

Background Papers

5. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.
 - Detailed specification around management and reporting of health and safety works, November 2021 (appendix 1)
 - Itemised response to those reporting requirements, February 2022 (appendix 2)

Impact

6.

Communication/Consultation	nil
Community Safety	This report specifically relates to safety of residents of and visitors to council properties
Equalities	Health and safety risks fall disproportionately on people with disabilities, and those with lesser mobility due to age
Health and Safety	This report specifically relates to safety of residents of and visitors to council properties
Human Rights/Legal Implications	Compliance with health and safety requirements is backed up by extensive legislative duties
Sustainability	Nil
Ward-specific impacts	All wards
Workforce/Workplace	As well as affecting council housing, this work also covers a small number of council offices and buildings.

Situation

7. Following extensive investigation into the handling in particular of health and safety aspects of the services provided to the c3,000 council housing stock, as well as council offices, substantial improvements have been delivered in the reporting and monitoring of health and safety requirements, covering legionella, gas and electricity checks, fire checks, cladding and lift maintenance.
8. Detailed performance reports have now been provided against each of these health and safety performance aspects, and these are generally satisfactory against the rightly-high standards that the Council expects as a housing landlord, and as are required by various statutes. Exceptions to 100% compliance are each individually explained – for example, where a safety check has not been completed because of difficulty in accessing a council property due to tenant unavailability, details are provided of the repeated attempts to gain access, ultimately through to taking Court action to get through the door.

9. Over the coming months, Council Officers will carry out assurance checks intended to give confidence around the solidity of the high reporting measures, such as dip sampling individual cases, carrying out secondary site visits or discussions with tenants and so on.
10. In parallel, now that reporting giving assurance around risk to life and limb appears substantially more under control, Council Officers will develop similar reporting requirements of our providers around a broader range of repairs and maintenance and capital improvement works.

Risk Analysis

11.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
That satisfactory reporting around health and safety works are not matched by reality	2	3	Assurance checks, as detailed above
That satisfactory performance around other repairs & maintenance and capital improvements work is being inadequately performance managed	3	3	Development of a detailed specification for presentation to the service provider to respond to, following the same pattern as successfully achieved over the prioritised health and safety concerns

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.

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