

Appendix 3

Please find below a narrative concerning the increase in complaints for Asset Management. We have experienced problems with two major contractors, Keepmoat covering contract 8 of the Welsh Housing Quality Standards improvement programme and the gas contractor Liberty.

Keepmoat Contract

There has been a large increase in the complaints in Asset Management due to some significant problems we have experienced with the Keepmoat contract in relation to the quality of subcontractors employed by the principal contractor. This contract has seen operatives travelling excessive distances with often poor quality of workmanship.

Delays and poor progress from the outset has been a significant issue for Asset Management which has not been helped by some survey information issued by DCC to the contractor being inaccurate or lacking sufficient information and detail. This situation was rectified by re-surveying properties and re-issuing the information however this did have a knock on effect in terms of time taken to complete the works which resulted in customer complaints.

Action taken

Concerns raised by Housing Services that some members of the contractor's management team were underperforming and allowing the project to slip led to a complete change of all contractor site personnel and to avoid any further delays Housing Services also appointed an additional member staff to the site team. Following these changes there followed a distinct improvement in performance throughout December 2013 and into January 2014. Unfortunately the contractor has not maintained this level of improvement and project performance dipped once again.

An emergency meeting was called by the Head of Service, local Councillors and Keepmoat to discuss the problems being experienced. This resulted in an action plan Asset Management then managed. We also took the decision to remove properties from the programme that has not been started and these have been given to our own in house Trade Operative to complete.

A full report regarding this contract was discussed at Scrutiny on 15th May 2014. There are lessons that we need to learn here and these are mainly around the procurement of the contracts which in future will include, social clauses to ensure the use of local labour, a greater weighting through the procurement process of quality rather than cost, stronger penalty clauses and more consistent contract management arrangements.

What we do with complaints

As part of the WHQS improvement programme, we seek customer feedback from every home we have refurbished. This information will be collated and together with the "lesson learnt" from contract 8 will be used to improve our services to customers going forward in delivering the next 5 year planned programme.

Liberty Gas

In April 2013, Liberty Gas were appointed as the gas servicing and repair contractor for Property Services and it is fair to say that there have been problems and issues with the contract so far. The problems have been highlighted and discussed at the monthly contract progress meetings and steps to improve have been put in place. The performance of this contract has been very closely monitored since Sept 13 and is now improving. There have been changes of staff from Liberty and also Property Services. From 01/04/13 to 15/10/13 there were 19 CRM complaints for Liberty Gas, an average of 3 per month. The average of the complaints has now dropped to 0.75 per month. Housing Services will continue to monitor the situation closely going forward.