

**TITLE OF REPORT: Repairs and Ready to Let Performance Update**

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**Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide an update on the current performance of domestic property repairs, including empty properties made ready to let.

**Background**

2. Construction Services underwent a Service Review in March 2022 and implemented significant change to operational process.
3. This has included improvements to productivity and better data to inform ongoing areas of demand and customer dissatisfaction.

**Recruitment**

4. The service is currently recruiting to 32 new trades posts as the first of several planned work internalisation business plans. This is to replace non-specialist contractors to improve performance, responsiveness, and value for money.
5. Last financial year contractor labour costs rose by 41%, with materials increasing by over 60%. There are few contractors prepared to take on what amounts to high complexity, low pressure work. Existing contractors work books are full until late summer with little flexibility.
6. A move to measured internalisation will make significant cost savings.

**Repairs**

7. The review of Construction Services responded to feedback from both Councillors and tenants and implemented a new approach to repairs in 2022/23. This one front door approach better diagnoses repairs and aims to complete as much as possible in one visit. It empowers the visiting trade operative to complete additional works when attending the original repair. This has consequently increased both the time and cost of each repair.
8. Repair inspections increased by 276% on the financial year 2022/23 partly due to a rise in complex repairs but also to improve first time fixes. A key area identified early in the service review was a regular failure to correctly diagnose repairs with right first-time performance at 36% in March 2022.
9. Repair Team staffing was resourced in 2022 to manage a projected 54,000 repairs per year supported by contractors. Whilst the repair team increased their productivity by 20% last financial year via various operational improvements, the level of incoming repairs increased by over 28% above resourced capacity to 69,000. The team dealt with 12,000 major jobs, 50% more than the previous year.
10. The level of repairs continues to increase with 11,000 repair jobs raised in April and May 2024, 23% more than in the same period 2023/24. This emphasises the need for a responsive resource that can be flexible to changing priorities.

11. The key repair pressures include a 74% increase in roofing work, 266% increase in reports of mould, and a 27% increase in plastering work.

### **Voids**

12. Construction Services made 1,296 empty properties ready to let in 2023/24 compared to 1,149 in 2022/23 which is an increase of 147 properties or 13%.
15. The number of empty properties undergoing works reduced from 390 at the start of the year to 340 as of 31 March 2024. The current number of properties undergoing works is 328 which is the lowest number in over 4 years. The target is to have no more than 300 properties undergoing works by the end of the financial year.
16. Whilst the number of work orders completed per empty property has increased, the average cost of making a property ready to let reduced by 4.26%.

### **Performance**

17. The Service has seen an increase in customer satisfaction with the repairs service from 52% in 2022/23 to 69% in 2023/24 a 17% increase and customer satisfaction with the time taken to complete repairs from 42% to 63% a 21% increase.
18. Right first-time performance increased from 36% in March 2022 to 93% in April 2024.
19. Appointments kept improved from 50% in March 2022 to 92% in April 2024
20. Repairs completed in target rose from <50% in March 2022 to 81% in April 2024

### **Proposal**

21. Repair and void processes, performance and productivity will remain under review and changes made as necessary.
22. Options to move away from contractors to inhouse staff are under review. This is intended to improve responsiveness, quality, and customer service.

### **Recommendations**

23. The Committee is asked to note this report.

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