

Cabinet Response to Referrals by Community & Housing Scrutiny Committee on 20 July 2021

Community & Housing Scrutiny Committee (20 July 2021)

Agenda Item 5: Milton Keynes Council Housing Maintenance Programme:

- 5.3 *That the Committee welcomes the successful collaboration between officer colleagues and the Mears Group, particularly in areas of concentrated council housing, to deliver an effective repairs service which was generating a high level of tenant satisfaction.*
- 5.4 *That the Committee welcomes the marked improvements to the number of properties meeting the Decent Homes Standard and noted that the delivery plan for this work should continue to deliver these improvements.*
- 5.5 *That the Committee welcomes the Council's future plans to improve the energy efficiency of council homes, making them easier to heat in a cost-effective manner.*
- 5.6 *That the Committee welcomes the Council's undertaking to address the issue of roof voids by installing partitions where necessary in order to reduce the risk of a fire spreading to other properties in the block.*
- 5.7 *That the Committee welcomes the commitment to complete the mapping of boundary ownership to assist tenants in getting repairs done.*

Response from Councillor Darlington (Cabinet Member for Adults, Housing and Healthy Communities):

We have now completed our work looking across our existing set of key performance indicators (KPIs) and identified where we want to see improvement. In these areas we have agreed a more challenging target with our provider. These areas are as follows:

- Average repair times;
- Responsive repairs 'first time fix'; and
- Customer satisfaction and appointments made and kept.

Drop-in repair surgeries have been rolled out across housing estates as we work with our residents, Mears and councillors to deliver an effective repairs service.

As of 01/04/2021 Milton Keynes Council's % of homes classed as decent stood at 87.473% (compared to less than 60% in 2019). To achieve a 95% decent rate within 3 years, we will target a 2.5% decent increase year on year. Currently there are 543 properties which have not received a stock condition survey which are showing as non-decent. We are planning to survey the un-surveyed sites during 21/22. There are also 415 properties which have been identified as failing a single element of decent homes. Following a review of the components and upgrades of components where required, we anticipate a large number of properties to move from non-decent to decent.

Given the importance of the energy performance of existing buildings to carbon emissions, a key objective of our planned investment programme is to maximise the energy performance of the Council owned housing in Milton Keynes, through investment

in domestic energy efficiency. Our programme therefore has an energy focus, and it is our objective to move our assets to an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Category C as a minimum. Where possible, we will therefore prioritise investment works where the EPC is likely to be D, E or F.

We are in discussions with our corporate Health & Safety team who are supporting in undertaking compliance works across the housing stock and we will be actively investigating the issue mentioned in regard to roof voids and works will be undertaken where required during 21/22.

We are actively recruiting into the team for a Building Surveyor and Data Analyst to support in the mapping of boundary ownership to assist in undertaking any necessary repairs.

Agenda Item 6: Estate Management

6.2 That the Committee endorses the work being done by the Cabinet Member for Public Realm and officer colleagues from Environmental Services to tackle the issue of fly-tipping across the Borough.

6.4 That the Committee welcomes the commitment to complete and publish the mapping of landscaping responsibility and to ensure a common standard across all Council land.

Response from Councillor Townsend (Cabinet Member for Public Realm):

A dedicated Flytipping Action Plan will be presented to Cabinet. This will include unique actions for Housing maintained land. A dedicated Environmental Enforcement Officer for Housing land has been recruited into the Environmental Crime Team. A three year Service Level Agreement is in place with dedicated key performance indicators (KPIs) to demonstrate value for money for Housing tenants and expected deliverables.

A dedicated Housing Mapping Officer is now being recruited on a two-year fixed term contract – this will be 50% funded by the HRA. This officer will work to undertake a dedicated update on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) land ledger. It will be both an in-field and desktop exercise. This will not only include land that surrounds housing blocks, drying areas and ERLAS (estate related landscape and structure) but also land in close proximity that is public, but ownership not yet identified. It is estimated that a significant amount of housing land is not mapped, and this will need to be added to the contract layer and associated costs base to be considered. A universal baseline of services for landscaping is being developed and stakeholders, including housing and Parishes, will be included in a forthcoming workshop to agree the outline specification for standards.

Officer Response to Referrals by Community & Housing Scrutiny Committee on 20 July 2021

Agenda Item 5: Milton Keynes Council Housing Maintenance Programme:

5.8 That the information as to how to best control or treat damp and mould, be placed on the Council website so that all residents, not just HRA tenants, can access it.

5.10 That consideration be given to rolling out a similar model of operation to other estates in Milton Keynes.

Response from Head of Asset Management and Investment

5.8 - We have revisited our repairs webpage and added amongst other things a section on mould and damp to advise residents on treatment and how to reduce the issue and when to report. This will be refreshed this week (w/c 06/09/21) and published on our webpage.

5.10 - Drop-in surgeries have now been rolled out across other estates.

Agenda Item 6: Estate Management

6.3 That information on how the various estate management operations are carried out effectively, eg reduction of fly-tipping, education about waste presentation, rat reduction, etc be provided via the MKC environment website so that other residents and parish and ward councillors can access it.

6.4 That the Committee welcomes the commitment to complete and publish the mapping of landscaping responsibility and to ensure a common standard across all Council land.

Response from Head of Environment and Waste

Work has commenced on identifying the method of reporting fly-tipping, waste presentation and pest control on HRA land. Once there is parity in how these services are responded to (as current resources deployed for both land types are not equal) then a universal access page will be worked up. In the interim an Estate Services information page for Public Realm services within Estates is being worked up to be delivered along with the MKWRP (Milton Keynes Waste Recovery Park) page updates for November 2021.

The Environment team and Housing Maintenance team have agreed to fund (50% from general fund and 50% from the Housing Revenue Account) for the position of a Housing Mapping Officer. This position will support both the mapping of all Housing assets on to the Council GiS system with oversight and support from the corporate GiS team. It will involve curation of the HRA ledger definitively onto public access GiS. It will ensure that the complete Bills of Quantity for Housing land are included in the new corporate landscaping contract and that a universal contract specification is applied across all public land and housing land maintained by the Local Authority. The position has been recruited into and starts in October in 2021 for a period of two years.