

London Borough of Enfield

Housing Scrutiny Panel
22 September 2022

Subject: Overview on progress, delivery, efficiency, response times and out of hours repairs.

Cabinet Member: Cllr George Savva
Acting Executive Director: Joanne Drew

Purpose of Report

1. This report reviews the key performance indicators of Enfield Repairs Direct and details areas of success, areas of challenge and current & future developments of the service.

Proposals

The Panel is invited to note the contents of the report and make comments, suggestions or recommendations for further work or improvements.

Background

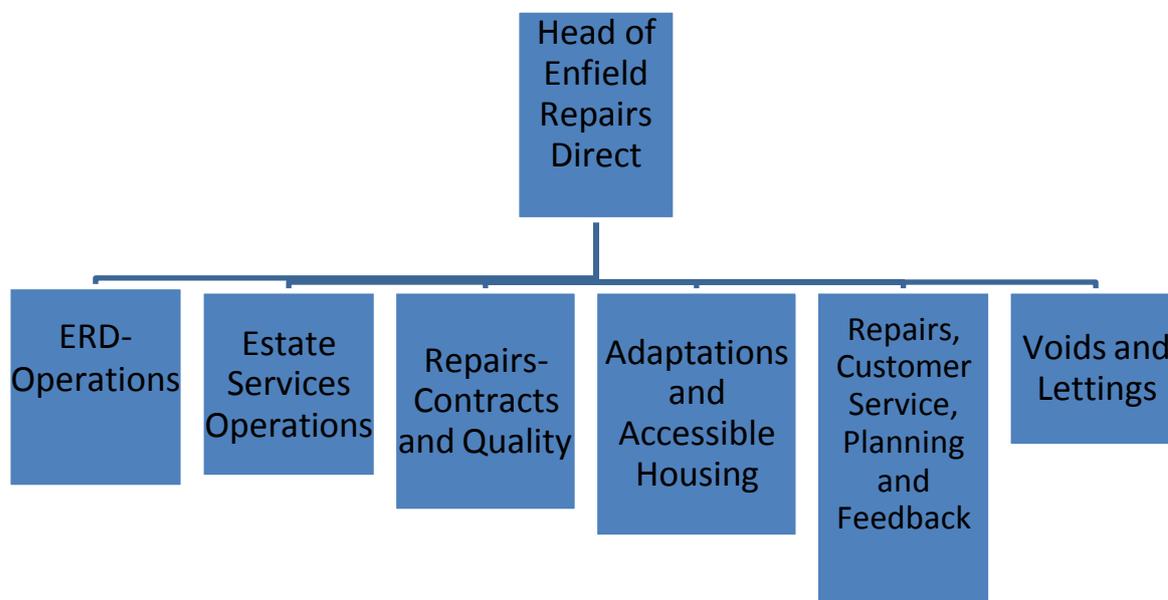
2. The repairs service prior to May 20 was delivered by two repairs contracts divided geographically.
3. In June 2019, the Cabinet approved the in-sourcing of the Housing Repairs Service (KD4868). This service was launched in May 2020. In arriving at this decision, Cabinet considered the wider feedback from service users. Firstly, that residents wanted to register their repair to polite, helpful staff who could diagnose their problems accurately and book a convenient appointment slot with minimum customer effort. Secondly, there needs to be more reliability in attending appointments and we achieve higher rates of 'first time fix'. Finally, that we communicate better to satisfactorily resolve repair issues including improving how we handle escalations and complaint casework.
4. In February 2020 Cabinet reviewed a report (KD5070) detailing the design of the service, a policy for repairs, timescales for delivery, a financial business plan, branding and a service model with proposed timetable for the introduction of defined functions:
 - Housing Resolution Centre – align with the establishment of a new Housing Hub set for January 2022.
 - ERD direct labour force – established. Staff have been recruited firstly on a temporary basis moving to permanent contracts. The market is particularly challenging

- MOT service ceased due to covid restrictions although the team has focussed on the treatment of damp & mould and ensuring there is a robust winter service which ensures all of our elderly and vulnerable customers are supported.
- Active Asset Management – this has been developed further and allows the Council a higher level of sophistication in asset planning and management.

Regulatory Environment

5. The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) has introduced Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) to be collected and reported during 2023-24. The measures would provide data about social housing landlords' performance and the quality of their services to help tenants hold their landlord to account and help RSH in its future consumer regulation role.
6. Satisfaction with repairs and the time taken to complete the most recent repair are included within the Tenant Perception TSMs that will be captured through an Annual Survey.
7. The last annual satisfaction survey undertaken in 2019 showed that satisfaction with Enfield's current repairs service showed that over half (55%) of tenants are satisfied with the way the Housing Service deals with repairs and maintenance, with a quarter of that number (24%) very satisfied. In 2021 this figure had risen to 62%, up +7% from the pre-insourcing survey.

Overview of the Repairs Team



8. The organisational chart above outlines how functions are organised. The structure is predicated on maximising efficiency so there are several functions brought together or share common resources. Eg. Estate Services and Repairs services share common demands for fleet, materials, waste disposal etc.
9. **Housing Resolution Centre** The structure combines the customer

service, planning and customer feedback/ complaints functions. There are several business benefits to managing the end-to-end repairs process as a whole. Firstly, it enables us to improve diagnosis meaning improved efficiency down the chain. For instance, we are more likely to dispatch the right tradesperson for the job and book the appointment for the correct amount of time and there will be a greater chance of having the right materials.

10. Communications with customers are important. Our integrated call handling and planning functions working alongside technical staff are best placed to deliver a slick high- volume service.
11. **ERD Operations** – The inhouse repairs operation is of critical importance to the future success of the service. We do not wish to over- rely on contractors as has been a problem in the past. Instead our vision is to create a dedicated inhouse workforce with trained and knowledgeable tradespeople, with apprenticeship programmes and succession planning. The benefit of an inhouse service is that there is greater control and accountability for the standard of work. Many of our new staff are local to Enfield and have a connection to our community. We have a training programme agreed which will enable our staff to work safely, understand our systems and to be receive further trade skill training.
12. ERD Tradespeople act as ambassadors for the Council. For many of our residents this is one of the few direct interactions they have with Council staff. For this reason, they have a public service opportunity far wider than a contractor. Through our regular programme of toolbox talks we can update on local initiatives the Council is undertaking as well as a level of training in safeguarding, neglect and abuse training.
13. **Contracts and Quality Team-** To support the delivery of repairs we have a back office and technical support team. This has had a positive effect on delivery in several respects. As operational administrators for our IT we can use real-time data to improve the speed and quality of our responses. In addition, there is a data analyst function allowing us to review repairs demand, hotspots and identify responsive repairs trends which may require a capital investment solution. For instance, it may be more cost effective to bring forward a programmed roof renewal rather than multiple repairs. Furthermore we are also concerned to maximise productivity from our inhouse workforce as well as monitor and challenge spend on materials and fuel.

Establishment of the Housing resolution Centre

14. One of the key drivers of creating a dedicated Contact Centre for Housing repairs was to improve the customer journey and have the process ‘from telephone to screwdriver’ all in one team. As agreed in the plan a Housing Resolution Centre was established in January 22.
15. The service fields around 80,000 calls per annum resulting in 49,000 repairs orders being raised (30,000 of which through ERD). Approximately 80% of those who were surveyed about the contact centre were satisfied. The service is based at Edmonton Green and co-located with technical staff and staff from other teams in Housing to develop more of a joined-up approach.

16. Performance in the Contact Centre has improved since the service transferred to Housing with an increased answer rate alongside a decreasing average wait time.

Housing Resolution Team

	April	May	June	July	Target
Calls offered	6853	7016	6508	5902	
Calls handled	6078	6571	5884	5425	
Call answer rate	88.69	93.7	90.40%	95.00%	85%
Average wait time	06:04	03:08	05:19	02:41	03:00

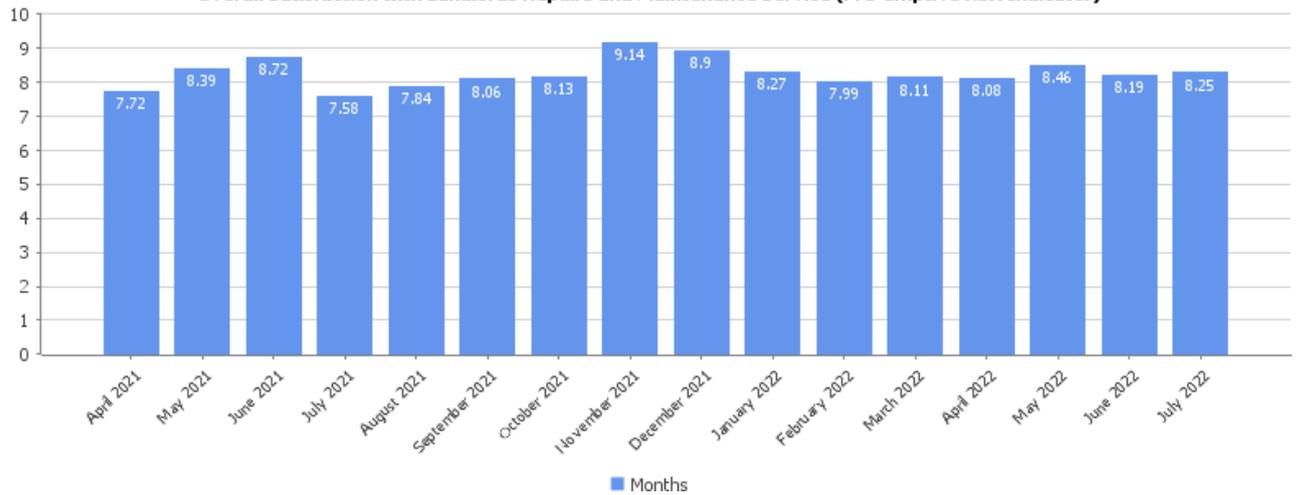
17. Given that this is the 'shop window' for Enfield's tenants and leaseholders we have ambitions to further develop and improve the service. We have devised a training plan to improve knowledge of the building industry, customer service techniques and handling difficult conversations. Furthermore we recognise that local knowledge is crucial and we ensure staff are briefed on major works projects and estate specific problems such as lift outages and communal heating issues.
18. We have a performance management process in place to give us assurance that call quality is high and we can give feedback to staff on potential for improvement as part of our continuous improvement drive. This involves call audits, listening to calls in real time and coaching.
19. To improve the quality of service we give to our customers and reduce call volumes we have devised a digital shift plan (see below). While offering a comprehensive telephone service residents should be able to book routine repairs online and engage in more digital interactions with us. Reflecting societal shifts in behaviour we anticipate that there will be a year on year tapering down in telephone demand and a corresponding increase in digital transactions.

Phase 1 – Improving our website content	Target date
Update the website to include a clear definition for emergency repairs promote peak/quiet call centre times, Active Housing Link for reporting repairs via eform (to Housingrepairs inbox), updated repairs responsibilities table and search function	Sep-22
Training Housing Repairs Centre	Sep-22
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •to answer webchat queries and promoting digital channels •to give advice on other digital channels as a quick way to report routine repairs. 	
Phase 2 – Booking and cancelling routine repairs directly	
Develop additional functionality on the website to embed live repairs diaries on the website and allow for customers to book and cancel routine repairs	Nov-22
(subject to other integrations being in place)	
Phase 3 – Expanding Digital Options	
Research the market/costs and feasibility of other digital options such as online repair diagnostic tools or other digital options such as AI, social media and video. Ensure contact centre has ongoing digital plans and roll out and embed use of Electronic noticeboards	April 2023

Performance

20. **Resident satisfaction** is our most important indicator of performance. The methodology used to obtain satisfaction responses affects the results. Individual job satisfaction taken through text, soon after a repair is completed, means the experience of the repair appointment is still vivid in the customer's mind and will be more informed than a general perception survey result taken at a later date.
21. The chart below shows the overall levels of satisfaction which are consistently above 8. Residents have the ability to leave 'free text' comments to give us more specific feedback which we review.

Overall Satisfaction with Landlords Repairs and Maintenance Service (Pre-emptive RSH Indicator)



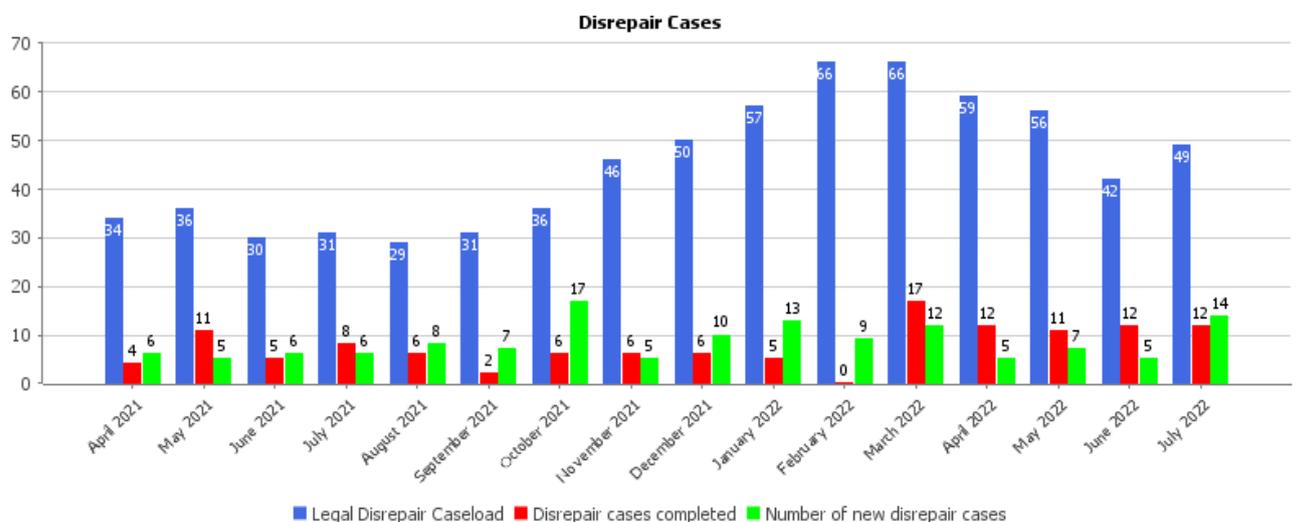
Indicator	Aug 2021	Sep 2021	Oct 2021	Nov 2021	Dec 2021	Jan 2022	Feb 2022	Mar 2022	Apr 2022	May 2022	Jun 2022	Jul 2022
	Value											
Overall Satisfaction with Landlords Repairs and Maintenance Service (Pre-emptive RSH Indicator)	7.84	8.06	8.13	9.14	8.9	8.27	7.99	8.11	8.08	8.46	8.19	8.25
Quality of the Repair	8.4	8.63	8.67	9.42	9.2	8.73	8.38	8.27	8.22	8.7	8.6	8.55
Repair was completed within the Agreed Timescale	7.65	8.08	8.45	9.02	9.05	8.24	8.1	8.14	8.42	8.77	8.05	8.43
Worker was Polite and Helpful	8.71	8.98	9.24	9.48	9.43	8.96	8.85	9.39	8.97	9.04	9.09	8.77

		Aug 2021	Sep 2021	Oct 2021	Nov 2021	Dec 2021	Jan 2022	Feb 2022	Mar 2022	Apr 2022	May 2022	Jun 2022	Jul 2022
Satisfaction Survey Response Rate	Returned Issued						5%	4%	4%	6%	7%	6%	9%
							111	100	100	124	151	120	165
							2,325	2,332	2,332	1,916	2,036	1,951	1,803

22. As we evaluate customer responses from transactional satisfaction scores, we also evaluate feedback in form of complaints, member enquiries (MEQ) and Ombudsman enquiries. The type of feedback we received was about booking follow on works, the length of time to resolve repairs and the durability of the repair. Management of casework is a priority for the team and we are actively working to de-escalate complaints and effect timely solutions as a matter of course. Furthermore, we look into trends and hotspots to see where we can focus our planned investment to reduce multiple expensive responsive repairs. For instance, on one block, given the number of leaks emanating from a failing infrastructure of heating pipes causing multiple callouts often out-of- hours, we have liaised with colleagues to bring forward a programme of works to alleviate the issue.

Month	Complaints	Final reviews	Housing Ombudsman	MEQ
May-21	19	1		36
Jun-21	30	2		42
Jul-21	35	2		33
Aug-21	28	3		30
Sep-21	31	1	0	19
Oct-21	18	2	0	34
Nov-21	49	2	0	35
Dec-21	31	2	1	27
Jan-22	31	1	0	24
Feb-22	38	1	1	34
Mar-22	44	3	1	37
Apr-22	29	1	1	25
May-22	35	0	1	19
Jun-22	25	3	3	25
Jul-22	32	4	1	36

23. Tenants and leaseholders have the right to invoke formal legal disrepair protocols where they feel the council has failed to discharge its repairing obligations as a landlord. The number of disrepair cases has decreased from the beginning of the year and we are managing these cases pragmatically. We may contest the assertions made in some of these claims but where it is evident the Council has failed our focus is to quickly resolve the disrepair. We are concerned that some solicitors are canvassing for cases and are linked in with regional and national groups to share ideas and mitigate the effects. Some legislative changes such as the Homes (Fit for Habitation) Act which can widen the scope and duration of proceedings.



1.3 Disrepair Cases

Indicator	Aug 2021	Sep 2021	Oct 2021	Nov 2021	Dec 2021	Jan 2022	Feb 2022	Mar 2022	Apr 2022	May 2022	Jun 2022	Jul 2022
	Value											
Legal Disrepair Caseload	29	31	36	46	50	57	66	66	59	56	42	49
Disrepair cases completed	6	2	6	6	6	5	0	17	12	11	12	12
Number of new disrepair cases	8	7	17	5	10	13	9	12	5	7	5	14

24. **Response times** – the chart below outlines the percentage of jobs completed on time.

Indicator	Aug 2021	Sep 2021	Oct 2021	Nov 2021	Dec 2021	Jan 2022	Feb 2022	Mar 2022	Apr 2022	May 2022	Jun 2022	Jul 2022	Current Target
	Value												
Total Repairs Completed in Time by ERD	91%	76.5%	92.4%	94.5%	93.1%	91.4%	94.4%	95.8%	96.6%	91%	94.3%	93%	98%
Emergency Priority Repairs	84.7%	100%	99.4%	99.4%	100%	99.5%	99.1%	99%	100%	100%	100%	99%	98%
Urgent Priority Repairs	65.8%	99.7%	90.1%	97.3%	98%	99%	99%	99.3%	100%	97.4%	100%	99.3%	98%
Routine Priority Repairs	97.8%	68%	92.1%	93.6%	90.9%	87.9%	92.3%	93.6%	95.2%	89.2%	93%	90.9%	97%

Emergency repairs are completed within 24 hours (4 hours for heating outages and critical emergencies). Routine repairs are completed within 48 hours and routine repairs are completed by appointment within 90 days. Our performance against the emergency and urgent categories is stronger than for the routine category. Mindful of the new regulatory environment we seek to move to industry standard repair categories: 24hours, 5 days, 20 days, appointment basis. This will enable us to organise and plan our work more efficiently.

25. Efficiency indicators – responsive repairs are a demand led service and the type of works carried out are variable in nature. As an inhouse team we are interested in the long-term resolution rather than the per job profit incentive of a contractor. Currently we are sub-contracting 18% of our work. We have a target to bring this under 15% by September. The average cost per property of repairs is £169.36 and we anticipate that with the introduction of our new management system CX we will be able to reduce this further. Productivity is an important consideration for an inhouse workforce as our labour costs are fixed, our drive to improve productivity from an average 3.5 jobs per day to an average of 4 will enable us to derive greater efficiency from our staff.

26. **Out of Hours Repairs**

Outside working hours, the Council provides an 'Out of Hours' repairs service.

Residents can report emergency repairs 24 hours a day calling our usual number and the calls are handled by our contractor. They work every day of the year including bank holidays and weekends. Only issues which cannot wait until the following working day to be resolved, will be dealt with by the out of hours emergency repairs service: that is issues which present a serious risk to resident safety or to the property itself. Serious leaks and burst pipes, unsafe wiring, unsecured doors or windows will be attended to in under 4 hours. In all cases the primary objective is to 'make safe' therefore it may be necessary for a follow-up visit to complete the repair fully. The team operates a duty rota and invokes protocols when there is for instance, double lift outage, staff are mobilized to assist residents until the repair is completed.

27. ERD Plans for assistance for customers over the cost-of-living crisis

Due to the escalatory nature of the energy crisis alongside high inflation and low growth the ERD team have assessed where we can assist customers to mitigate some of the effects. There are several elements to our service which have a role:

Service	Supportive Actions
<p>Housing Resolution Centre</p> <p>Dealing with customers at the point of call</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefed with the latest advice on energy saving from the Energy Saving Trust, managing damp and mould, site specific issues • Briefed on planned programme activities • Signposting to organisations offering additional support e.g. HEET, Shine <p>From August</p>
<p>ERD Operations</p> <p>Visiting customers at home and able to offer immediate solutions to many problems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced checks on repair appointments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draughts from windows, doors and letterboxes - Insulation check for roofs, water tanks - Use of Thermostatic Radiator Valves to control areas of the home to heat - Checks for damp and mould, adequate ventilation • Winter plan for enhanced checks on elderly and vulnerable customers <p>Capacity trial August, fully ready in September</p>
<p>Planned Programme</p> <p>Concerns which may have a wider impact need to be planned and part of a works package</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following from the repairs visits, some building-wide issues may need to be addressed as a larger work package • We will assess the trends of data to inform where investment could be targeted better e.g. Deficient windows affecting a whole block, no insulation in a block • Make amendments to existing plans to incorporate <p>From August</p>

28. The HRA revenue budget (gross expenditure of £68.9m), is forecasting a pressure of £2.3m against the approved budget. Of this, in terms of repairs expenditure: the service is experiencing inflation and sub-contractor pressures and is estimated to

have a budget shortfall of £1.5m if current spend continued. The service has a plan to reduce expenditure by completing the following urgent actions:

- Reduce works allocated to subcontractors including pausing improvement works on estates
 - Reducing headcount in trade-staff as productivity increases with a target of 3.5 jobs per day to 4 and through efficiencies in the new IT system, Civica.
 - Conversion of temporary contracts to permanent. In a challenging time for recruitment in trade disciplines we intend to convert more temporary contracts to permanent (from 17 to 27)
 - Greater control of repairs demand through the contact centre: higher levels of accuracy in registering repairs, reduction in duplicate reports and launch reporting repairs online on the website.
 - Completing contractual repairs only. We will become more disciplined to complete only the repairs we have a contractual obligation under the tenancy agreement and work to fences, garages, outbuildings, decorating, lock-changes will be the main areas affected.
 - The team are currently modelling further efficiencies which will be required as the rent cap will put a significant strain on resources.
29. The repairs service has ambitions for the growth of the service but mindful of the budget position and start-up costs for new services. Further analysis is needed in four potential areas of commercial growth:
- Handy Person Service
 - Leaseholder Repairs
 - Voids
 - Community Assets

Report Author: Martin Greenway
Head of Repairs and Estate
Services
Martin.greenway@enfield.gov.uk 0204 526 7122

Date of report 31.8.22