

DECENT HOMES CONTRACT SCRUTINY PANEL – ACTION NOTES

MEETING 7: 18th October 2016

ATTENDED BY: Councillors Bokor (Chair), Bebbington, Jukes, Pacey, Savage, Smidowicz and Tassell

Officers: C. Ansell, J. Duffty, M. Harper, M. Hopkins and H. Tambini

Witnesses: A. Brown, L. Wolstenholme and A. Elahi (Wates)

APOLOGIES: Councillor Radford and D. White (Landlord Services)

MATTERS CONSIDERED AT THIS MEETING:

DOCUMENT OR MATTER	ACTIONS AGREED
Evidence was received from the following witnesses: C. Ansell – Head of Landlord Services J. Duffty – Compliance Team Leader M. Harper – Principal Officer Investment and Programme Delivery	That the report updating the Panel on levels of performance under the contract be noted.
A. Brown – Operations Manager Wates L. Wolstenholme – Contract Manager Wates A. Elahi – Senior Liaison Manager Wates	That the presentation detailing key improvements and the benefits to the Council, local residents and the wider social community be noted.
M. Hopkins – Democratic Services Manager	That a proposal to establish a Scrutiny Panel to look at the procurement for the next contract be submitted to Scrutiny Management Board.

EVIDENCE RECEIVED FROM ANDY BROWN, CONSTRUCTION MANAGER (WATES), LEWIS WOLSTENHOLME – CONTRACT MANAGER (WATES) AND ANITA ELAHI – SENIOR LIAISON MANAGER (WATES)

The Panel considered a presentation from Wates detailing key improvements to the service and the benefits to the Council, local residents and the wider social community. A copy is attached as an Appendix.

Arising from the evidence provided, the following issues were raised/discussed:

- There had been considerable investment in the local community and incentives to improve the environment, with a total of £8,023,242 of economic, environmental and social value generated by the project.
- The performance agreement target for fitting bathrooms had worsened. One possible reason for that was a reduction in staff on that project in August when the list for bathrooms had been completed. Work had now resumed with additional staff in place and it was hoped that it was a temporary spike.
- The previous problem of ill-fitting doors had now been addressed.
- A gas leak had occurred recently and investigations were currently underway as to the cause. Until that was known no further works would be undertaken.

EVIDENCE RECEIVED FROM CHRISTINE ANSELL, HEAD OF LANDLORD SERVICES, JO DUFFTY, COMPLIANCE TEAM LEADER AND MARTIN HARPER, PRINCIPAL OFFICER INVESTMENT AND PROGRAMME DELIVERY

The Panel considered an update report of the Head of Landlord Service detailing levels of performance under the contract.

Arising from the evidence provided, the following issues were raised/discussed:

- In respect of tenants refusing to have work undertaken, the Council had written again to all those tenants and included a freepost envelope for a reply. Over 400 letters had been sent, with 39 requests to be added to the kitchen programme and 35 requests for a new bathroom being received. Often people did not want a new kitchen or bathroom because they have installed new ones themselves and some people simply did not want the upheaval and were happy with their existing facilities. Unless the work was structural or the property was unsafe, the Council would not insist on anyone having to have work done. When a property became void appropriate work would be undertaken.
- Checks had not previously taken place to identify who was living at a particular property; however, if the Panel was concerned that sub-letting could be an issue then a small sample audit could be undertaken.

- The money not spent due to refusals had yet to be allocated; however, discussions were underway in conjunction with the Lead Member and it was likely that works to door entry systems and communal areas would be prioritised.
- The snagging issue was being addressed. That included weekly meetings with the Contract Manager who was now leading the project.
- The overall trend in numbers of complaints was down. However, there was an increase in September and that would be monitored in conjunction with Wates. Once available the subsequent figures would be emailed to the Panel, together with an update on the performance in relation to snagging.
- Work on the procurement process for the new contract had commenced. The brief for the process had reflected the concerns previously raised by the Panel and the Chair had been consulted on the brief. Three bids had been received which fulfilled the remit of combining the legal and procurement requirements into one contract. Given those concerns previously raised by the Panel, it would be possible to ask the Scrutiny Management Board to establish a Panel to look at the procurement process and to ensure that the milestones identified during the procurement stages were completed.

ACTIONS

- Updated complaints figures, together with an update on performance in relation to snagging be emailed to the Panel once available.
- That a recommendation be submitted to the Scrutiny Management Board to establish a Scrutiny Panel to scrutinise the procurement process for the new Housing Capital Programme to start in April 2018. In particular to ensure that the process for specifying the requirements for the contract, the evaluation methodology against those requirements and the drafting of the contract puts tenants at the heart of the procurement process and satisfies the expectations of the Council for the contract.

Timetable for Review

Panel's review completed.