

LANDLORD SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD (EXECUTIVE WORKING GROUP)

Thursday, 19 October 2023 - 10.00 am

Council Chamber, Council Offices, The Burys, Godalming

A G E N D A

Circulation:

Members:

Cllr Paul Rivers (Chair)

Terry Daubney, Waverley Tenants' Panel
(Vice Chair)

Cllr Jacquie Keen

Cllr Alan Morrison

Cllr John Robini

Cllr Janet Crowe

Chris Austin, Lucas Field Residents Group

Robert Stratford, Waverley Tenants Panel

Sally Purcell, Waverley Tenants Panel

Danielle Sleightholme (Waverley Tenant's
Panel, Co-optee)

1 Apologies for absence

To receive apologies for absence.

2 Notes of the previous meeting

To agree the notes of the meeting held on 28th October 2023 and published on the Council's website.

3 Declarations of interest

To receive any declarations of interests under the Waverley Members' Code of Conduct.

4 Questions from Members of Public

To receive questions from members of the public.

5 Questions from Members

To receive questions from Members of the Council.

6 Smith and Byford Presentation

Smith & Byford Ltd. representative to provide Gas Servicing and Repairs 6

month Progress Update and Presentation.

7 **Aids and Adaptations Service Review** (Pages 3 - 12)

The report details the actions that Waverley Borough Council have taken and are in the process of implementing to review and improve the way in which the aids and adaptations service is managed and delivered to tenants.

Recommendation to the Landlord Services Advisory Board

It is recommended that the LSAB:

- reviews, supports and provides comments to Co-Portfolio Holder of Housing and Executive Head of Housing,
- on the actions taken and those actions to be implemented, in order to have fully reviewed the Council's aids and adaptations service.

8 **Senior Living Fire Alarm Upgrade - Contract Award** (Pages 13 - 24)

The report seeks to approve awarding a Senior Living Fire Alarm Upgrade contract, following a competitive tender process. Co-Portfolio Holder for Housing (Operations & Services), in consultation with the Executive Head of Housing, to make formal decision in the meeting to follow.

9 **Executive Head of Housing Update**

Andrew Smith, Executive Head of Housing, to provide verbal update.

10 **Work programme** (Pages 25 - 26)

To note the updated work programme.

11 **Date of next meeting**

To confirm that the next meeting will take place on 30th November 2023.

LANDLORD SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD (EXECUTIVE WORKING GROUP)

28 September 2023

NOTES

Present:

Cllr Paul Rivers (Chair)
Terry Daubney, Waverley Tenants' Panel
(Vice Chair)
Cllr Jacquie Keen
Cllr Alan Morrison
Chris Austin, Lucas Field Residents Group
Robert Stratford, Waverley Tenants Panel
Sally Purcell, Waverley Tenants Panel
Danielle Sleightholme (Co-optee)

Apologies:

Councillor John Robini and Councillor Janet Crowe

In attendance:

Cllr Andrew Laughton

21 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Robini, Cllr Crowe and Executive Head of Housing, Andrew Smith.

Cllr Laughton was in attendance to observe the discussions regarding Responsive Repairs and Voids as the O&S Resources Committee had expressed concerns about the KPIs.

22 Notes of the previous meeting

Members agreed that the notes of the previous meeting, attached, were an accurate and complete record.

The Chair addressed a few matters arising and provided the following updates:

- The Decant Policy and Re-let Review are on the work programme, scheduled to come to the Board in November.
- Drew Roberts, Fire Safety Officer, has agreed to consult with the Home Ownership Team RE: leaseholders' obligations to install smoke detectors. He confirmed that any leaseholder letting out their property will be required to install smoke detectors as part of their legal responsibilities as a Landlord. Homeowners however, are not obligated to install them and the only mechanism is if there is an applicable term in their Lease. This is a legal issue and Drew will seek further clarity.
- The Chair noted that CDM refers to Construction and Design Management; CDM Regulations 2015 set legal responsibility for all parties regarding construction projects .
- The Chair clarified that bi-annual meant twice a year in the context of Senior Living Reviews.

- Drew discussed the suggestions to allow Tenants Panel representatives to join the Senior Living Reviews with David Brown (Senior Living Careline Services Manager), however when each manager brought this up at the Tenant meetings for respective sites, no one wished to take up the offer. Managers will continue to offer this in future.

23 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations received.

24 Questions from Members of Public

There were no questions received.

25 Questions from Members

There were no questions received.

26 Responsive Repairs and Voids Update

The Chair urged attendees to keep their questions as general as possible. William Jones, representing Ian Williams, the Council's Responsive Repairs and Voids Contractor, then presented an overview of the last five months of their business operations.

William Jones noted the performance record since he entered the role in June. He mentioned the average monthly volume of reactive orders (around 1,100 to 1,200) and the significance of maintaining a two-and-a-half-week work-in-progress (WIP). He displayed a graph indicating a decline in live orders from 1,200 in April to approximately 650 by the end of August. He emphasised that this change marked a positive impact from the steps and measures they had implemented, even though they hadn't reached their ideal state. He also noted improvements in emergency and urgent performance, aiming for 90% completion on routine jobs in the next quarter.

William outlined the changes made, including restructuring the operational management, dividing the workforce for efficiency, conducting performance reviews, recruitment efforts, and optimizing the supply chain.

Graphs in his presentation showed performance metrics for emergency, urgent, and routine tasks. The performance in April and May was not optimistic. However, since June, performance began to improve, and by August, the emergency and urgent tasks had reached their desired performance levels. They aimed to continue improving routine performance to reach their target of 95%.

William elaborated on the changes made:

1. They reviewed their operational management structure to provide more clarity in roles and responsibilities.
2. The workforce was split into fast response jobs for emergencies and larger works that required pre-site planning and specific delivery schedules.

3. A performance review was conducted with direct labour, leading to the departure of five employees who weren't meeting performance standards. Simultaneously, seven new employees were recruited with specific skill sets, and resources were brought in-house for areas like electrical work and flooring.

4. Recruitment efforts were ongoing with more robust recruitment criteria, as it was essential to maintain a talented workforce.

5. The supply chain underwent changes to ensure alignment with their performance goals. They transitioned out underperforming contractors and introduced new contractors, even though this was an ongoing process.

6. Their goal was to decrease outsourcing to about 20%, focusing on specialist tasks like drainage, large roofing jobs, and flooring.

William Jones continued his presentation, highlighting various changes made, such as restructured management and the division of the workforce to address emergencies and larger projects. The company also performed performance reviews for direct labour, recruiting new talent, and optimizing the supply chain by transitioning away from underperforming contractors. Their goal is to reduce outsourcing to 20% of work, focusing on specialist tasks like drainage and large roofing jobs.

There were questions raised about the presentation;

1. Terry Daubney, Waverley Tenant's Panel, highlighted his disappointment with the service; most significantly that tenant satisfaction was continuing to drop and that missed appointments, delays and failure to communicate by Ian Williams set a poor standard for social housing in the Tenants' perspective. He highlighted that Ian Williams had promised to carry out tenant meetings across the borough on a regular basis; he is not aware that any such meetings had been carried out. He requested that the Waverley Tenant's Panel are involved in these meetings as tenant involvement is crucial.
2. Cllr Keen expressed her disappointment, particularly with delays, communication issues and missed appointments. She emphasised that respect for tenants should be at the heart of the service and noted the case of two tenants in her ward, who had complained regarding missed cooker and toiler repairs. William expressed his understanding and offered to discuss the specific cases in detail outside of the meeting.
3. Danielle Sleightholme, Waverley Tenant's Panel Co-optee, queried whether the Council should carry out a review of the systems in place to look at what has gone wrong and lessons learned as well as improvements that can be made. Matt Alexander, Housing Operations Manager, confirmed that officers were in the process of setting this up and were looking at resourcing this. He confirmed that Tenant's Panel involvement would be ensured.
4. Chris Austin, Lucas Field's Residents Group, stressed the importance of optimizing communication by keeping the Council in the communication loop between tenants and Ian Williams.

Annalisa Howson, Service Improvements Manager, addressed the Board and noted that the KPI information from the Q1 report was based on performance in April, May and June. Therefore, when we get the same statistics back by the end of Autumn, we will be able to see an improvement in the service as the impact of changes in the service will start to become apparent.

27 Customer Experience Group presentation

Rod Blackmore, on behalf of the Customer Experience Group (CEG), addressed the Board and delivered an overview of the Customer Experience Group's review of complaints data. The group had access to council complaints data to identify areas where improvements could be made in the council's services.

The CEG discovered that many upheld complaints lacked recorded "Lessons Learned," and this was mainly due to lack of awareness of this function. To address this issue, the group recommended that actionable "Lessons Learned" should be recorded on all upheld complaints. They suggested conducting an investigation into the process of adding these lessons. Additional training for staff handling complaints was also recommended. The group planned to review the results of these actions in six months.

Members praised the group's dedication and suggested that a 10-day response time to complaints might be too long. It was emphasized that tenants should be updated throughout the complaints process. Acknowledging compliments received was also highlighted as important.

Officers outlined the complaints handling process, highlighting the importance of immediate issue resolution for tenants. The process includes a 10-day formal response period for written explanations and "Lessons Learned." An automated system sends acknowledgments and updates to tenants throughout the process.

28 Regulator for Social Housing Consultation

The Chair actioned that lengthy agenda papers are to be sent out earlier as Members received their papers a few days prior to the meeting and were not given adequate time to study them.

Annalisa Howson, Service Improvement Officer, addressed the Board and reminded Members of the reading that was sent over summer RE: the RSH Consultation and new Consumer Standards set by the Regulator.

Annalisa discussed the recently enacted Social Housing Regulation Bill, which grants the regulator increased powers to hold social landlords more accountable. It also focuses on ensuring good quality homes, tenant safety, and compliance with various issues such as gas safety, damp, mould, asbestos, and more. Members were informed that the Regulator was consulting on a set of new Consumer standards. The purpose was to get feedback on these standards and to increase awareness. There was also a call for suggestions from the regulator on improving tenant involvement.

A few points were raised about the Safety and Quality Standard;

- i. The Chair mentioned that accurate assessment databases must be maintained within the Safety and Quality Standard.
- ii. There was also a question about re-lets within this standard; which appeared to have been dropped out. There was emphasis on getting repairs 'right first time' with categorized jobs. Although it was acknowledged that some jobs will never be fixed right the first time, WBC asks for tenant feedback to track this rather than looking at it from a categorized perspective.

- iii. There were questions around meeting the demands of tenants within the decent homes standard. Annalisa noted that there will be a Decent Homes Part 2 policy in the future which will give tenants a say over the expected standard of decent homes.
- iv. A point was raised about assessing tenants' homes for safety and health, especially in cases of hoarding or living conditions that may require assistance. Annalisa reassured Members that the stock condition surveys were actively identifying and signposting individuals with safeguarding, health and safety and hoarding concerns.

A few points were raised around the Transparency, Influence, and Accountability Standard;

- i. The idea of having senior officers' roles and responsibilities and their salaries transparently was mentioned and how this might be put in context proportioned to the Landlord service and tenant's rent, to be open and transparent.
- ii. Tenant involvement was highlighted and the Chair thanked Jeanette Englefied for her years of service as Tenant's Involvement Officer. He noted some of her achievements. It was noted the Joesph Warriner had successfully been recruited to role of Tenant Involvement Officer. The Chair suggested that a representative of the Tenants Panel should have involvement within the recruitment process of specific housing service officers. Annalisa Howson noted that the service was looking into this through the correct legal channels. This could be added to the consultation feedback to ensure tenant views are taken into account through the recruitment process.
- iii. Questions were asked about ensuring tenant involvement within decision-making processes. Terry Daubney highlighted the importance of learning from other successful councils in improving tenant relationships and engagement and the need to explore innovative ways to engage tenants and encourage their involvement. Some examples included offering incentives like paid board membership, gold status for repairs and conducting focus groups for upcoming policies. Annalisa noted that the Regulator expected social landlords to learn from good practices from other councils. Joesph Warriner, Tenant Involvement Officer, would look a divising a new tenant involvement strategy and channelling more initiatives to get tenants involved in the service. Satisfaction surveys on responsive repairs and mutual exchange reviews will provide a means to bring tenants into the service.

Annalisa Howson reminded Members that there was a lot of work to be done to ensure the Housing service is meeting consumer standards and the involvement of the Board is key in this process. Feedback taken will go back to the Regulator and Officers will need to start coming back to the Board and the Regulator with self-assessments against these standards. Officers will need to demonstrate actions in place to meet standards and this will feed into the budget setting process to invest resources, where needed, into areas such as compliance, tenants engagement and IT systems to hold data and reports.

The Chair actioned for the RSH Consumer Standards presentation and responses to the Regulator to be circulated to Members.

Annalisa noted that the Regulator was conducting a second consultation around fees, as there will be a cost attributed to the consumer standard regulations when

they come into effect in April 2024. This will cost around £7-8 per social housing unit for a large Local Authority registered provider. It was estimated that this will total around £40,000 per year for WBC. Members raised concerns about the financial implications of this and whether those funds could be put to better use, as fees would be drawn from the Housing Revenue Account. There were concerns about the rates being the same as Housing Associations, given that we do not receive the same level of finance or governance assessments and services. However, the Tenant's Panel were supportive of the proposed fees as they would ensure regulation of the housing service.

The Chair encouraged further comments on the Consultations and fees to be fed back to Annalisa.

29 Q1 Corporate Performance Report (2023-24)

Annalisa Howson addressed the Board and discussed the Q1 Corporate Performance Report (2023-24), acknowledging improvements in gas safety, stock condition surveys, carbon monoxide detectors, and security for senior living schemes. It was also noted earlier in the meeting, that the impact of changes within the Responsive Repairs and Voids service would be seen in the Q2 Performance Report. The Vice Chair, Terry Daubney, noted that he was pleased with the performance in gas safety checks, but noted the case of a tenant who issued a complaint as the inspector only spent several minutes performing the gas safety check and there was a concern about its validity.

There were no further comments on the Performance Report.

30 Asset Management IT Solution

The Board were happy to endorse the recommendations highlighted in the report.

31 Aids and Adaptations Extension Procurement

The Board were happy to endorse the recommendations highlighted in the report.

32 HRA ex local authority buy back

The Board were happy to endorse the recommendations highlighted in the report.

33 Work programme

Annalisa Howson noted that the following items were expected at the next meeting:

- A 6 month update from Smith and Byford Ltd – gas safety checks and provisions for the winter.
- Aids and Adaptations Service Review and action plan
- Senior Living fire alarms procurement
- Asset Review on St. James Court.

34 Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on the 19th of October 2023.

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Waverley Borough Council

Report to: Landlord Services Advisory Board
Date: 19 October 2023
Ward(s) affected: All wards affected
Report of Director: Community Wellbeing
Author: Steph Aves, Special Projects Officer
Tel: 01483 523 515
Email: steph.aves@waverley.gov.uk
Executive Portfolio Holder: Cllr Paul Rivers
Email: paul.rivers@waverley.gov.uk
Report Status: Open

Housing Service:

Aids and Adaptations Service Review

1. Executive Summary

Following a complaint against the Aids and Adaptations (A&A) Service provided to a tenant and their household, and a subsequent Housing Ombudsman determination dated 29 March 2023, work has commenced to carry out a comprehensive review of the Aids and Adaptations policy, procedure and the service as a whole.

Waverley accepts that:

- There were significant and unreasonable delays in dealing with an application made by one of our residents for adaptations to meet the needs of his disabled son, and
- Our communication with our resident was very poor.

This report and action plan details all the specific actions necessary for driving service improvement. This includes actions that have been completed and actions still to be taken.

2. Recommendation to LSAB

It is recommended that the LSAB:

- reviews, supports and provides comments to Co-Portfolio Holder of Housing and Executive Head of Housing,
- on the actions taken and those actions to be implemented, in order to have fully reviewed the Council's aids and adaptations service.

3. Reason(s) for Recommendation:

3.1 To ensure all stakeholders are satisfied that the Council is providing the best possible aids and adaptations service for tenants and their families.

3.2 To prevent further maladministration or service failures from occurring in the future, as by the Housing Ombudsman.

4. Purpose of Report

4.1 To detail the actions that Waverley Borough Council have taken and are in the process of implementing to review and improve the way in which we manage and deliver the aids and adaptations service to our tenants.

4.2 To reassure the Housing Ombudsman, the Executive, tenants, and all other stakeholders that Waverley acknowledges that failures were made previously with regards to a specific recent complaint and Housing

Ombudsman report and has actively taken actions to review and improve processes and ways of working to prevent these same failures from reoccurring.

5. Strategic Priorities

- 5.1. The report supports the Council's Corporate commitment to promote *"Good quality housing for all income levels and age groups"* and aim to *"be the best council landlord in the South East and to be acknowledged so by our tenants."*

6. Background

6.1 Following the Housing Ombudsman Service findings, a holding response was sent in May 2023 and this report, along with the attached action plan, further details the specific actions the Council has taken so far and those outstanding.

6.2 It has been found that in general, the current Aids and Adaptions (A&A) Policy (introduced in 2021) is fit for purpose and must be adhered to. It must be noted that the particular complaint / Housing Ombudsman case determination, which led to this review, dates back many months prior to the development and implementation of this policy.

6.3 It has been recommended that the current A&A Policy is sent externally for third-party expert legal advice and verification. This has been requested to ensure the policy meets all legal, legislative, and statutory obligations of the Council.

6.4 The A&A Procedure document has been reviewed by the Adaptations team, including tenants feedback, and only minor amendments have been made. These amendments include changes to titles of responsible officers, now to include administrative support from the recently formed 'Housing Operations Support Team (HOST)', changes to wording where 'Case management system' was referenced to 'Tracker'. In addition, a few specified timescales have been revised to be more realistic and achievable, reflecting current resource availability/ capacity.

6.5 The main addition to the procedure document has been the introduction of a formalised and structured communications plan providing regular correspondence with the tenant throughout a case, from start to finish. This will be greatly improved as a direct impact of having the additional support from the HOST.

7. Consultations

7.1 Consultation of the current policy and procedure will take place, over the autumn, with a sample of tenant volunteers as well as carrying out 'service user surveys' to gauge customer experience and satisfaction of the A&A service. In addition, previous complaints will be reviewed to identify trends/ themes and lessons to be learned.

7.2 Consultation in the form of refresher training will also be undertaken to re-roll out the A&A Policy and Procedure to both internal and external stakeholders to ensure there is clarity across all relevant departments, teams and services (including Social Services). This will be undertaken September / October 2023 in preparation for winter months.

8. Key Risks

8.1 If the policy and procedure are not adhered to, then the Council is at risk of non-compliance with regulatory standards and statutory obligations as a social housing landlord.

In addition, risks include:

- Failing tenants most in need of support
- The provision of a poor service
- Damaged reputation and compensation costs

9. Financial Implications

9.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report. Any costs as a result of any subsequent changes to policy/procedure will be funded from within existing budgets.

10. Legal Implications

10.1 There are no direct legal implications as a result of this report. Request made to Legal Team to arrange review of Policy.

11. Human Resource Implications

11.1 There are no HR implications from this report.

12. Equality and Diversity Implications

12.1 An equality impact assessment on the A&A Policy was completed in 2021. The Aids and Adaptations policy aims to ensure tenants live comfortably, and independently in their homes for as long as possible.

12.2 There are no direct equality, diversity or inclusion implication in this report.

13. Climate Change/Sustainability Implications

13.1 There are no direct negative Climate change / sustainability implication in this report.

14. Summary of Options

14.1 To follow and complete the action plan as detailed

15.2 To do nothing, which would be inappropriate as we need to respond to the Housing Ombudsman.

15. Conclusion

15.1 Waverley accepts that:

- There were significant and unreasonable delays in dealing with an application made by one of our residents for adaptations to meet the needs of his disabled son, and
- Our communication with our resident was very poor.

15.2 By completing all actions on this action plan, Waverley is confident that a good quality aids and adaptations service will be provided, ultimately benefiting tenants and residents.

16. Appendices

16.1 Annexe one - Aids and Adaptations review Action Plan.

Please ensure the following service areas have signed off your report.
Please complete this box, and do not delete.

Service	Sign off date
Finance / S.151 Officer	11/10/23 CK
Legal / Governance	No response
HR	n/a
Equalities	n/a
Lead Councillor	Sept 2023
CMB	19 Sept 2023
Executive Briefing/Liaison	19 Sept 2023
Committee Services	

ANNEXE 1

A&A Review Action Plan September 2023 – In response to Ombudsman complaint determinations

A&A Review Action Plan

'We are in the process of carrying out a comprehensive review of our policies and procedures for processing requests from our residents for disabled aids and adaptations to establish why, on this occasion, we did not adhere to those policies and procedures'.

Waverley accepts that:

- There were significant and unreasonable delays in dealing with an application made by one of our residents for adaptations to meet the needs of his disabled son.
- Our communication with our resident was very poor.

A holding response to the Housing Ombudsman was sent in May 2023 which promised the following, making up the comprehensive Policy and procedure review:

#	Actions	Detail	Responsible Officer	Target Completion
Policy and Procedure Review				
1	Review existing policy	<p>Draft review by A&A Team</p> <p>Policy to be sent to Legal for advice / clarification on statutory and regulatory obligations and relevant legislation.</p> <p>Our inhouse legal team have suggested the finalised policy is sent for checking by a third-party legal expert.</p> <p>What governance route is necessary for policy amendments?</p>	<p>Adrian Bryant, Steph Aves</p> <p>Adrian Bryant</p>	<p>22 May 2023 14 August 2023</p> <p>Submit to legal 14 September 2023</p>
2	Review existing procedure document and reassessing the specified timescales	<p>Draft review by A&A Team</p> <p>Submit procedure to legal</p>	<p>Adrian Bryant, Neil Sawyer and Steph Aves</p> <p>Adrian Bryant</p>	<p>24 August 2023</p> <p>Submit to legal 14 September 2023</p>
3	Developing a clear and robust communications plan to ensure that our tenants are kept regularly updated on the progress of their application for aids and adaptations	<p>This relates to procedure. All correspondence received from tenants must be acknowledged and/or responded to.</p>	<p>Neil Sawyer, Adrian Bryant, HOST</p>	<p>Ongoing & continuous</p>

Consultation and feedback				
4	Undertake survey/ questionnaires /surveys on recent recipients of our A&A Service to gauge satisfaction	Determine how satisfied our tenants are with their recent experiences of the A&A service received	Joseph Warriner	Surveys out w/c 2 October 2023
5	Conducting interviews with residents to gather their feedback on our policy/ consulting tenants panel or customer experience group	Tenant working groups and tenants panel	Joseph Warriner	Report findings to LSAB November 2023
6	Refresher training/ Roll out - ensuring all relevant staff have a thorough knowledge and understanding of our Aids and Adaptations policy and procedure	Once reviewed policy and procedure have been finalised, consult / roll out policy and procedure with all stakeholders: A&A Team, Homechoice, Housing Management, Customer Services, Rents, Planned Works Team, Service Improvement, Housing Development, Voids etc (All in housing)	Matt Alexander, Adrian Bryant	September October 2023 in preparation for winter
7	Social Services Consultation	e.g. what we will and will not carry out and the new maximum spend threshold per referral. This is to ensure Social Services do not over promise schemes to their clients/ our tenants which we simply cannot meet and to manage expectations.	Neil Sawyer, Adrian Bryant	October 2023 in preparation for winter
Public relations – Spreading the word				
8	Promoting the service and updating available information on the Waverley Website	Ensuring tenants are aware of help available as well as what we will/won't provide etc e.g., event days, Homes and People magazine, presenting at Senior Living Schemes, leaflet dropping, could Community Development Officers assist? Etc	Neil Sawyer & Adrian Bryant to review info on website and feedback to Service Improvement to make amendments – link to improved communications plan within procedure doc	End of October 2023

Case monitoring, tracking and performance measures				
9	Create and implement a user-friendly tracker/ IT monitoring system to manage each live case	Short term – the existing excel spreadsheet used for tracking will be improved for officers ease and clarity but review options to switch to using a purpose built MRi Case Management system similar to that used for tracking Damp and mould cases	Adrian Bryant, Deb Holland, Neil Sawyer	Review option of new Case management November 2023
10	Continuously review case volumes and resource needs to ensure a high standard of service is delivered	Set up automated weekly reports pulled from Orchard regarding all Aids or Adaptation jobs raised to the contractor so that progress can be monitored and managed (similar to void reports).	Matt Alexander, Adrian Bryant, Daron Tripp	Ongoing & continuous
11	Improved management oversight and monitoring	Collate monthly performance stats / KPIs to ensure accountability and adherence to policy. These should be monitored in monthly performance reporting at Operational Meetings and Quarterly submissions to O&S committee e.g.: # of panels held and decisions made within the 6 week period, # of 'Medium Adaptations' completed within 3 months of confirming approval (under normal circumstances) etc	Matt Alexander, Adrian Bryant	Ongoing & continuous – monthly reporting

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Waverley Borough Council

Report to: Landlord Services Advisory EWG

Date: 19 October 2023

Ward(s) affected: All wards affected

Report of Director: Community Wellbeing

Author: Drew Roberts, Compliance Officer (Fire Safety)

Tel: 01483 523 563

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Executive Portfolio Holder: Cllr Paul Rivers

Email: paul.rivers@waverley.gov.uk

Report Status: Open

Housing Service: Senior Living Fire Alarm Upgrade Contract Award

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Waverley Borough Council has statutory requirements to ensure it meets its fire safety obligations and maintain the safety of tenants and properties.
- 1.2 During recent fire risk assessments and fire alarm service visits, it was noted that five of the fire alarm systems maintained by the Council are nearing the end of their working life and plans should be made to upgrade.

- 1.3 Work is currently underway with our consultants Fraser Walker Associates, to design new systems and tender a contract to identify a suitable contractor to complete the upgrades.

2. Recommendation to Executive Co Portfolio Holder for Housing

- 2.1 That the Executive Co Portfolio Holder for Housing consults with Executive Head of Housing to approve awarding of Senior Living Fire Alarm Upgrade Contract, following a competitive tender.

3. Reason(s) for Recommendation:

- 3.1. Waverley Borough Council has statutory requirements to ensure it meets fire safety obligations.
- 3.2. Failure to upgrade systems before the existing become obsolete, puts the Council at risk of systems failing and replacement parts not being available. An urgent awarding of works following failure of a system would not provide best value for money.

4. Purpose of Report

- 4.1. To approve awarding a Senior Living Fire Alarm Upgrade contract, following a competitive tender process.

5. Strategic Priorities

- 5.1. The report supports the Council's Corporate commitment to promote *"Good quality housing for all income levels and age groups"* and aim to *"be the best council landlord in the South East and to be acknowledged so by our tenants."*

6. Background

- 6.1 During fire risk assessments completed during 2021, it was noted by the fire risk assessor that the fire alarm system at the following

- senior living sites: Blunden Court; Bowring House; Dower House; Moat Lodge and Shepherds Court, were all reaching the end of their working life and consideration be given to upgrading these systems.
- 6.2 At the same time, recommendations were also received from our fire equipment maintenance contractor, Sureserve, to upgrade the fire alarm systems at the above sites.
 - 6.3 For completeness, a further review of the fire alarm systems at the remaining senior living sites was completed. Rolston House was fully upgraded as part of the refurbishment works completed in 2014 and met current standards, Riverside Court was upgraded as part of extensive fire safety works in 2020-21 and Falkner Court Sureserve advised no work was required but that upgrades should be planned alongside the other sites, although this system later failed and was upgraded as a matter of urgency.
 - 6.4 Following the above recommendations, our consultants, Fraser Walker Associates, were employed to complete surveys of each site and provide recommendations on whether full upgrades (replacement of fire alarm panel and all associated equipment) are necessary or if upgrading the aged fire panels would be sufficient. This review identified that as well as the aged fire panels, coverage from detectors and break glass manual call points was insufficient, therefore full upgrades would be the best approach.
 - 6.5 Fraser Walker Associates were subsequently employed to commence with the designing of new fire alarm systems at the five senior living sites and to complete a competitive tender process. This tender process will take place during September, with the aim of identifying a suitable contractor by early October.
 - 6.6 The anticipated value of this contract will be £393,000.

7. Consultations

- 7.1. Our contractors Fraser Walker Associates and Sureserve Fire and Electrical were consulted on the need to upgrade systems.
- 7.2. Following successful award of contract, tenants and senior living officers will be contacted to notify them of the planned work and the reason work is needed.

8. Key Risks

- 8.1 In the event a fire alarm system failed and Sureserve Fire and Electrical are unable to source spare parts to keep the system operational, there would be an urgent need to identify a contractor and award upgrade works without a competitive tender. This wouldn't offer best value for money.
- 8.2 In addition, in the event a fire alarm system fails, the Council would be forced to rely on battery powered smoke detectors which only sound if activated and will not raise the alarm, therefore relying on a building occupant to call the emergency services. This would put building occupants at increased risk as they may not become aware a fire had started and the emergency services may be delayed in being notified and attending in a timely manner.

9. Financial Implications

Drafted by: Candice Keet, Senior Accountant

- 9.1 The cost of this contract (£393,000) will be spread across financial years. Part of the cost will be met from within the 2023/24 existing capital budgets. The remainder will be spent in 2024/25. This cost will be included in the capital programme which will be going to February 2024 Council for approval. The service will adhere to the Council's CPR's when procuring this contract which will support the HRA in ensuring value for money is being achieved.

10. Legal Implications

Drafted by: Jayne La Grua, Deputy Borough Solicitor

- 10.1 The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (the Order) places a statutory duty on the Council to take such general fire precautions as may reasonably be required in the circumstances of the case to ensure that premises the Council are in control of are safe. The Order

places specific duties on the Council to, amongst other matters, carry out suitable and sufficient fire risk assessments and, where necessary in order to safeguard the safety of any person on or in the immediate vicinity of the premises, ensure that the premises are equipped with fire-fighting equipment and with fire detectors and alarms.

- 10.2 It is an offence for any responsible person to fail to comply with the above requirements where that failure places any person lawfully on or in the immediate vicinity of the premises at risk of death or serious injury in case of fire.

11. Human Resource Implications

- 11.1. There are no HR implications from this report.

12. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 12.1. An equality impact assessment has been completed for this contract. As noted in Annexe 1, current fire alarm installations are not adequate for persons with reduced mobility or reduced sensory, particularly those with reduced hearing.
- 12.2. The new fire alarm systems are to be designed to reduce travel distances between manual call points and to ensure a combination of visual and auditory alarms are used.

13. Climate Change/ Sustainability Implications

- 13.1. There are no direct negative Climate change/ sustainability implications in this report.

14. Summary of Options

- 14.1. To approve awarding the contract to the successful bidder at the end tender period, allowing upgrade of fire alarm systems to go ahead.

14.2. To do nothing and be at risk of breaching our statutory and regulatory obligations as a landlord, putting tenants health and lives at risk.

15. Conclusion

15.1 The proposed contract aims to ensure tenant safety within the five sites, as well as offering better value for money by upgrading older systems in a proactive manner.

16. Background Papers

There are no background papers, as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972).

Annexes:

Annexe 1 – Summary Report of Fraser Walker Associates Findings

Please ensure the following service areas have signed off your report. Please complete this box, and do not delete.

Service	Sign off date
Finance / S.151 Officer	CK 31/07/2023
Legal / Governance	JLG Sept 2023
HR	n/a
Equalities	n/a
Lead Councillor	Sept 2023
CMB	19 Sept 2023
Executive Briefing/Liaison	n/a
Committee Services	

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Summary Report of Fraser Walker Associates Findings

Senior Living Fire Alarm Upgrades

Purpose

The following report aims to summarise the findings of Fraser Walker Associates, following surveys they completed on fire alarm systems at Blunden Court, Bowring House, Dower House, Moat Lodge and Shepherds Court. These surveys were completed 14th December 2022.

Site Details

The below table summarises details of the current fire alarm system at each site. See appendix 1 for details on classification terms.

Site	Type of System	Age of System	Communal Classification	Flat Classification
Blunden Court	Conventional, Multiple Zones	At least 15 years	L4 (assumed)	LD2 (advised)
Bowring House	Conventional, Multiple Zones	At least 15 years	L4 (assumed)	LD2 (advised)
Dower House	Conventional, Multiple Zones	At least 10 years	L4 (assumed)	LD2 (advised)
Moat Lodge	Conventional, Multiple Zones	At least 10 years	L4 (assumed)	LD2 (advised)
Shepherds Court	Conventional, Multiple Zones	At least 15 years	L4 (assumed)	LD2 (advised)

Findings

Below is an extract showing the defects identified at all five sites.

Deviations observed

- There is a lack of detection in communal areas*
- Insufficient detection either side of fire doors with hold open devices*
- The distance between detectors is greater than permitted in some areas*
- There are no beacon sounders in the disabled toilets or boiler room.*
- The travel distances between Manual Call Points (MCP) appear greater than permitted in some areas – Note: Good practice is to install MCP's at reduced travel distances and changes of direction in buildings of this type where residents may be infirm or confused.*

In addition to the above defects, some site-specific issues were also identified. These have been noted below.

- Bowring House-
 - The day centre has no detection on the staircase from the mezzanine floor to the ground floor.
- Moat Lodge-
 - No detection was observed in the accessible void spaces.
 - No detection was observed in part of the basement.
 - The detector in the basement boiler room is obscured by pipework.
 - A MCP is not fitted in the basement.
- Shepherds Court-
 - There is a lack of detection in some areas, in particular two staircases were observed to have no detection fitted.
 - All MCP's are mounted higher than approved by BS5839-1 and may not be accessible to all.
 - Remote indicators outside each flat have been removed.

Recommendations

Across all five sites Fraser Walker Associates have made the same recommendations. An extract of their recommendations is provided below.

We recommend a fully addressable fire alarm system is installed to communal areas, voids where there is a risk of fire spread and associated high risk areas complying with BS 5839-1:2017 to provide L2 standard of coverage:- Category L2: systems installed only in defined parts of the building. A Category L2 system ought to include the coverage necessary to satisfy the recommendations of this standard for a Category L3 system; the objective of a Category L2 system is identical to that of a Category L3 system, with the additional objective of affording early warning of fire in specified areas of high fire hazard level and/or high fire risk;

Category L3: systems designed to give a warning of fire at an early enough stage to enable all occupants, other than possibly those in the room of fire origin, to escape safely, before the escape routes are impassable owing to the presence of fire, smoke or toxic gases;

NOTE 1 To achieve the above objective it is normally necessary to install detectors in rooms which open onto an escape route.

We understand a stay put policy is currently in place however a system designed to the above standard would provide early warning of fire developing within a flat should the Tunstall system be inoperative such escape route integrity is maintained should a general evacuation become necessary. This also could be programmed to warn residents of an impending evacuation if deemed necessary by the fire service or site manager.

In addition the functional integrity of the Tunstall system should be investigated. An additional smoke detector should be added to hallways and heat detector to kitchens

where necessary to achieve BS5839-6:2019 Category LD 2 Additional Protection - Escape routes plus high risk rooms.

Appendix 1- Fire Alarm Classifications

Life protection fire alarm systems are classified from L1 to L5, depending on the level of coverage. Below provides a brief summary of the level of protection offered.

L1 provides for Automatic Fire Detection (AFD) to be installed into all areas of a building.

L2 provides Automatic Fire Detection (AFD) as defined in L3 as well as high risk or hazardous areas. Examples of this could be Kitchens, boiler rooms, sleeping risk, storerooms if not fire resistant or if smoke could affect escape routes.

L3 Automatic Fire Detection (AFD) with smoke detection should be installed on escape routes with detection in rooms opening onto escape routes.

L4 provides Automatic Fire Detection (AFD) within escape routes only.

L5 is installed in building with a specific risk that has been identified. An example of this would be if there was an area of high risk that requires detection the category would be L5/M.

Within domestic settings, fire alarm detection are classified from LD1 to LD3, depending on level of coverage. Below provides a brief summary of the level of protection offered.

Category LD1 – Maximum life protection for a domestic property

LD1 alarm systems are installed throughout domestic premises. Detectors are fitted in all areas that form escape routes and in all rooms and other areas, other than those that have a low risk of ignition, such as bathrooms and toilets. The goal is to provide the earliest possible warning for occupants to ensure the preservation of life.

Category LD2 – Additional life protection for a domestic property

LD2 fire alarm systems require detectors to be installed in circulation areas that form part of the escape routes, and in certain rooms or areas that present a high risk of fire to occupants. This would include a kitchen and a key habitable room in the building.

Category LD3 – Standard life protection for a domestic property

Category LD3 systems feature detectors in all areas that form escape routes from the property. Unlike LD2 systems, LD3 systems do not have to place alarms close to high-risk sources of ignition.

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Meeting date	Title	Reason	Responsible officer
Sept			
28/09/23	Ian Williams	Six month update Meet contractor, review performance against	Ibiyemi Akoto
28/09/23	Asset Management IT Solution	Update board on recommendation for replacement system	Hugh Wagstaff
28/09/23	Q1 Performance Report	oversight of service	Annalisa Howson
28/09/23	Regulator of Social Housing Consultation	share RSH proposed consumer standards	Annalisa Howson
28/09/23	Aids and Adaptations extension request	Executive decision	Neil Sawyer
28/09/23	CEG Complaints review findings presentation	to share customer experience groups work and	Joseph Warriner
28/09/23	HRA Buy back ex LA home	to gain approval for purchase	Hugh Wagstaff
Oct			
19/10/23	Smyth and Byford	Six month update. Meet contractor, review performance against	Matt Alexander
19/10/23	Aids and Adaptions Review Update	review update a&a policy in light of HOS findings	Steph Aves
19/10/23	Senior Living Fire Alarm Procurement		Drew Roberts
Nov			
30/11/23	Q2 Performance Report	oversight of service	Annalisa Howson
30/11/23	Retrofit progress report	Review and comment of project progress	report tbc
30/11/23	Re let review progress report	Review and comment on project	Annalisa Howson
30/11/23	A&A Survey feedback	share and reflect on tenant feedback	Joe Warriner
30/11/23	Decant Policy	review updated policy and objectives of process	Brenda Glover
30/11/23	Finance training	Provide finance training to members before Jan Budget meeting	Annalisa Howson
Jan			
25/01/24	HRA Budget 2024/25		Candice Keet
25/01/25	Tenant Insight TSM report	share and reflect on tenant feedback	Joe Warriner
25/01/24	Management information (TSM)	Review performance indicators required for TSMs	Annalisa Howson
Feb			
29/02/24	Housing Management presentation	Present performance information and share current priorities	Annalisa Howson
29/02/24	Rent Team annual presentation	Provide performance information and current priorities	Annalisa Howson
29/02/24	Internal Audits	Present information on current housing internal audits	Annalisa Howson
29/02/24	Senior Living Consultation Feedback	share and reflect on tenant feedback	David Brown
March			

28/03/24 Q3 Performance Report
28/03/24 RSH Update

NB

Policy and procurement reports to be added as progressed