

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 17 NOVEMBER 2015

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING

REPORT ON MEETINGS WITH REGISTERED PROVIDERS WITH
HOUSING STOCK IN THE DISTRICT

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report

- To report back to the Committee following a series of meetings with registered providers with housing stock in the district following the concerns raised by Members about repair services.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

That:

(A)	the repairs services provided by registered providers with significant housing stock in the District continue to be monitored.
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1.0 Background

1.1 At its meeting on 11 March 2014 the Committee resolved that: Members' frustration and concerns of scrutiny be conveyed to the Registered Providers in respect of their repairs service and these concerns should be expressed through direct meetings between representative Councillors, the Director of Neighbourhood Services and their Chief Officers.

2.0 Report

2.1 A series of visits to the registered providers with a significant number of properties in the district has been undertaken. The results are set out in the report.

3.0 Aldwyck Housing Group

3.1 Repairs services are provided by Connect Property Services.

Connect Property Services was established as a wholly owned subsidiary of Aldwyck Housing Group in September 2010. Connect offers an integrated repairs and maintenance service to local authorities, social housing providers and private clients across the southeast of England. Their experience includes working with a diverse range of client groups such as general needs, younger persons, frail elderly and other vulnerable groups.

3.2 Vulnerable tenants receive additional support depending on the tenants needs. Repairs are prioritised:

P1 – emergency response within 24 hours which would include making a property safe.

P5 – response within 5 days for standard repairs

P20 – routine repairs.

3.3 The performance indicators for Aldwyck are set out below

- 99% of repairs completed within target timescales
- 98% of repairs fixed at first visit
- 86% of customers satisfied with their last repair

4.0 Circle Anglia Housing

4.1 There have been a number of meetings with Circle Anglia. The concerns raised by Members were discussed. A list of particular cases which had been identified by Members where repairs had not been completed was presented. The repairs on the list have now been resolved. Various issues were identified such as a lack of surveyor capacity to evaluate more complex repairs. There were also issues about lack of resources and slow responses in some cases.

4.2 Circle Housing South Anglia is currently delivering improvements in respect of its repair service delivered “in house” by Circle Housing Property Services. Their priority is to address the following areas:

- Ensure repairs are completed on time
- Reduce the use of subcontractors
- Enhance customer satisfaction
- Improve staff morale
- Further improve performance and first time completions.

4.3 An improvement plan has delivered a reduction in the level of

overdue jobs and an improved approach to contract management to monitor performance and service delivery. Progress in this priority service continues to be monitored by Executive Members, Senior Officers at South Anglia and by members of Circle Housing South Anglia board.

- 4.4 Circle is experiencing increasing customer satisfaction in respect of both landlord and repair service. As at 30 September 2015, 85 % of customers were satisfied with last repair (against a target 90%); and 84% of emergency and urgent repairs were completed within timescales (against a target of 95%).
- 4.5 Circle is also seeing improvements in void performance; supported by strong internal controls with subcontracts including pre and post inspections and regular contractual meetings to monitor performance to minimise any potential negative impact for perspective customers and wider stakeholders; with a strengthened approach to performance management with improved accountability and responsibilities for Circle Housing front line teams.
- 4.6 Vulnerable tenants receive a priority service under the policy operated by Circle Anglia.
- 5.0 Orbit East
- 5.1 Orbit has a relatively small number of properties in the district. No particular problems relating to the repairs service have been identified. Complaints are at a low level.
- 5.2 The performance indicators for Orbit are set out below.
- 82% of customers satisfied with the overall service
 - 79% of jobs completed on first visit
 - 93% of customers provided with an appointment
- 6.0 Paradigm Housing Group
- 6.1 Paradigm gave a demonstration of their call centre and an explanation of their policies and approach. Tenant satisfaction is high with good response rates and a low level of complaints. They have an in-house repairs service.
- 6.2 Paradigm's performance indicators for customer services and repairs are set out below.

- 96% of emergency (within 24 hours) repairs completed in target time
- 78% of routine (within 15 days) repairs completed in target time
- 22.6 days- average time taken to complete repair (urgent + routine)
- 82.5% % of repairs completed first time
- 100% of gas safety certificates in date
- 4.5% of missed appointments
- 76.5% customer satisfaction with repairs

7.0 Riversmead Housing Association

7.1 Riversmead explained their approach and policy framework. They explained their centralised call centre in Hertford which serves the whole of Network. At the time of the visit it seemed to be working well. However, since that date Members have expressed concerns about call centre performance resulting in long waiting times for calls to be answered and calls being abandoned.

7.2 The call centre at Riversmead has been affected by staff turnover. New members of staff have now been recruited and trained. The response times should therefore improve.

7.3 The actual repairs service is effective with most repairs carried out in accordance with their policy within a reasonable time to an acceptable standard.

7.4 Average re-let time for September was 26.25 days with a year to date figure of 27.9 days. Repairs completed was 95.7% and year to date 97.6%.

8.0 Implications/Consultations

8.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

Background Papers

Performance indicators supplied by the registered providers.

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