



Report to:	STOCKPORT HOMES MEMBER COMMITTEE			
	<i>09 October 2023</i>			
Report of:	EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS			
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Type of Report	<i>Assurance</i>			
Title of Report:	REPAIRS 'WORK IN PROGRESS' (WIP) UPDATE			
Purpose of Report:	To provide an update on the current repairs service within SHG including the current backlog of repairs known as 'Work in Progress' (WIP) alongside the actions being taken to address this.			
Recommendation(s):	That Stockport Homes Member Committee note the current repairs WIP position alongside the actions taken to reduce this.			
Confidentiality	Non Confidential			
Resource Implications	This report highlights various actions taken to address the WIP in repairs and the impact on resources.			
Impact on Risk Appetite and Risk Register	SHG has a 'minimal' risk appetite in relation to reputation with the presented proposal meeting all minimal risk requirements in relation to service delivery / meeting customer expectations. There is an 'adverse' risk appetite to health and safety whilst ensuring all repairs are completed competently in a safe and timely manner which is unaffected by the proposals of this report.			
		Risk Number	Risk Description	Risk Mitigation
		TSL 3	The customer experience of	Ensure that all staff within Three Sixty

		services delivered by Three Sixty is poor	are trained on the expectations of customer service delivery and uphold excellent customer experiences, dealing with issues promptly and escalating matters where required.
	TSL 6	Three Sixty is unable to attract/recruit/retain competent staff and employees in post (both current and future) are not engaged with SHG values.	<p>Regularly review and benchmark the T & C (pay, pension and other benefits) to ensure they are attractive and competitive, making changes where necessary and ensure new starters are clear on what their T & C's contain.</p> <p>Ensure recruitment processes allow for people with the correct skills and abilities to be appointed into Three Sixty to deliver new contracts /commercial opportunities /ongoing service delivery.</p>

Customer Voice	Customer voice is represented in the feedback received through ongoing and regular surveys to assess levels of satisfaction across the service. This is reported by way of TSM's and KPI's which have highlighted the importance of completing overdue repairs and the requirement of a separate team to reduce the numbers whilst maintaining the existing team to concentrate on the day-to-day repairs.
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<p>Equality, Diversity & Inclusion implications</p>	<p>Performance is measured monthly across several key indicators. Checks are made to ensure no negative impact on customers as a result of works carried out. Systems record customer demographic and alerts details such as presence of children in the home or disabilities etc. These are considered when booking in appointments and carrying out works.</p>
<p>Regulatory compliance</p>	<p>This report demonstrates that SHG are committed to fulfilling their obligations as set out in the Regulatory Standards and Homes Standards.</p>
<p>Comments of the Customer Monitoring Group:</p>	<p>Given the amount of disruption and increased demands of the last few years, some of which are still impacting, customers felt that Stockport Homes should be commended for ensuring that the number of outstanding repairs jobs are not higher than they currently are.</p> <p>The customers noted that 500 jobs will be completed by the end of the year, which they felt was a significant number. They highlighted that this led them to have confidence that this will be achieved and in future the numbers of repairs that are a work in progress will be much lower.</p> <p>It was asked whether SHG would consider for there to be scope in the future for some repairs being undertaken outside of working hours as this may help with some properties where it is difficult to gain access due to the customer's work pattern.</p> <p>To help the repairs operatives gain access to hard-to-reach properties, it was asked whether the use and aid of Neighbourhood Housing Officers had been explored, as their relationships with customers in those communities may help access be more frequently gained.</p> <p>The fact that the presence of disabled people and children in a dwelling is notified to contractors was seen as a positive thing by the customers.</p> <p>The customers understood that it was difficult for a timeframe to be identified on how long it would be until the backlog of repairs would be cleared, due to their being numerous factors affecting the repairs being completed.</p>

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This report is to provide an update to Council Members for the meeting on the 09 October with regards to performance of the repairs service at Stockport Homes.
- 1.2. SHG officers attended Members Committee on the 3rd of July and it was noted that Council Members had requested “a report on the backlog of repairs; numbers and progress” and this was to be available for the next meeting on the 9th of October.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. Stockport Homes manages nearly 12,000 homes on behalf of the council under an Arm’s Length Management Organisation arrangement that has been in place since 2005.
- 2.2. In March of 2020, because of COVID-19, the UK went into a full lockdown which spanned over two years with various levels of restrictions. Throughout that time Stockport Homes remained operational offering a full suite of services, however due to the restrictions in place it was inevitable that some disruption would be felt within the company’s ability to maintain all services at pre-Covid levels.
- 2.3. Many housing organisations stopped carrying out routine repairs altogether during the lockdown periods, but SHL continued to provide an emergency and routine repair service whilst implementing strict Covid safety measures. It was decided however that to carry out large repairs in customers’ homes which would involve operatives spending a substantial proportion of the day in a property would be unsafe for staff and customers, so these larger works had to be put on hold.
- 2.4. In the years that followed 2020 and added pressure of other national and global events such as Brexit and Russo-Ukrainian Conflict, The UK economy and specifically the Construction Industry became very unstable and irregular. The supply of materials and labour became difficult with regards to costs and availability with the effects being seen regionally, nationally, and globally.
- 2.5. Customer demand on services also increased with circa 46,000 repair requests being undertaken throughout 2022/23. This is a sizeable increase in additional demand on the repair service to that of the average from previous years. Demand has increased through higher levels of required compliance works because of national reported cases such as the fire at Grenfell Towers in London in 2017 and the tragic death of Awaab Ishak in Rochdale in December 2020.
- 2.6. Other factors include: a general increase in repair requests which were likely to have not been reported throughout the lockdown periods, a significant increase around the impact of Damp, Mould and Condensation, FRAS (Fire doors and associated works), and the change to the Carbon Monoxide monitoring legislation.

- 2.7. As a result of the above, a backlog of routine repairs has built up and performance is below the usual high standard and target. It is acknowledged that this is not an acceptable position and as a result significant action has been taken to address this. This report highlights the current position and action taken to date.
- 2.8. SMBC/SHG have invested heavily over the past five years in repairing the housing stock. The following table highlights the responsive repairs spend against each financial year spanning between 2018 and 2023 along with the volume of repairs completed. This is in addition to the planned capital investment works carried out.

Budget Year	Responsive Repair Spend
2018/19	£3,680,522
2019/20	£3,987,061
2020/21	£3,786,526
2021/22	£4,465,648
2022/23	£5,847,246

Budget Year	Number of Repairs
2018/19	42,332
2019/20	43,143
2020/21	41,053
2021/22	43,053
2022/23	45,901

- 2.9. As can be seen, £21.8m of investment has been made in the past 5 years and spend has increased significantly between 2018 and 2023. The increased spend is due to the increased volume of repairs delivered, coupled with the significant market inflationary increases that the industry has faced, particularly over the past 2 years.

3. CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1. The overall performance of the repair service remains high and in the upper quartile against the sector despite the above challenges as can be seen from the table below. The only area being off target is routine repair performance.
- 3.2. The following table highlights repairs performance for the last full year and for this year to date:

Indicator	EOY performance for 2022/23	Performance up to July 2023

Customer Satisfaction (transactional measured after repair is complete)	99.18%	99.68%
Customer Satisfaction with repairs service (measured at current tenancy visits)	-	84.38% YTD July 90.48%
Right First Time	98.53%	98.70%
Appointment made & kept	97.58%	93.39%
Percentage of Emergencies on time	99.9%	100%
Percentage of routine repairs on time	84.62%	78.76%

3.3. The following table highlights the number of live repair jobs in the system and the number in WIP which are beyond their targeted completion date.

▪ Live orders – 4954							
▪ Orders currently in WIP status - 2873							
Joinery	Electrical	Roofing	Bricklaying & plastering	Decorating	Plumbing	Multi-Trade	Sub-Contractors
1089	308	383	418	62	51	159	403

3.4. There are currently 2,873 jobs in WIP as of end of July 2023 with joinery being the highest single trade due to the large scope of works that joinery encompasses.

3.5. The remaining are the live jobs in the system which are not overdue and are programmed in line with targets and these number 2,081 in total.

3.6. The high volume of jobs in WIP, which are a result of the reasons highlighted in section 2 are impacting on the routine repair performance, so decisive action is being taken to address this as outlined in the section below.

4. ACTIONS TO ADDRESS THE WIP

4.1. It was recognised that the WIP needed particular attention as previous attempts to reduce by revising planning, changing the approach, and utilising existing resources, without increasing cost, had a minimal effect. A “task force” was put together with key stakeholders to identify the full extent of the workload, accurate data, the effect on customers and day-to-day activity and to agree the actions to improve, along with an achievable timeline.

4.2. No access quickly became a focus for the team. This issue is a widespread problem for most similar organisations and certainly needed tackling to improve the situation. A much more proactive approach was taken for overdue jobs whereby all customers were contacted by phone and/or e-mail, even where they have reported online or via Stockport Homes Staff rather than the customer reporting themselves.

4.3. Along with the standard texting on confirmation of appointment and before the day, further contact is attempted to validate. When multiple no access still occurs, the customers are now also contacted by letter to re-arrange, however,

if the repair is a Health & Safety matter, the letter has a more legal approach to encourage entry being gained as soon as possible.

- 4.4. In certain circumstances customers directly refuse entry as they believe this will affect any complaints or claims they may have. This trend is worsening but SHL are starting to utilise the legal system with SMBC to address, and in the worst cases, take to court, if necessary. There has been some success.
- 4.5. To take a more proactive approach to tackle the backlog, it has also been agreed that a separate team be established to address the increasing number of jobs in WIP. As previously mentioned, this is to ensure that the day-to-day repairs are not adversely affected. The cost to form this team and in turn complete all jobs currently listed in the WIP is anticipated to be in the region of £650k. This is in addition to the current repairs budget which has increased significantly on previous year due to increases in demand. Naturally, this creates a budget pressure for the organisation and, whilst this additional spend will be spread across two financial years, other projects will be stopped or paused to fund it and there may be a further need for additional resources.
- 4.6. Despite the challenges of recruiting labour that the whole construction industry continues to face, the team has now been formed and comprises of a Service Manager, Planner and up to seven operatives. There are currently five new operatives in the team, four of which are multi-skilled joiners and one bricklayer/groundworker. The Multi-skilled joiners are in place as they can complete complicated larger and multi trade repairs and as such improve “Right first time” and speedy closing down of longstanding repairs.
- 4.7. Additional specialist contractors have also been added to the team to assist with the delivery of those jobs in WIP which are of a specialist nature.
- 4.8. At the time of writing the report, there are over 500 jobs from the WIP that are in diaries which are scheduled to be complete this year. As the list of jobs has been prioritised by age, these jobs represent those that were reported first. This number will continue to increase now that the additional resource is in place, until all jobs on the WIP are complete.
- 4.9. The team will continue to liaise closely with the customers working through the back log, with the focus being on the aged and risk related work with the aim to bring the current WIP position under control within the next 12 months. Close monitoring of the WIP number will continue throughout this time to ensure that it continues to fall each month.
- 4.10. This approach will enable newly reported repairs to be completed within target with the existing staff resource.

5. RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1. That Stockport Homes Member Committee note the current repairs WIP position alongside the actions taken to reduce this.