



The Gateshead Housing Company Assets, Development & Investment Committee

Thursday 20 June 2013 at 2pm
Board Room 2, The Gateshead Housing Company, Keelman House,
Fifth Avenue Business Park, Fifth Avenue, Team Valley Trading Estate,
Gateshead NE11 0XA

Agenda

Item	Business
1.	Apologies for Absence
2.	Declarations of Interest
3.	Membership To note the appointment of Eileen Gill onto the committee
	<u>PRESENTATION</u>
4.	Asset Management Strategy Presentation by Simon Chrisp, Asset Manager
	<u>ITEMS FOR DECISION</u>
5.	Minutes (Pages 3-9) To approve as a correct record the minutes of the last meeting of the committee held on 5 March 2013
6.	Matters Arising

Item

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

7. **Energy Company Obligation Works – Tender Update (Pages 10-16)**
Report of Director of Customers and Communities
8. **Lift Refurbishment Programme 2013/14 (Pages 17-20)**
Report of Director of Customers and Communities
9. **Fire Safety Improvements to Sheltered Scheme (Pages 21-24)**
Report of Director of Customers and Communities
10. **Capital Update (Pages 25-32)**
Report of Director of Customers and Communities
11. **Repairs and Maintenance Contract – Review of First Year (Pages 33-45)**
Report of Director of Customers and Communities
12. **Items for Future Meetings**
13. **Date and Time of Next Meeting**
Thursday 17 October 2013 at 2pm in Board Room 1 at Keelman House, Fifth Avenue Business Park, Team Valley, Gateshead



ASSETS, DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

5 March 2013

PRESENT:

Directors

Paul Foy (Chair)
Joanne Carr
Pauline Dillon
Peter Mole
Gordon Spring

Advisers

Neil Bouch	Director of Customers and Communities
Phil Gallagher	Head of Investment and Development
Kevin Johnson	Head of Customer Services
Simon Chrisp	Asset Manager
Alan Sandey	Customer Asset and Procurement Officer
Phil Hogg	Repairs Service Manager
Stuart Gibson	Governance and Risk Officer

1 MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

The membership and terms of reference of the committee were submitted.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted, subject to the committee also considering the following: -

- Repairs Service Delivery
- New Build
- Development of Asset Strategy

2 APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY CHAIR

RESOLVED – That Joanne Carr be appointed as Deputy Chair of the committee.

3 MINUTES OF ASSET MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The minutes of the last meeting of the committee held on 30 October 2012 were approved as a correct record.

4 MATTERS ARISING

(a) McErlane Square Communal Lighting

RESOLVED – That a committee site visit be arranged to look at the key aspects of the housing stock in Gateshead, including McErlane Square.

(b) Carbon Monoxide Detectors

Officers have looked into alternative carbon monoxide detectors and there are none available on the market with a larger lifespan.

5 PROPOSED ENERGY COMPANY OBLIGATION WORKS

In December 2012, the current arrangements for grants from energy companies to improving thermal efficiency in homes ended. Community Energy Saving Programme (CESP) grants have funded the solid wall improvements to High Fell and Blackhill Crescent. Carbon Emission Reduction Target (CERT) grants has funded cavity and loft insulation to thousands of Council homes in Gateshead through WarmZone.

The schemes have been replaced by the Green Deal and ECO in January 2013.

Energy companies are required to offload around £1.3billion in funding between January 2013 and March 2015 to help reduce fuel poverty. The main part of this funding that is open to the social housing sector is the Carbon Saving Communities obligation (CSCO).

More areas of Gateshead are eligible for this funding than under CESP. The company has over 500 non-traditional properties within the funding areas that could potentially benefit from funding.

The funding also contains a provision for properties that fall just outside of the grant area, to ensure that estates can be fully completed. This affects three estates in Gateshead.

The proposed homes included in the scheme were reported subject to survey. In addition to TGHC managed homes on these estates, there are significant amounts of right to buy owners that could also potentially benefit from the funding as energy companies will release this at the same rate as similar properties within the area.

The majority of properties will receive external wall insulation, which is estimated to save a resident 40% on their annual fuel bills. Where necessary, windows and heating systems will need to be upgraded at the same time as the external insulation.

Discussions have been held with the Home Group regarding entering into a partnership to obtain funding and procure the works. Home has around 300 non-traditional properties in the Leam Lane area. Entering into a partnership with Home Group has a number of benefits and details of these were reported.

Home Group will lead on the works tender through their current OJEU framework, saving the company significant officer time in preparation of specifications and tender documentation. The company will be involved in the evaluation of the returned tenders, alongside the Home Group and Council officers.

A formal partnership agreement to detail what the arrangement will cover including liabilities for owner occupiers would need to be put in place.

Soft market testing has been carried out with a range of energy companies regarding the likely funding levels available. Initial feedback has indicated that high volumes of properties being included would be the key to increasing levels of funding for the works. Based on the initial assessment, it is likely that the company will receive 100% funding for the works.

Any contractor wishing to bid for these works must be Green Deal accredited and have PAS 2030:2012 quality mark as a requirement of the funding.

- RESOLVED –
- (i) That the proposal to apply for ECO funding to carry out improvements to the Council properties reported subject to survey be noted.
 - (ii) That the entering into a partnership with Home Group to secure funding and deliver the works be approved.

6 ENERGY PERFORMANCE HEATING SCHEME AND IMPROVEMENTS TO MULTI-STOREY BLOCKS

The Company currently manages 25 multi-storey blocks. These blocks have varying degrees of investment needs in the coming years, including 17 of the blocks that still require window upgrades, 16 blocks that have electric storage heaters as the main form of heating and at least 6 blocks being 'difficult to heat' due to the nature of their construction.

Heating costs in some blocks are very expensive due to the poor thermal efficiency of the windows and walls, as well as electric heating which are costly to run. This has a negative impact upon the sustainability of blocks and impacts upon turnover.

Gateshead Council has previously tendered for a Biomass District Heating Scheme for Redheugh and Eslington, although no compliant tenders were received.

To improve the long-term sustainability of blocks, TGHC's Asset Management Team and Gateshead Council's Climate Change Team have been exploring ways of attracting investment to make energy efficiency based improvements to tower blocks.

Initial work has been carried out to explore the possibility of taking an energy improvement approach to the multi-storey blocks at Beacon Lough. The blocks could benefit from improvements to improve the thermal efficiency such as a district heating scheme, external wall insulation, high performance windows and new insulated roofs.

Following soft market testing with a number of providers, it is also suggested that a scheme for Redheugh and Eslington is included in any scheme undertaken. These blocks would benefit from a district heating scheme and external wall insulation to the gables and floor joints.

A model has been developed to fund improvements through multiple funding streams including capital finance, Energy Company Obligation, Renewal Heat Incentive, profit from heat sales and standing charge (a % of the savings made by residents).

Energy Company Obligation funding rules allow for higher allowances to be given to solid wall tower blocks that are electrically heated. It is expected that at least 70% of the capital cost will come from this funding stream.

The main benefit of the scheme is that the company can deliver both desirable and essential improvements to blocks with a value of £7million which is fully funded and additional to the current capital programme.

The improvements will improve the sustainability of the blocks by providing low cost controllable heating and significant decrease in heat loss.

Residents will receive a reduction in their heating costs and this help reduce fuel poverty.

The capital contribution required for the works is subject to a proposed loan from Gateshead Council's General Fund which has been the subject of agreement by Cabinet. The details of the financial model are being finalised with the contribution being paid back through income from the heat sales.

RESOLVED – That, subject to the financial model being agreed by Gateshead Council's Group Director of Finance and ICT, it was agreed to continue the development of the Energy Performance Heating Scheme and Improvements for Beacon Lough multi-storeys and Redheugh and Eslington Courts.

7 LED LIGHTING

Communal areas are found in many areas of the stock the company manages. The highest concentrations of communal lighting are found in the multi storey blocks and sheltered housing schemes. Communal lighting can also be found in many of the medium and low rise flats as well as the lounges manage by the Company.

The majority of the communal lighting circuits managed are original installations that have received only limited improvement. The lighting runs permanently with light bulbs requiring annual replacement. The physical light point fitting has an estimated running life of 15 years, although experience has shown that this is commonly closer to 10 years.

In recent years there has been a steady move away from permanently lit traditional light fittings, classified as standard lighting, to more efficient and effective alternatives. Increases in electricity prices have also influenced a

move to systems that provide value for money through a managed system that is not constantly lit.

LED lighting provides a robust and highly effective alternative to standard lighting. This technology is based around light emitting diodes, simple electronic devices that produce light when electricity passed through them.

LED's have been around for many years, but as they only produce a small amount of light, it has taken a long time to develop lamps capable of producing adequate space lighting.

While LED products are currently more expensive than traditional alternatives they are the most efficient product available. They last far longer than any other technology and cost significantly less over the product life.

It is proposed that on all new communal light installations LED products are specified as the standard fitting for both space and emergency lighting. With the addition of corridor sensors it will also be possible to manage the provision of space lighting, so that it is only on when there is footfall in the communal areas. Managing the system in this way will also allow the emergency lighting to be dimmed to a minimal level.

RESOLVED – That LED lighting be adopted as the standard specification for all future communal rewiring works.

8 SMOKE DETECTION SERVICING

The Company manages 25 multi-storey blocks across Gateshead. In these blocks is a mixture of communal and flat smoke detectors. The Company has a requirement to service these smoke detectors, which is part of the Company's approach to preventing a fire spreading in a multi-storey block should one occur.

A Service Level Agreement (SLA) for servicing has been negotiated directly with Local Environment Services (LES). LES will service all multi-storey smoke detectors on an annual basis. Provision is also included for faulty units and batteries to be replaced whilst at the property if required. A copy of the proposed SLA was submitted.

The annual cost to the Company of the servicing of smoke detectors is £35,444.50. This price has been negotiated directly with LES.

RESOLVED – That the introduction of the Service Level agreement for these works be approved.

9 DECC LOCAL AUTHORITY FUNDING FOR FUEL POVERTY MEASURES

Improving home energy conservation to reduce domestic fuel bills, lower carbon emissions and remove cold-related health problems remains a core priority of national government.

In October 2012, the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) announced a £40m Local Authority Fund. The aim of the fund is to further support local authorities in reducing the extent of fuel poverty.

The Asset Management Team approached Gateshead Council's Climate Change Team on release of this fund with a view to developing a partnership bid for fuel poverty funding.

In partnership with the company, the Council successfully bid for a total of £220,000 from the fund for the following works: -

- £80,000 for replacement of high-cost electric heating with gas central heating systems at 26 properties Binsby and Millbeck Gardens.
- £140,000 for the replacement of 'G' rated boilers in 70 TGHC managed properties.

For Binsby and Millbeck works are on site and works are expected to be completed by 8 March 2013.

For the boiler replacement, all works are scheduled for completion by 31 March 2013.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.

10 CAPITAL UPDATE 2012/13

The committee received a monitoring statement of the capital expenditure budget for 2012/13 and progress update on housing investment work up to 15 February 2013.

The overall capital budget for 2012/13 is £22,985,000. The budget the company is managing is £15,881,000. This includes carry forward of £2,196,000 relating to a number of 2011/12 schemes which have been carried forward into 2012/13.

Details of the schemes which are being managed in partnership with the Council's Local Environmental Services were reported.

An analysis of the budget spend to date in each of the following areas was reported: -

- Health and Statutory Obligations
- Maintaining Decency
- Other Priorities
- 2011/12 carry forward schemes

RESOLVED – That progress with the capital programme be noted.

11 ACCESS TO THE HOMERPAIRS REPAIR REPORTING SERVICE

The committee received a report noting the decision of the Customers and Communities Committee to approve the development and carrying out of a consultation exercise on options to improve access to the repair reporting service.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.

12 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

To be agreed.



Assets, Development and Investment Management Committee

20 June 2013

Title: Lift Refurbishment Programme 2013/14

Report of Director of Customer and Communities

Purpose of Report

1. To provide the committee with an update on the current lift programme and seek approval to commence procurement of a specialist consultant to assist with the development of the remaining lift refurbishment programme from 2013/14 to 2017/18.

Background

2. On the 7 February 2012 Gateshead Council's Cabinet approved a five year Housing Capital Investment Programme for the financial years 2012/13 to 2016/17. One of the headline scheme budgets was an annual lift replacement and/or refurbishment programme with a budget provision of £250,000 in year 1 increasing to £500,000 for the four years thereafter.
3. The programme is focused on those lifts that had been identified as in greatest need of replacement or refurbishment through inspection reports and repair data. Lift replacements at Adelaide, Brisbane and Melbourne Court were planned to span 12/13 and 13/14 programmes. In addition a lift replacement scheme is on site at Pleasant Place (House Numbers 1-23). Work at these schemes is expected to be complete by the end of July 2013.
4. The current contract for lift maintenance is with Stannah Lift Services Limited. Through the agreement with Stannah, all lifts receive a cyclical service as well as a periodic inspection, by the insurers (Zurich), to ensure correct operation and to identify any areas of concern.
5. The Gateshead Housing Company (TGHC) with the assistance of Stannah are reviewing lift stock condition information in order to ensure that the indicative budgets over the next four years within the investment programme are accurate and that the capital budget remains targeted at lifts in greatest need, in order that a planned approach to refurbishment or replacement is taken.
6. Whilst the above work continues, the company are keen to ensure that the works identified as a priority following previous inspections are carried out during the remainder of 2013/14 and are requesting the committee to

authorise, by exception, the continued employment of Stannah Lift Services Limited to deliver the remaining 2013/14 investment programme.

7. A copy of the work currently being delivered and the works proposed for 2013/14 are included in the Appendix.

Next Steps

8. The information and recommendations that we currently receive following maintenance inspection reports advise of remedial action but do not provide full condition information or highlight where future investment works may arise. In order to ensure that we provide an effective and proactive lift maintenance and improvement programme, committee approval is sought to commence a procurement exercise to appoint a lift consultant to provide full condition surveys on all lifts.

Links to Values

9. The report links to the values of being honest, accountable and transparent

Impact on tenants

10. The work to undertake lift replacement will positively impact upon tenants. Customers will be able to take confidence knowing that the lift is not at risk of breaking down or having to be placed out of service until replacement components are sought.

Risk Management

11. The risk of not adopting a proactive programmed investment approach places TGHC in a reactive state. Major lift failure through parts that have exceeded their life expectancy can result in imminent failing or being taken out of service due to the risk they propose to our insurers Zurich. It is to be noted that the majority of major lift components are bespoke and have lengthy lead in periods to obtain.

Health Implications

12. The risk of a lift failing whilst occupied could lead to panic and distress or even potential injury. The break down of 'alternate' floor lifts can have a significant impact on the wellbeing of elderly customers or residents with vulnerabilities linked to mobility.

Financial Implications

13. By TGHC obtaining information on the stock condition of each lift it will then allow for a targeted, programmed investment approach removing, in the early years, lifts that have become deficient through age. Advancing on the current holding of stock knowledge will allow a year on year programme to be compiled that will be able to be achieved in the parameter's of annual budgets.
14. The lift consultant's fee will be met from the 'preparation for future schemes' budget.

Value for Money Implications

15. Continuing to maintain lifts and components that have gone beyond their life cycle is not viable. A planned asset management approach will achieve value for money by reducing the percentage of expensive reactive repairs.

Recommendations

16. The committee is asked to:
 - (i) Agree by exception, that Stannah Lift Services Limited deliver the planned 2013/14 lift investment programme.
 - (ii) Approve the commencement of a procurement exercise to engage a lift specialist consultant to assist with full condition surveys to inform the remainder of the 2012/13 – 2017/18 capital funding cycle.
 - (iii) Receive an update on lift improvement works for 2014/15 through to 2016/17 in advance of the procurement of a contractor.

Contact: Steve Cook, Senior Asset and Procurement Officer Tel: (0191) 433 5412

Appendix - Lift Programme

2012/13 Lift Refurbishments (on-going)	Update
Pleasant Place D (House Numbers 1-23)	Commenced 20th May – Expected completion end of July
Adelaide South Lift	Complete
Brisbane South Lift	Completion expected 5 th July
Melbourne South Lift	Completion expected 14 th June
2013/14 Lift Refurbishments Programme (Proposed)	
Pleasant Place C	
Park Court South Lift	
Peareth Court South Lift	
Priory Court South Lift	



Report to the Assets, Development and Investment Committee

20 June 2013

Title: Fire Safety Improvements to Sheltered Schemes

Author: Director of Customers and Communities

Purpose of Report

1. To update the committee on the progress of the Fire Safety Improvement Works to Sheltered Schemes.

Background

2. The fire safety improvement works investment programme commenced with multi storey properties in 2011. Following this scheme fire safety improvement work to the Sheltered Scheme properties has commenced in order to address the areas identified through the annual risk assessments conducted by The Gateshead Housing Company (TGHC) and Tyne & Wear Fire and Rescue Service (TWFRS).
3. Using the TWFRS risk assessments, TGHC and our principal contractor Local Environmental Services (LES) have conducted bespoke surveys of the sheltered schemes where deficiencies have been identified as follows:
 - Flat entrance doors
 - Communal door sets
 - Compartmentation
 - Electrical – smoke detection, fire alarms, emergency lighting
 - Signage
4. The survey results have been collated and used to form the basis for the scope of works (SOW) for delivery by LES.
5. As McErlane Square was part of a separate programme to carry out rewiring and communal door upgrades, the fire safety works to this scheme has been brought forward to minimise the disruption for residents.
6. The next scheme to receive works will be Harrison Court. Specifications and pilot installs of measures have been completed and the programme of work commenced 10 June 2013.

7. We are currently finalising a contract programme from LES for the remaining schemes. The work will be programmed to be completed by the end of March 2014.
8. The sheltered schemes that will receive works are included at Appendix A.

Links to Values

9. The report links to the company's values of being honest, accountable and transparent.

Impact on tenants

10. These works will have a positive impact and give customers the confidence they are provided with protection against fire and smoke spread.
11. LES will need access into every customer's home in order to carry out works to their entrance door. Due to the vulnerable nature of the residents we will work to ensure customers fully understand the benefits of this work in order that access can be obtained and the risks mitigated

Risk Management

12. The risk of not carrying out this work is that should a fire break out there could be rapid spread of fire and smoke throughout the building.

Health Implications

13. The completion of these works will contribute to the fire safety of the properties, minimising the spread of fire and smoke and thus reducing the danger to lives and property assets.

Financial Implications

14. The budget for these works is £500,000 and is part of the Housing Capital Investment Programme for 2013/14

Equality and Diversity Implications

15. There will be no negative impact to customers in relation to equality and diversity. Customers will benefit from improved access and egress to areas of the building as doors are being fitted with hold open magnetic features.
16. An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken for the scheme. Ensuring the planned work and product specifications take account of customer groups specific needs.

Value for Money Implications

17. Carrying out bespoke surveys to each scheme has enabled a scheme specific SOW to be developed, this will ensure the most efficient use of the budget.

Environmental Implications

18. Our robust specifications will ensure that sustainable products are used wherever possible.

Consultation

19. TWFRS and TGHC's Health and Safety Team have undertaken the initial risk assessments.
20. Gateshead Council's Building Control has been consulted on the proposals.
21. As these works are being carried out to remedy deficiencies highlighted by risk assessments residents can not opt out of the works. Prior to the work starting we will invite residents to a scheme meeting and follow this up with a letter to each customer providing details of the Resident Liaison Officer that will be available on site to address any concerns. Local ward members will be invited to the scheme meetings and advised when work is scheduled to commence at each scheme.

Recommendations

22. The committee is recommended to note the contents of the report receive further updates on progress of this work at future meetings.

	Property	Doors (Flat)	Keep Corridors & Protected Staircases Clear of Combustible Items	Doors (Communal)	Compartmentation	Emergency Lighting Installation to Communal Lounge	Emergency Lighting Installation to Communal Areas	Signage	Sufficient Procedures & Safety Drills to Be Implemented	Upgrade / Installation of Fire Alarm of Detection	Configure Front Door so That is Falls Safe on Activation of Fire Alarm
CENTRAL											
	Bensham Court										
	Millvain Close			✓	✓				✓		✓
	Mulgrave Villas	✓		✓	✓						
	Warwick Court - lounge			✓							
EAST											
	Joyce Close			✓				✓	✓		
	McErlane Square	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓		
	Wood Green						✓	✓	✓		
INNER WEST											
	East Lea	✓		✓	✓			✓		✓	
	Lowfield Walk - Rectory Hall			✓							
SOUTH											
	Birtley Villas 26 - 50	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	
	Birtley Villas 1 - 25	✓	✓	✓	✓						
	23 Cheshire Avenue	✓				✓					
	Croftside										
	Easington Avenue						✓	✓	✓		
	Harrison Court	✓	✓	✓	✓						
	Kateregina			✓							
	Lansbury Close										
	Leyburn Place	✓				✓					
	Pleasant Place 1- 23	✓		✓							
	Pleasant Place 24 - 48	✓	✓	✓	✓						
WEST											
	AJ Cooks Cottages (Accessed off William Morris Avenue)	✓		✓							
	Boltons Bungalows										
	Burnside Road										
	Conifer Close	✓		✓							
	Crocus Close	✓	✓	✓					✓		
	Denton view	✓		✓				✓	✓		
	Emmaville	✓		✓							
	Greenfields	✓		✓							
	Kays Cottages							✓	✓		
	Mosspool	✓		✓							
	Rydal Crescent	✓		✓			✓				
	South Lea	✓		✓				✓			
	South Sherburn	✓		✓							
	Southwood Crescent	✓		✓						✓	
	West Acres	✓		✓							
	Whinney Close	✓		✓			✓			✓	

Key:

	Stand alone building - No work required as lounge not attached to residential properties.
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Report to Assets, Development and Investment Committee

20 June 2013

Title: Capital Update

Report of: Director of Customers and Communities

Purpose of summary

1. To provide the committee with an update on the delivery of the capital programme for 2012/13 and 2013/14.

Background

2. The five year capital budget up to 2017/18 was approved by Gateshead Council's Cabinet on 7 February 2012 and reported to Asset Committee on 23 February 2012.
3. A summary of the 2012/13 capital programme is attached as Appendix 1.
4. A summary of the 2013/14 capital programme is attached as Appendix 2.
5. The Investment Team manage the delivery of the capital programme. This involves the performance monitoring of the delivery partners to ensure that schemes are delivered on time, on budget and to the satisfaction of customers, with emphasis on achieving value for money. Our main delivery partner is Local Environmental Services (LES).

Update on the 2012/13 programme

Health and Statutory Obligations

6. The concealed flue appliance works were delivered through our delivery partner LES. The work started 10 September 2012 and was completed by the end of December 2012.
7. The Equality Act works to communal lounges and multi-storey flats required original designs to be re-visited and this work was carried out by Design and Enterprise at Gateshead Council with estimates produced by LES. The first scheme at McErlane Square commenced in May 2013. A full programme of works has been established to ensure completion in 13/14.

8. Lift replacement works at Melbourne, Brisbane and Adelaide Courts are progressing well. The work at Adelaide is complete and the other two schemes have been commissioned.
9. Replacement of the communal electrics at Melbourne and Brisbane Courts commenced in March 2013.
10. Fire Safety works to sheltered schemes started in May 2013 at McErlane Square. A programme has been developed and the next scheme to receive the work will be Harrison Court commencing in June 2013.

Maintaining Decency

11. The first two tranches of 2012/13 work are scheduled for completion in July 2013.
12. The central heating and boiler replacement programme for 2012/13 included 522 homes. 115 of the replacements have been completed and handed over. The remainder of the work will be completed by July 2013.

Window Replacement

13. The window replacement programme was successfully delivered. Resources also allowed for the inclusion of a reserve scheme which resulted in window replacement work at an additional 37 homes.

Other Priorities

14. Insulation works to 104 "Wimpey No-fine" properties at High Fell A are complete with the exception of some minor snagging. The scheme has had issues with prolonged inclement weather causing delays, but customer satisfaction has been extremely high.
15. A similar scheme, to the 74 Dorran type non traditional properties in High Fell B (Blackhill Crescent) is also nearing completion. The scheme has suffered with the same issues regarding inclement weather together with delays caused by nesting birds.
16. Warden Call upgrades delivered by Tunstall are currently on-going at a number of sheltered schemes. Ensuring elderly and vulnerable customers have access to modern and accessible support via Gateshead Councils CareCall
17. Refurbishments to various acquired properties have been progressing since the end of last year. At Stoneygate work to convert a former community building to two semi detached properties is complete.
18. An additional 324 homes have benefited from new A rated boilers via the 'one-off heating replacement' budget. These works were identified and carried out through the gas servicing contract with Mears.

2013/14 Capital Programme

19. We have worked closely with the partners on the 2013/14 programme to ensure the programme was mobilised early, avoiding the risk of slippage.

Health and Statutory Obligations

20. Five lifts will be replaced as part of this years planned works. Design and pricing work has commenced.

Maintaining Decency

21. Learning from the previous year we have identified estates with a high concentration of work to maximise efficiencies for our partner.
22. The Maintaining Decency programme for 2013/14 comprises of works to 1,345 properties. Covering individual elements such as re-wiring, kitchen replacements and bathroom renewals. Work commenced in April and is running concurrent to remainder of 2012/13 schemes.
23. Provision has been made for the renewal of 400 'F' rated Baxi 30/50 boilers during 2013/14.
24. This year's window programme consists of 199 properties with 50 in reserve. This work is going through a tendering process. The estates that will receive replacement windows in 2013/14 are shown at Appendix 3.

Other schemes in progress

25. In addition the following schemes are currently in the programme;
- Fire safety works at three multi storey blocks are programmed for completion subject to snagging. Work in relation to doors is currently being completed at Redheugh, Eslington and Bensham Courts. 30 properties remain outstanding due to access issues. The remainder of the fire safety works to multi storey blocks is complete.
 - Fire Safety works at Regent Court started in January 2013. The sprinkler system, to the individual flats and communal areas, is scheduled to complete in October 2013.
 - Remote door entry and CCTV - discussions are being held with the Council regarding the prioritisation of this work.

Links to Values

26. This report relates to the following company values: -
- Being honest, accountable and transparent
 - Being a listening and learning organisation

Impact on tenants

27. Having spent £330million bringing all properties up to the Decent Homes standard we continue to invest in maintaining decency of the housing stock for the benefit of the customers.
28. The insulation works identified will improve the SAP ratings for the harder to heat homes and reduce fuel poverty.

29. Satisfaction surveys are carried out with all tenants and leaseholders who receive investment works. These satisfaction surveys have now been split to ensure that we can gather improved data on satisfaction across all of the different elements of investment work. This will help to improve the service to customers when they receive works. Results up to 31 March 2013 show that 99.1% of customers are satisfied with the overall improvements. Surveys were returned by 75% of customers that have benefited from improvement works.

Health Implications

30. The improvement works to be delivered will reduce the risk of customers living in cold damp homes, reducing the risk of heart, stroke, respiratory and cold related illness.

Environmental Implications

31. The works will deliver new high efficiency combination boilers to properties that have the oldest most inefficient systems currently. These measures along with external envelope works will reduce substantial carbon emissions through reductions of heating usage.

Risk Management Implications

32. The failure to maintain decency has been identified as a strategic risk and controls and future actions have been agreed to mitigate the risk. The Strategic Risk Register is scrutinised quarterly by the senior management and monitored by the Board.

Financial Implications

33. The financial implications are detailed in the report.

Equality and Diversity Implications

34. There are no equality and diversity implications associated with this report.

Value for Money Implications

35. Value for money is key in delivering an efficient and effective investment programme. Discussions have been held with suppliers around their costs to ensure that we are continuing to receive the best quality products at a reasonable price. We will continue to manage the investment works to ensure that the contractors provide value for money in their approach to the works.

Consultation carried out

36. Consultation has been carried out for:-
- Maintaining Decency – drop in events have been held for residents whose homes are due heating or kitchen replacement.
 - Fire Safety Works – drop in events have been held for residents living in multi-storey blocks so they could find out more about the works.
 - Regent Court Sprinkler System – information events have been held for all residents living in the block and visits to a pilot flat have been carried out.

- Air Source Heat Pumps – individual visits carried out to all affected properties.
- High Fell A External Insulation works – drop in event held for residents to come along and find out more about the proposals.
- Pleasant Place 1 -23 residents meeting relating to the lift replacement.

Recommendation

37. The views of the committee are sought on progress with the capital programme.

Contact: Jim Charlton, Investment Manager

Tel No: (0191) 433 5451

APPENDIX 1

Housing Investments Capital Programme 2012/13 up to 31 March 2013

Category	Project	2011/12 c/f (£'000)	2012/13 (£'000)	TOTAL (£'000)	Spend to date (£'000)
Health and Safety or Statutory Obligations	Concealed flue appliances (incl in MD)	0	600	600	0
	Equality Act works: Communal lounges	0	100	100	0
	Equality Act works: Multi-storey flats	0	250	250	3
	Fire Safety to Multi-storey flats	1,711	0	1,711	919
	Fire Safety to Sheltered Schemes	0	500	500	8
	Lift replacement / refurbishment	0	250	250	176
	Replacement of Communal Electrics	0	125	125	32
	Total Health & Safety/ Statutory Obligations	1,711	1,825	3,536	1,138
Contractual Obligations	Programme Management	0	1,000	1,000	1,000
	Strategic Maintenance	0	1,500	1,500	1,500
	Total Contractual Obligations	0	2,500	2,500	2,500
Maintaining Decency	Maintaining Decency	0	6,710	6,710	4,258
	Total Maintaining Decency	0	6,710	6,710	4,258
Estate Regeneration	Older Persons Strategy - Phase 1	385	0	385	357
	Total Estate Regeneration Schemes	385	0	385	357
Other Priorities	High Fell Solid Wall Insulation	0	900	900	964
	One off Heating Replacements	0	1,000	1,000	582
	Warden Call	0	250	250	270
	Window Replacement	0	500	500	268
	Remote door entry and CCTV	100	0	100	2
	Total Other Priorities	100	2,650	2,750	2,086
	Total	2,196	13,685	15,881	10,339

2013/14 Housing Capital Programme

Category	Project	Budget (£'000)	
Health and Safety Obligations	Lift replacement / refurbishment	500	
	Barnes Close completion Peareth Court (south) Pleasant Place (south) Priory Court (south) Park Court (south) Pleasant Place (north)		
	Replacement of Communal Electrics	250	
	Barnes Close (completion of Brisbane & Melbourne will have a £115,000 of support from 'decency')		
	Equality Act works - Multi-storey flats	250	
	Equality Act works - Communal Lounges	100	
	Adaptations	1500	
	Total Health & Safety	2600	
Contractual Obligations	Programme Management	1000	
	Strategic Maintenance	1500	
	Total Contractual Obligations	2500	
Maintaining Decency	Maintaining Decency	6930	
	Kitchen replacement (172 properties)		
	Coach Road Est (75) Dunston Park (23) Lobely Hill (74)		
	Bathroom replacement (685 properties)		
	Barley Mow New (142) Chopwell (134) Elisabethville (134) Springwell (275)		
	Crowhall flats & block rewire (88 flats)		
	'F' rated boiler replacement (400 properties)		
	Preparation for future years ECO support work Barnes Close - rewire addition Designing out crime & Neighbourhood Pride CEAS (condensation energy advisory service) Common area improvements Decent Homes one off pick ups External works		
	Total Maintaining Decency	6930	
	Estate Regeneration	Chandless Demolition	1750
		Dunston Achieving the vision	2157
		Clasper Village	1250
		Bleach Green	1350
Flowershow Field		24	
Older Persons		200	
Total Estate Regeneration Schemes		6731	
Other Priorities	One off Heating Replacements	500	
	Warden Call	250	
	Denton View, Winlaton Crocus Close, Winlaton Kays Cottages, Windy Nook Easington Avenue, Wrekenton Rectory Road East, Felling Bolton Bungalows, Chopwell Milvain Close, Deckham Cheshire Avenue, Birtley Leyburn Place, Birtley		
	Window Replacement:	500	
	Hallgarth Ph2 (110) Florence Ave (31) Hexham Old Road (58) Reserve – Hallgarth Ph 3 (50)		
	Total Other Priorities	1250	
	Total Capital Programme	20,011	

Proposed Window Replacement Programme Year 2

Estate			With Timber Windows
Year 2 2013/14			
HALLGARTH_EST Ph2	BLAYDON, WINLATON & HIGH SPEN	2013/14	110
FLORENCE_AVENUE_EST	HIGH FELL, LOW FELL	2013/14	31
HEXHAM_OLD_ROAD_EST	RYTON	2013/14	58
			199
RESERVE			
Hallgarth Ph3	BLAYDON, WINLATON & HIGH SPEN	2013/14	50
			249



Report to Assets, Development and Investment Committee

20 June 2013

Title: Repair and Maintenance Contract – Review of First Year

Report of Director of Customer and Communities

Purpose of Report

1. To provide the committee with a review of the first year of operation of the repair and maintenance contract with Mears.

Background

2. The repair and maintenance contract with Mears came into operation in April 2012 following an extensive procurement exercise. The contract is for a three year period with an option to extend for up to a further two years.
3. The contract involved a certain degree of “raising the bar” in terms of service delivery and meeting customer expectations. For example, customers were very interested in having two-hour appointment slots for repairs instead of the existing “am or pm” slots. The contractor would also be expected to develop a multi-skilling approach for the workforce that would enable more jobs to be completed in one visit.
4. The formal awarding of the contract to Mears was delayed following enquiries from the previous contractor. This led to the mobilisation period being somewhat condensed into a number of weeks rather than months, and some elements of the supporting systems and infrastructure still being developed as the contract went live. A further issue was that 2,869 outstanding repair jobs and 99 relet repairs to void properties had not been completed by the previous contractor before their contract ended.

Contract Review

5. Setting up and operating a repair and maintenance contract is a very complex task, not only for the contractor, but also for the client. There are significant requirements for training and for developing systems and procedures. This includes: -
 - setting out the Schedule of Rates (SOR) and master preambles to accurately describe the requirements for every possible repair job
 - developing systems for repair ordering and tracking

- developing systems for viewing available appointment slots and generating appointments
 - managing the process of varying orders (where the work content is found to be more extensive)
 - invoicing and payment systems
 - managing performance and customer satisfaction
6. Keeping in mind the condensed mobilisation period for this contract, and the unforeseen service issues caused by the severe floods of June, August and September 2012, the first year of operation can be viewed very positively. There was no gap in service as Mears took over from the previous contractor, and although there were teething problems with some systems (such as a new appointment booking system) solutions were sought and implemented during the year. Levels of satisfaction were maintained at a high level, and although there are naturally a number of complaints about a repair service, there has also been much positive feedback from customers and from Ward Councillors.
7. Performance targets were not achieved across the full year, but there were significant improvements during the year with much better performance in the final quarter. This gives some confidence that performance will continue to improve in the second year of the contract. It should also be appreciated that although achieving two-hour appointment slots is much more difficult than achieving am or pm slots, performance targets were kept at much the same levels as for the final year of the previous contract.
8. A contract review document for the year has been jointly produced by service managers from Mears and the housing company, and is attached as an appendix to this report. The review document includes sections on: -
- Responsive Repairs
 - Flood Damage
 - Voids
 - Gas Servicing and Repairs
 - Electrical Testing
 - Painting and Repairs
 - Aids and Adaptations
 - Apprentices
 - Customer Care
 - Health and Safety
 - Cross Cutting Themes
 - Performance summary
9. Further updates on repairs and maintenance performance will be brought to this committee during the year.

Links to Values

10. The report links to the values of: -
- Being a listening and learning organisation
 - Being honest, accountable and transparent
 - Being customer focused

Impact on tenants

11. For most tenants, their contact with the services provided by the company is most likely to be linked to the repair service – and customers tell us through the annual survey that well maintained homes remains a key priority.

Risk Management

12. The report links to the strategic risks around:
- delivering effective asset management
 - delivering on new projects
 - maintaining a positive reputation
 - managing finances and delivering value for money
 - effectively managing business continuity

Health Implications

13. There are no health implications directly arising from this report.

Financial Implications

14. The management of the repair and maintenance contract involves a considerable degree of financial and budget management. In the first year of the contract repairs and maintenance works were carried out within budget.

Value for Money Implications

15. Value for money was a key factor in the award of the repair and maintenance contract, and it includes for example a requirement on the contractor to deliver 3% efficiency savings in year two, and a further 2% in year three.

Recommendation

16. The views of the committee are sought on whether the committee is satisfied with progress on the management of the repair and maintenance contract with Mears in its first year.

Contact: Phil Hogg, Repairs Service Manager Tel No: (0191 433 5315)
 Kevin Johnson, Head of Customer Services Tel No: (0191 433 5378)

CONTRACT OVERVIEW

April 2012 to March 2013



Working in partnership for you

Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is to provide a year end review of the Mears Responsive Repairs and Maintenance Contract.

Responsive Repairs

In 2011/12 a tender process was undertaken by the Council in partnership with TGHC to procure a new Repair Partner. Customers were involved from the start of the tender and played an essential part in identifying key components of the tender documentation.

On selection of Mears as the successful tender applicant the mobilisation period was scheduled. Unfortunately the planned schedule and the demobilisation / mobilisation period was dramatically reduced to a period of 8 weeks rather than our initial proposal of up to 6 months.

The Mears contract commenced 2 April 2012. Prior to mobilisation of the Mears contract we were working in partnership with Morrison Facilities Services. As part of the demobilisation programme repair and void orders were delivered by Morrison were phased out in accordance with targets and priority timescales. At the end of the Morrison contract 2,869 responsive repair jobs and 99 voids were outstanding which Mears took responsibility for. The additional works required to be completed by Mears impacted on service delivery during the mobilisation period and the early part of the new contract.

In addition during the early part of the contract there were some minor TUPE implications which were resolved mid-April. This coupled with the training and induction obligations for Mears employees impacted on service delivery at the beginning of the contract.

In year one of the contract we have raised 62,487 jobs and completed 52,098 (average of 1000 per week completed) with 7,652 being cancelled for various reasons. The number of jobs completed has reduced in comparison to the previous contract partly due to operational changes such as improved linking of works orders rather than multiple orders being raised. The expectation of our customers and the promised added value in the contract has led to an increased level of client involvement in the first year.

Throughout the year we have jointly developed a number of improvements to the contract including:

- Implementation and ongoing improvement to Mears Appoint System, providing accurate slot availability, highlights customer contact to Gas Safety Checks and links to customer profile
- Review the time taken to complete a job and convert to a standard minute values and link back to the SOR's
- Repair finder diagnosis tool for TGHC call centre to increase works order accuracy, reducing cancelled appointments

- Dedicated emergency category response team for a more customer focused delivery
- Tailored role specific process maps highlighting expectations
- Re-location of Mears Planners to allow improved productivity and customer service
- Contractor coordination of planned works to allow efficiency of resource, freeing up more appointment slots for customers
- Ability to collect customer satisfaction data at the close of the appointment on site via use of the Mears handheld PDA system.
- Out Of Hours processes have been reviewed to streamline the follow on works orders. The introduction of a specific OOH Work Programme will allow increased right first time repairs and control of the service
- Learning Log, a learning log has been developed jointly by Mears and TGHC operational managers to assist with identifying and driving service improvements
- Joint review of Mears processes have been complied using Mears National processes. Current National processes have been fine tuned to fit in with the requirements of TGHC contract, in the following areas of business
 - Role of the Planner
 - Operatives use of PDA
 - Identifying responsibilities in Mears roles
 - Roofing repairs
 - Planned works
 - Emergency Squad
- In the winter of 2010/11 the service delivery was negatively impacted on due to the adverse weather conditions. A Winter Working Plan was jointly developed with Mears and allowed successful delivery with limited delays and or disruption to the customers.

Flood Damage

There was a significant impact during year one caused by the three separate flooding events. In addition to the jobs raised for Mears the Repairs teams coordinated a number of additional contractors affecting approx 435 properties in total. Coordination included repair works, drying out periods and equipment, decanting of customers, waste management and environmental cleaning. During this period Mears completed 613 jobs in approx 130 properties, giving additional priority where possible to return the properties to a habitable state.

Voids

We have successfully completed 1372 voids in year one of the contract in addition to the 99 outstanding voids which were not completed by the previous partner.

Close working has continued throughout the year to maintain a consistent delivery of Lettable Standard for our customers. The partnership has a tight scrutiny policy to ensure properties meet our published standards. We continue to work with Mears to achieve a high

standard while striving towards achieving the KPI's and identify any additional service improvements.

Throughout the year we have jointly developed a number of improvements to the contract including:

- Joint Lettable Standard training to ensure understanding and consistent delivery
- Introduction of PDA use for Mears Supervisors, improving live information sharing with TGHC with particular focus on variation management
- Implemented Void Manager quality audit with associated partnership team learning
- Expansion of the relet categories with an aim to align the timescale with specification of works for maintaining decency
- Introduction of additional subcontractors to improve delivery turnaround timescales

The PDA's were introduced to the Voids team to help with the planning and variation process. The concept is that the smaller variations can be quickly agreed from a clear photo rather than having to wait for the void officer to visit the property each time. The introduction has helped speed the process up.

We have jointly completed property spot checks to see if all of the teams were consistent with their understanding of the lettable standards. Inconsistency was recognised and again lessons were learnt and further spot checks would continue.

We have closely monitored the level of voids in year one in relation to termination reasons and are working with Mears on projected estimated increase in voids due to the impact of welfare reform. We would anticipate that if the void levels increase significantly then the turnaround and void rent loss may suffer.

A void workshop was completed in the final quarter of the year in January. All ideas and issues were thoroughly discussed and fed into an improvement plan. Examples of findings included:

- Variation process
- Correct information available at point of handover
- Ensuring properties were pre inspected by Mears
- Consistent delivery of the Lettable Standard
- Additional relet category

Voids managers have started a programme to capture any quality issues for improving right first time. This is being used to show and improve the quality and timescales at handover with all operatives. Future workshops will be held with operatives to ensure they continue to understand and maintain the lettable standard.

Gas Servicing & Repairs

The operational management of gas servicing has previously been administered and delivered by TGHC. As part of this contract Mears have taken on this responsibility on a full time basis. During 2012/13 we have a given significant level of support to ensure that the management and delivery of the service maintains legal compliance. During year two the expectation is that the level of direct support will reduce and with the TGHC gas team focusing activity on auditing the operational delivery of the gas servicing contract.

Throughout the year we have jointly developed a number of improvements to the contract including:

- The implementation of a 'no access' team to target hard to access properties.
- Increased the level of property data within Northgate to improve the interfaces with Mears systems for generating appointments in time.
- Linked customer contact through the call centre with the gas safety check requirement, allowing us to proactively book appointments with our customers
- Dedicated gas repairs contract, improving resource management and efficiency of deliver
- Implementation of an improved Gas Care Plan, allowing budget saving for TGHC
- Increased notification time and additional telephone contact by Mears for servicing to reduce missed appointments
- Gas servicing for Leaseholders was introduced

No access rate in year one remains high and has stood on average at 38%. The priority for the coming year is to reduce this figure and limit the financial impact of seeking warrants on TGHC budgets.

The number of gas services carried out in the year are identified in the table below, it also identifies the number of no access appointments.

	Completed	Overdue	N/A one	N/A two	N/A three	N/A & Warrant process	Completed %
Annual Total	19193	1	4874	1712	744	744	99.995

There was one outstanding gas service at the end of March 2013.

The Mears gas team have completed 101.7% of the total gas services required due to the servicing process commencing 56 days in advance of the service due date.

In an aim to reduce the no access rates Mears make a phone call to confirm the appointment for every gas service.

Electrical Testing

There were 794 orders raised for electrical testing, 623 were completed, 167 were cancelled and 4 remain outstanding from year one. We are working with Mears to reduce the level of no access / cancelled jobs by increasing the customer contact prior to visiting the property. Processes have been built with Mears to ensure that cancelled jobs are placed into a mop up scheme and scheduled accordingly.

We have ensured that all Mears electricians are suitably qualified to the correct level of the electrical regulations

Electronic certification was introduced providing up to date information within MCM, the documents can be easily accessed by all parties.

The table below identifies that 794 jobs were raised to carry out programmed electrical testing.

Estate	Neighbourhood	Properties	Completed	Cancelled	Not Completed
Cedars Green	South	2			2
Milford/Ridgeway	East	71	52	18	1
Rose Milling	Inner west	229	180	49	0
Shibdon Bank	West	26	17	9	0
St Marys Green	Inner west	6	5	1	0
Victoria	Inner west	20	16	4	0
Lobley Hill	West	85	68	17	0
Whickham North	Inner west	133	116	17	0
Ellen Wilkinson	East	42	25	17	0
Holly Hill	East	4	4		0
Cranesville	South	1	1		0
Hole in the Wall	West	140	110	27	3
Ryton	West	37	29	8	0
		794	623	167	4

Painting & Repairs

The external painting contract consisted of 1156 properties. 1031 have been completed alongside 116 garages. The internal painting contract consisted of 11 blocks of flats. All were completed to provide class 0 fire rating to all areas.

During the year there was a total of seven weeks inclement weather. To overcome the resultant delays work was undertaken during evenings and weekends at no additional cost to the contract.

A number of improvements have been agreed during Year 1 with the aim of increasing productivity of the service. The improvements included:

- In the summer the use of Welfare Vehicles was introduced which not only saves money and reduces the carbon footprint. It has also made the team more efficient should they encounter any adverse weather travelling to internal jobs elsewhere.
- Mears introduced as a value for money exercise the use of Mobile Elevated Working Platforms which saved annually in excess of £18,000 in the cost of access arrangements and also reduced the impact our works has on our customers.
- We have jointly reviewed the Customer Satisfaction Surveys. The first set of results, from 83 surveys returned, recorded 86.30% of customers satisfied with the painting improvements made to their property. The learning from this survey will feed into year 2 of the programme and help bench mark future works.

Aids & Adaptations

Jobs completed = 1,140

Jobs completed within time = 1,102 = 96.67%

Jobs not completed within time = 38 = 3.33%

The following are a list of initiatives introduced by both Gateshead Council and Mears to ensure an efficient process is in place.

- Target costs agreed for most of the common type of installations, subsequently reducing administration costs for both parties. This allows cost assurance for Gateshead Council & accurate monitoring of budgets throughout the year
- Sharing feedback from customer satisfaction results, this helps to analyse areas where the service needs to improve & where good practice occurs.
- Reducing response time for the minor works or repairs by stocking items that take more than 7 days to deliver from suppliers. These items are identified by providing details of the most frequently used items.
- Reduced response time for rapid response teams, with the introduction of an automated standard vehicle stock and replenishment system.
- Time efficiencies made to shower installs by having materials delivered to job location by stores operatives.
- The removal sanitisation and storage of shower cubicles, these are cleaned stored then re-cleaned and fitted into another property this reduces the costs for the client and enables them to manage their budget.
- Joint agreement of performance targets required and how best to measure and present the results on a monthly basis
- Introduction of Greenwood fan to contract, the installation avoids the usage of ladders/scaffolds, installation is totally done from inside avoiding the working at height on the outside of the property
- Introduce resident communication plan for detailed Aids and Adaptations
- Delivered extra care training for design staff and provided support from HIA colleagues

Apprentices

There are currently a total of 22 apprentices within the Gateshead business made up as follows:

- 7 transferred during the TUPE transfer
- 7 employed in the Mears September 2012 recruitment process
- 8 employed in the Mears February 2013 recruitment process

Mears have partnered with Gateshead College on both the recruitment process and the provision of the relevant training courses. We have agreed a selection process that satisfies both the college & Mears.

Gateshead College advertise on the Government site - apprenticeshipvacancymatchingservice.lsc.gov.uk. This site advertises in local schools and Colleges and various other recruitment centres.

The College receive the applications and choose a number of candidates for interview and test (CITB-Construction Skills Structured Learning Exercise). Approximately 30 candidates are put forward to Mears from the college to take part in the Assessment day.

This day is arranged by both Mears and Gateshead College with the assessments undertaken at the College. The assessment group are made up from operational supervisors, managers & the training co coordinator from branch & group training representatives.

Following the assessment day the numbers are further reduced to approximately 20 for interview. The interviews take place at Mears Depot and are carried out by 2 operational managers and the apprentice coordinator.

During the Apprenticeship, points of contact are established with each learning provider. Progress reviews are carried out every 12 weeks with the Apprentices, their Mentor/Manager, Mears Apprentice Coordinator and the College contact. These reviews are an opportunity to address any issues any party has and ensure that the Apprentice is given the best support available.

Mears have advised Gateshead College that they are keen to work with them on any other projects they may have to promote the Construction Industry and have offered the support of a Business Ambassador if required.

Gateshead College have recently nominated Mears as the Employer of the Year in the National Apprentice Awards.

Customer Care

Complaints are a major element of understanding customer satisfaction and therefore identifying improvements within the service. The partnership has worked throughout the year to reduce the number of complaints and establish common trends. The trends are reviewed and added to the service improvement plan to prevent further occurrences.

July – Dec 2012 averaged at 29 complaints per month, with a peak of 62 complaints received in October. Jan – Apr averaged at 17 complaints per month.

On-going training within the team and regular meetings with the client, has led to a better understanding of how to distinguish between technical issues, operational issues and a complaint. This has seen a steady reduction in the number of complaints being received within the customer care department.

Health & Safety

All accidents / incidents are recorded on the Accident Database and have been investigated in line with Mears Group procedures. A summary of the accidents / incidents during this reporting period are as follows:

Month	Near Miss	Minor	Major
Apr	0	2	0
May	0	1	0
Jun	0	0	0
Jul	0	3	1*
Aug	1	0	1*
Sep	0	1	0
Oct	0	4	0
Nov	0	2	0
Dec	0	2	0
Jan	0	3	1*
Feb	0	1	0
Mar	0	1	0
Total	1	20	3

Cross Cutting Themes

The variations process for the current contract has been focused on an almost live system compared. This compares to the previous arrangement of settling after works are complete. This means that we are able to have an improved level of control of both the works and budget.

TGHC and Mears have resourced this activity throughout the year and this has proven to be extremely beneficial to both parties helping to capture learning and improving the service. We have been able to

ensure improvements in the work descriptions, generation of the orders at first point of contact, consistency in the processes and how they are followed, correct delivery of the specification for the customer as well as seeing a reduction in the average cost to repair.

ICT development has featured highly in year one and we have jointly reviewed systems and practices with the aim of bringing accuracy and efficiency to our working methods. The high level of ICT support will continue to be required throughout the contract due to the tailored system utilised by Mears. Northgate being a standard Housing Management system does not always need to be modified, Mears ability to make amendments to the MCM system can be delayed due to their National strategy where changes would impact on other contracts.

Asbestos Management has required significant client support in year one. Systems have been reviewed in terms of both delivery and processes during year one to ensure that we meet our legal obligations. The partnership is now jointly reviewing asbestos management policies to streamline information exchange and minimise disruption to the day to day service delivery.

A number of partnership workshops have been held throughout the year to review progress so far, short term improvements and long term goals to further develop the service.