

<h1>BRIEFING</h1>	TO:	Improving Places Select Commission
	DATE:	8 September 2020
	LEAD OFFICER:	Katherine Harclerode Governance Advisor, Assistant Chief Executive's Directorate 01709 254352
	TITLE:	Outcomes of Workshop on Housing Repairs and Maintenance (27 August 2020)
1. Background		
1.1	Present:	Cllrs Mallinder (Chair), Atkin, B. Cutts, Elliot, Jones, Reeder, Sansome, Sheppard, Wyatt; and Co-optees Ms. Bacon and Ms. Jacques.
1.2	Apologies:	Cllrs Buckley, Jepsen; McNeely; Taylor; and the Cabinet Member for Housing, Cllr Beck.
1.3	Attendees:	Tom Bell – Assistant Director of Housing George Temple – Head of Contracts, Investment and Compliance
1.4	Purpose of the session	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To seek assurances regarding service delivery under the April 2020 contract. 2. To receive information regarding service response to the Covid-19 pandemic.
1.5	Scope	A presentation set forth information about Housing Repairs and Maintenance Service which is conducted through a partnership with two primary contractors, MEARS and ENGIE, as part of a contract that had recently expired and was therefore due for renewal in April 2020. Members had developed the scope around broad topics of Contract, Covid-19, Communication, Operations, and Social Value. Members expressed interest in receiving both qualitative and quantitative information on these topics as part of the workshop presentation.
2. Key Issues		
2.1	Contract:	The rationale for selection of the contractors under the contract renewed in April 2020, considered quality of service, cost, and contractor values and practices. On the basis of these criteria, MEARS and ENGIE have been the two companies selected.
2.2	Covid-19:	The presentation also illustrated the challenges faced in response to Covid-19, and safety and preparedness measures for the future. 10 staff members were redeployed to work with the Community Hub during Covid-19

	<p>crisis. It was noted that mobility became a challenge during the spring at the height of Covid-19 because all but two of the service vans were locked down in a different part of the Country and local vans had to be sourced and branded. Staff members also had to be given identification reflecting the partnership between ENGIE and the Council. Staff were outfitted with PPE, the cost of which has been absorbed by the contractor. Other staff were given the necessary kit to work from home. It was noted that COVID-19 had not affected the budget, and that budget targets for each of the years were set in advance so that progress with respect to those targets could be monitored on an ongoing basis. It is expected for spend to be on track with the budget allocated for this year.</p> <p>2.3 Communication: The presentation addressed communications and feedback trends from residents regarding the current contract. Notably, complaints were down 50% from the previous measurement period, suggesting high quality service delivery even amidst the Covid-19 pandemic.</p> <p>2.4 Operations: The presentation clarified matters of operational process such as how repairs are scheduled and prioritised when service requests are received. Although, operations prepare for a 20:80 ratio between requests for repairs that are emergencies and requests that are not emergencies; however, the actual ratio for the service is 15:85. Personnel receiving the calls are highly skilled in determining through conversation with residents and asking the right questions whether a request is an emergency, and a maximum four-hour response window is maintained for resolution of emergencies. If individuals are known or make themselves to the service as being vulnerable, these residents are prioritised, but rarely do residents choose to self-identify. Many non-emergency repairs such as slow leaks are also handled rapidly.</p> <p>2.5 Social Value: The presentation provided still further information about ways the service adds social value, specifically through use of data analysis and apprenticeships. Infrared data analysis and GIS mapping is used to identify and treat heat loss in areas of deprivation. As this year's apprenticeship programme goals were thwarted by Covid-19, the contractor has raised the number of apprenticeships to be recruited in subsequent years of the contract. 12 apprenticeships per year beginning next year are to be offered, with many of these becoming permanent positions either within the contractor organisation or one of their subcontractors.</p>
<p>3. Recommendations</p>	
<p>3.1</p>	<p>1. That the briefing be noted.</p>
<p>3.2</p>	<p>2. That the results of data analysis including GIS mapping be included in the next update in respect of Housing Repairs and Maintenance.</p>