



**SCRUTINY PANEL: Is the work being done under the Council's decent homes contract to a standard that satisfies tenants and the Borough Council's expectations of the contract?**

**DECENT HOMES CONTRACT SCRUTINY PANEL  
TUESDAY, 18TH OCTOBER 2016 AT 2.00 PM  
IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2, SOUTHFIELDS, LOUGHBOROUGH**

### **AGENDA**

1. APOLOGIES

2. NOTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

To agree the action notes of the meeting held on 24th May 2016 attached at page 3.

3. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY AND PERSONAL INTERESTS

4. DECENT HOMES CONTRACT PERFORMANCE

To consider progress on commitments given by the contractor at the Panel meeting held on 23rd November 2015 and reviewed at the Panel meeting held on 24th May 2016.

A representative of the contractor will be attending the meeting to give a presentation.

A report of the Head of Landlord Services is attached at page 19.

Panel membership:

Councillors Bokor (Chair), Bebbington, Jukes, Pacey, Radford, Savage, Smidowicz and Tassell.



## DECENT HOMES CONTRACT SCRUTINY PANEL – ACTION NOTES

**MEETING 6:** 24th May 2016

**ATTENDED BY:** Councillors Bokor (Chair), Jukes, Radford, Savage, Smidowicz and Tassell

Officers: C. Ansell, J. Duffty, M. Harper, D. White and M. Hopkins

Witness: A. Brown (Wates)

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors Bebbington and Pacey

### 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 D. White – Repairs and Investment Manager  A. Brown – Wates  M. Hopkins – Democratic Services Manager	  That the report in respect of current levels of performance, satisfaction and complaints be noted.       That the presentation detailing changes in systems and ways of working following commitments given to the Panel be noted.       That the information provided by the Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services in respect of the ability of Contact Centre staff to contact Wates be noted.

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

The Panel considered a report of the Head of Landlord Service detailing current levels of performance, satisfaction and complaints.

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

- There was an issue with the fitting of new doors which was being addressed. Wates had acknowledged that earlier actions had not resolved the issue and was currently remedying defects at its own expense. No new doors orders were currently being placed.
- Not all of the problems with doors would have been apparent to tenants but there had been a reduction in satisfaction in March which may have been caused by these problems.
- The independent survey of tenants showed that only 75% were satisfied with the length of time taken to complete work.

**EVIDENCE RECEIVED FROM ANDY BROWN, CONSTRUCTION MANAGER (WATES)**

The Panel considered a presentation from Wates setting out the actions that it had carried out since the meeting of the Panel held in November 2015 at which it had undertaken to make various improvements to its systems and ways of working. A copy is attached as an Appendix.

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

- A new process had been put in place to deal with defects, with the aim of providing better reporting and reducing delays. It was unclear why performance appeared to have deteriorated in March but Wates had sent a number of queries to the Council.
- Training had been provided to all staff, including sub-contractors. Providing training for agency staff could be more difficult as they might work for only a short period of time. Wates was therefore looking to reduce the number of agencies it worked with so that standards could be improved.
- The Decent Homes contract already had a mechanism for triggering financial compensation so no further action would be taken in relation to that suggestion by the Panel.
- Wates was looking to establish a training centre in the Borough which could also be used to providing training courses for members of the public.
- The number of defects per property was significantly better in Charnwood than at other locations at which Wates worked.

- There had been improvements in the way that Wates and the Council worked together, for example in agreeing quality standards, but there were still issues that needed to be addressed, such as finding a consensus on how orders were issued and handovers conducted.
- Wates had sought to address issues that had been raised by the Council in order to improve performance and reduce complaints. That had been achieved and the contract still provided value for money for the Council.
- It was acknowledged that there was a high turnover of project managers and other staff. However the jobs came with high expectations and it was important that issues were addressed.
- There would be less work to be done in year 4 of the contract. By the middle of year 4 only new work arising from the ongoing requirements of the Charnwood Standard would need to be done.
- Some tenants had refused to have scheduled work done to their properties. This could lead to more work having to be done at those properties when they became void. It would be helpful if tenants groups and other means could be used to identify tenants' concerns with having work done and provide them with reassurance.

#### **EVIDENCE RECEIVED FROM HEAD OF REVENUES, BENEFITS AND CUSTOMER SERVICES**

The Panel was provided with an update from the Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services requested by the Panel.

The view of Contact Centre staff dealing with calls relating to Wates was that the level of complaints and other problems had reduced significantly. Wates had a much more coordinated approach and there had been an improvement in the ability of Contact Centre staff to speak directly with Wates. Emails were also now sent directly to Wates on any defects and these were collated in a monthly report.

The Panel welcomed the fact that improvements had been made.

#### **ACTIONS**

- That updated end of year performance information, including clarification of the proportion of defects completed within timescales, be provided to members of the Panel once the data had been checked.
- That information be provided to members of the Panel regarding the number of properties at which tenants had refused to have programmed work done.
- That a further meeting of the Panel be held in October 2016 because, although improvements had been made, further work needed to be done, particularly in relation to doors and to ensure that the progress achieved

to date in terms of performance, complaints and joint working between the Council and Wates was maintained.	
Timetable for Review	Tuesday, 11th October 2016 - Further additional meeting to receive presentation from Wates regarding implementation of improvements and from officers regarding performance.

Working in partnership with



# Delivering the Promise Update

# Recommendation 1 Update

- |   |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| a) New Phone Lines                      | • Defects – New process in place    |
| b) Timescales via 1-1                   |                                     |
| c) New Flow Charts visual reinforcement | • Email & Text Service              |
| d) Revised Variation Process            | • End of Day calls logged           |
| e) End of Day Calls logged              | • TLO dedicated to the works stream |
|   | • Induction – Completion            |



## Recommendation 2 Update

- a) All Correspondence reviewed and updated
- b) All complaints now captured and calls logged by Wates Team
- c) Revised complaints tracker in place with supporting flow chart
- d) Improvement on response times
- e) Partial Alignment to Contract Mechanism

## Recommendation 3,4,5 Update

- a) All Operatives and Supply Chain completed Customer Service Training
- b) Supply Chain achieved TPAS accreditation
- c) Joint Workshop completed with positive feedback
- d) Revised Communication plans issued following breakout sessions
- e) Start Right Meeting embedded with all teams
- f) Interaction with Contact Centre team

## Recommendation 6 Update

- a) Works Orders - Progress made but not contract aligned
- b) WLS Share point used for joint access to data – CBC new system in place
- c) WLS Field Tools Phase 1 agreed .
- d) Joint training held at NSC Arena – positive outcomes
- e) WLS issued works programme aligned to budget values – template for the year
- f) NSC arena – negotiations for bespoke training centre

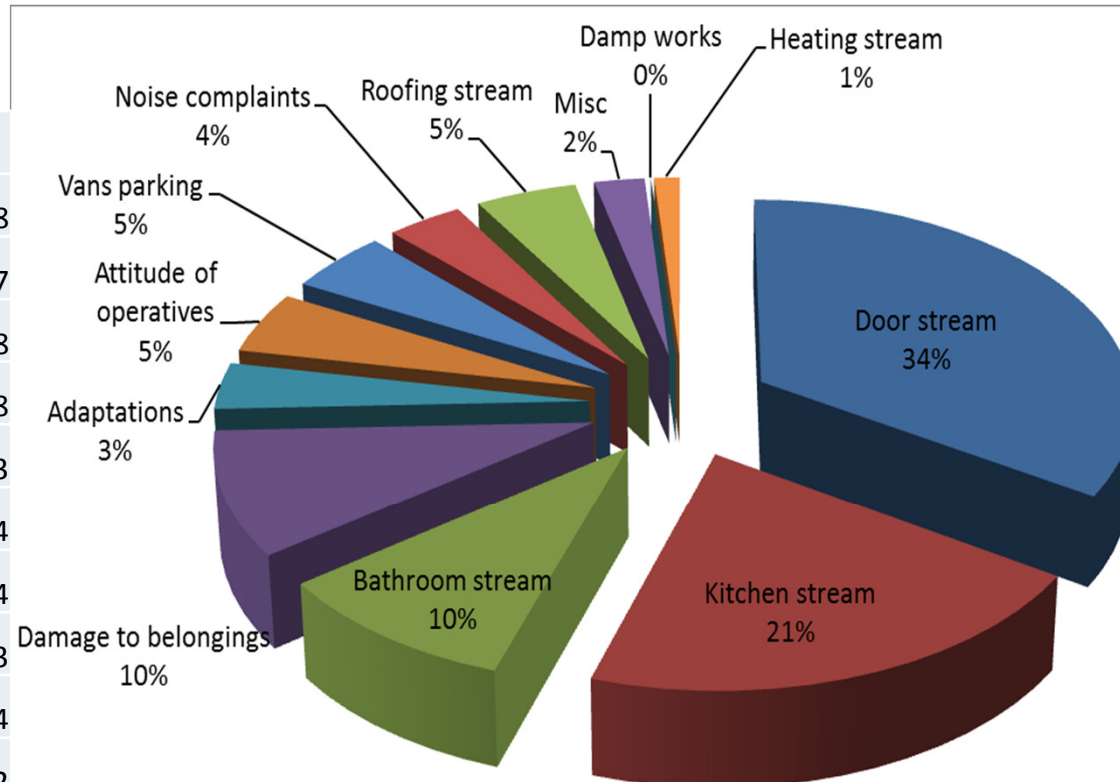
- Pre Surveys & Works Orders process
- Shared Resources – introduction of Responsive Repairs Teams – June 16
- Pre Works & Handover Process – Time taken
- Benchmarking Quality
- Customer Service – Next Level
- Innovation

- Pre Surveys & Works Orders process
- Shared Resources – introduction of Responsive Repairs Teams – June 16
- Pre Works & Handover Process – Time taken
- Benchmarking & written agreement supported by photos
- Joint Training for Supervisory Teams – Technical

- Kitchen Durations
- Bathroom Durations
- Customer Satisfaction
- Right First Time
- Average Complaints
- Average Defects at Handover 2015/16
- 11.83 days - 9.38 days
- 8.22 days – 6 days
- Target 90% Actual 94.1%
- 88% Target 95%
- Reduced Q4
- 1.1 per property

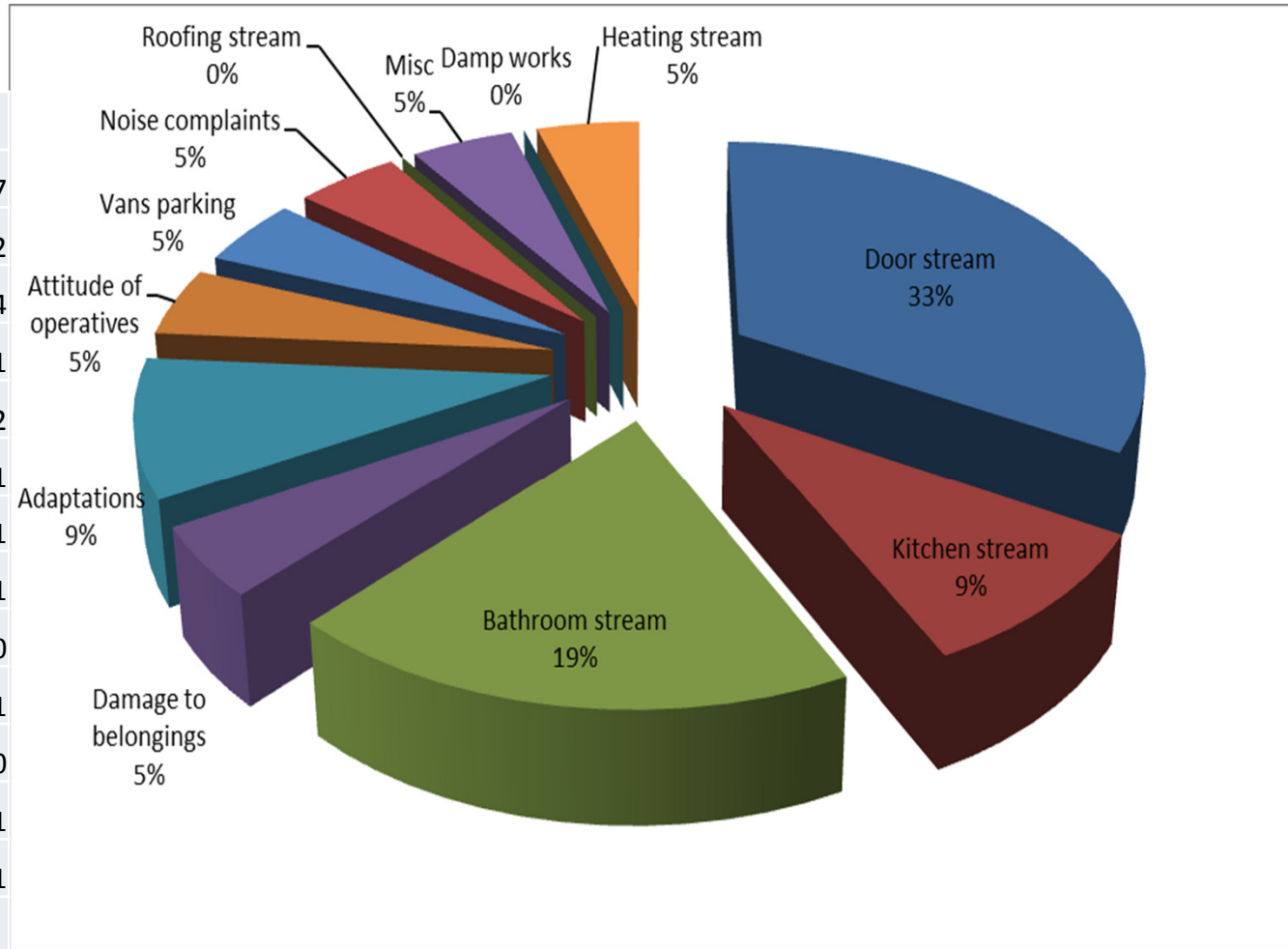
# Complaints Q3

Stage 0	
Door stream	28
Kitchen stream	17
Bathroom stream	8
Damage to belongings	8
Adaptations	3
Attitude of operatives	4
Vans parking	4
Noise complaints	3
Roofing stream	4
Misc	2
Damp works	0
Heating stream	1
	82



# Complaints Q4

Stage 0	
Door stream	7
Kitchen stream	2
Bathroom stream	4
Damage to belongings	1
Adaptations	2
Attitude of operatives	1
Vans parking	1
Noise complaints	1
Roofing stream	0
Misc	1
Damp works	0
Heating stream	1
	21





Dave Scattergood resigned – replaced by Lewis Wolstenholme Site Manager to be supported by Paul Taylor as a regional manager across all planned works .

Kelly Birkinshaw resigned – replaced with Anita Elija as Senior Customer Liaison Officer for the East Midlands

Anita will bring a new perspective /focus from working and leading within Customer Service Teams.

Tamara Fung – East Midlands Customer Services Manager supporting Anita across the East Midlands region



## **DECENT HOMES CONTRACT SCRUTINY PANEL – 18TH OCTOBER 2016**

### **Report of the Head of Landlord Services**

#### **ITEM 4      DECENT HOMES CONTRACT PERFORMANCE**

##### Purpose of Report

To provide the Panel with an update on performance under the contract.

##### Background

The Council has a four year contract for the delivery of decent homes and housing capital programme works. 2016/17 is year three of the contract.

##### Performance update

This is attached in the appendix to this report.

##### Update on Refusals

For years 1 and 2 letters have gone out to all those who refused work, or did not provide access or respond to attempts to contact for kitchens and bathrooms. Three attempts at access had previously been made and letters had already been sent - this was an additional step to ensure tenants were given the opportunity to respond. A Freepost envelope was included for reply. This resulted in 39 replies asking to be added to the kitchen programme and 35 replies asking to be added to the bathroom programme. The same exercise is being carried out for heating.

There remain 281 refusals/no responses for access for bathrooms and 246 for kitchens.

##### Doors

The door trial is nearing completion and inspections show that the work has been carried out to a good standard.

##### Issues to be resolved

The contractor has removed a tier of senior supervision from the contract – the previous contract manager has not been replaced. There is concern that this has resulted in a lack of supervision which has recently reflected in performance, particularly on non-standard works. Rectification of snags is also of concern.

Background papers:                      None

Officer to contact:

Christine Ansell  
Head of Landlord Services  
01509 634952  
[christine.ansell@charnwood.gov.uk](mailto:christine.ansell@charnwood.gov.uk)

Update for Decent Homes Contract Scrutiny Panel  
Performance and complaints for period from 1st April 2016

## Performance

### Kitchens:

Completed to date	241
Average completion time – time in property	8.5 days (target 10 days)
No. currently open	52
Average no. snags per property	1.37
Refusals / no access	74

### Bathrooms:

Completed to date	66
Average completion time – time in property	10.5 days (target 5 days)
No. currently open	49
Average no. snags per property	1.40
Refusals / no access	31

### Level Access showers:

Completed to date	14
Average completion time (from issue of order)	24 days
No. currently open	42
Average no. snags per property	1.07
Refusals / no access	5

### Heating:

Completed to date	3
Average completion time (from issue of order)	12 days
No. currently open	17
Average no. snags per property	n/a
Refusals / no access	0

There have been **162 defects** reported year to date, i.e. defects relating to works completed in the previous 12 month period and, although the average snags per property is low, many of the snags have yet to be completed.

**Whilst overall customer satisfaction** year to date is at **94.38%** against a target of 90%, there have been **31 complaints** year to date. The trend is shown overleaf.

We have taken the following steps to improve performance / satisfaction:

- Held an away day with Wates with a view to improving working relationships and identifying opportunities to improve collaboration / joint-working;
- Revised our ordering and snagging process as well as our payment process;
- Introduced a documented communication process – including developing scripts for customer contact;
- Developed improved progress reporting and performance monitoring reports.

## Complaints

A total of 31 complaints have been received in quarter 1 and quarter 2 of 2016/17 (since 1st April 2016). September 2016 showed an increase in the number of complaints.

	Apr	May	June	July	August	Sept
Stage 0	5	1	1	4	2	9
Stage 1			1		1	3
Stage 2	1	1			1	1
Total	6	2	2	4	4	13

There were 21 complaints in quarter 4 of 2015/16 – compared to 31 for the first two quarters of 2016/17 combined. The trend is, therefore, downwards, but there has been an increase in September 2016. This will be closely monitored.