

**Classification:** Public

**Key Decision:** No

## **Gravesham Borough Council**

**Report to:** Overview Scrutiny Committee

**Date:** 14 February 2019

**Reporting officer:** Daniel Killian, Assistant Director (Operations)

**Subject:** Housing Repairs Topic Review (Part 2) Final Update

### **Purpose and summary of report:**

To present Members of the Overview Scrutiny Committee with the final update on the what has been achieved in relation to the recommendations made by the Overview Scrutiny Committee following the Housing Repairs Topic Review (Part 2).

### **Recommendations:**

1. For Members of the Overview Scrutiny Committee to note the success of the review and the achievements made by the team.

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 In February 2017 the Overview Scrutiny Committee selected Housing Repairs for a further topic review (Part 2) which focused on:
  - A review of the total amount spent on repairs and maintenance and the capital improvement works to the council's housing stock.
  - A review of the cyclical programmes that the council has in place with regards to roofs, kitchens, bathrooms, boilers etc, to establish whether the council is replacing these items more frequently than is necessary, or more frequently relative to others.
- 1.2 The Overview Scrutiny Committee made a number of recommendations for Cabinet consideration:
  - 1.2.1 Continue to identify areas of repairs and maintenance work that can be carried out in house and increase staffing levels where appropriate to deliver this objective.
  - 1.2.2 Provide a further update of repairs and maintenance improvements to the Overview Scrutiny Committee within 12 months in response to the topic review recommendations

- 1.2.3 Ensure regular liaison between the internal Repairs team and the Housing team to ensure that a good client/ contractor relationship is maintained and that information is shared and acted upon.
- 1.2.4 Provide further training to Housing Officers to enable them to provide more comprehensive advice to tenant's responsibilities and the council's responsibilities in terms of repairs and maintenance issues.
- 1.2.5 Review 'repeat offenders' who have the same or similar repair jobs carried out a number of times and work with housing management to address this issue and to recover repair costs from the tenant where appropriate.

## **2. Update on Achievements**

- 2.1 Members of the Overview Scrutiny Committee received an update on progress in February 2018, 12 months on from the initial recommendations being made.
- 2.2 Whilst significant progress had been made up to that point, due to some long standing and complex historical issues it was recognised by the Committee that an additional 12 months should be given to fully realise and implement the recommendations.
- 2.3 As requested by the Committee at the last update, progress has been detailed and set out in table form as shown in Appendix 2 of this report.

## **3. Conclusion**

- 3.1 Significant work has been undertaken over the last 24 months, new technology has been introduced alongside an innovative review of existing repairs processes, which challenged existing custom and practices. This enabled the service to achieve the recommendations of the Overview Scrutiny Review whilst giving clearer guidance to both the tenants and the council as a landlord.
- 3.2 These changes have not only improved the service for our tenants but have also achieved significant savings now and will continue to do so in the future. The service will continue to build on its successes to date as a result of the review and will feedback through the relevant committees.

## **4. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 4.1 Anyone wishing to inspect background papers should, in the first place, be directed to Committee & Electoral Services who will make the necessary arrangements.

**IMPLICATIONS**

**APPENDIX 1**

<p><b>Legal</b></p>	<p><b>As a Landlord, the Council has a legal duty to respond to repair requests within set timescales to ensure compliance with legislation and therefore needs appropriate resources in place to comply with this requirement.</b></p>
<p><b>Finance and Value for Money</b></p>	<p><b>As a result of the review and introduction of new systems and new ways of working, as detailed within Appendix 2 of the report, a saving of just over £1m was realised within Responsive Repairs in 2017/18. In addition to this, significant savings will also be achieved by managing the captial kitchen and bathroom programme in-house, which are likely to be in the region of £760,000 per annum.</b></p>
<p><b>Risk Assessment</b></p>	<p><b>As a landlord, the Council need to comply with legislation with regards to specific repairs and timescales. Throughout the review work undertaken, officers have ensured that legislative requirements have been built in to the new processes and procedures to ensure tenants receive the appropriate response which also helps protect the Council against complaints and claims.</b></p>
<p><b>Equality Impact Assessment</b></p>	<p><b>Screening for Equality Impacts</b></p>
	<p><b>Question</b></p>
	<p>a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community? If yes, please explain answer. <b>No</b></p>
	<p>b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality? If yes, please explain answer. <b>No</b></p>
<p><i>In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above</i></p>	
<p><b>Corporate Plan</b></p>	<p>Stronger Gravesham- Improve the standard and efficiency of our housing stock. Sound &amp; self-sufficient council- Quality frontline services delivered on time and to the right people. Sound &amp; self-sufficient council- continuously review and adopt how we deliver our services to achieve financial efficiencies and improved performance.</p>
<p><b>Crime and Disorder</b></p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>Digital and website implications</b></p>	<p>N/A</p>

<b>Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults</b>	N/A
--	-----