

Customer & Communities Committee

1. Cover Report

Date	17 th July 2023
Agenda Item & Title	Repairs Scrutiny Review
Report Ask /Purpose	For Discussion
Forward Planner	Standing Item Quarterly Information
Report Author	Stephanie Williams
Email/Mobile	Stephanie.williams@msvhousing.co.uk 07739899503
Confidential	Not Confidential
Recommendation	Members are asked to note and comment on the report.

Fits with Corporate Plan



Narrative: By producing this report it links into the corporate plan by doing the decent thing and focusing on our customers, working with customers to strengthen our business and offering a broad range of homes and support for people

Link to Strategic Risk Register

<input type="checkbox"/> COVID 19 - Pandemic Impact	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Safeguarding tenants
<input type="checkbox"/> 2. Health and safety compliance	<input type="checkbox"/> 3. Income collection and customer financial hardship
<input type="checkbox"/> 4. Government policy	<input type="checkbox"/> 5. Sector Reputational Risk
<input type="checkbox"/> 6. Cyber and Data Security plus GDPR imp	<input type="checkbox"/> 7. Business continuity
<input type="checkbox"/> 8. Long Term Funding and financial viability	<input type="checkbox"/> 9. Growth and Partnerships
<input type="checkbox"/> 10. Asset management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 11. Property services
<input type="checkbox"/> 12. Safeguarding staff and loss of skills	<input type="checkbox"/> 13. Regulatory and legal compliance

Risk Appetite: The Repairs Improvement Plan (RIP) sets out the risk in the service area and the mitigations and controls required to improve operational delivery of repairs.

VFM The repairs service remains under review to ensure VfM is achieved in operational delivery.

Financial Implications	Financial implications from any recommendations managed by Property Services. Controls are in place to ensure spend is monitored in year spend to manage any potential overspends.		
EDI Impact	Equality, diversity, and inclusion underpins all work undertaken by Scrutiny and the services are tailored according to customers' needs as required.	EIA Attached?	NO
Consultation & Engagement	Reviewed by customers with the support from MSV's Resident Engagement Officers. Additional customers consulted throughout the process in focus groups.		
Environmental & sustainability	The repairs service remains under review to ensure all operations consider the environmental and sustainability impact on the environment.		
1.1 Executive Summary			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer volunteers from MSV's Scrutiny panel carried out a review on our repair service from October 2022 to February 2023. The report provides a summary of the review and recommendations based on the findings. 			

2. Report

Introduction

MSV's Scrutiny panel is a collective group of customer volunteers who are interested in helping us to improve our services. 6 members of the group volunteered to participate in this review.

A key focus is to increase membership to ensure reviews best reflect our customer profile, we have developed a digital scrutiny group who meet virtually, with one face to face meeting per review. Each member has the option to loan a device and access 'digital skills' training. Since this review started, we have recruited a further 3 customers who have joined the Scrutiny 'pool', which now has 15 members. Customers can select the reviews they would like to take part in, allowing them to volunteer at times to suit their own personal commitments.

Members attended a Digital Skills Workshop delivered by MSV's Resident Engagement Officer and the Power of Scrutiny training delivered by TPAS in October.

Aims of the Review

After a review of complaints received in Q2 2021/22, this highlighted a large percentage of complaints related to repairs. The panel members agreed to explore the customer journey focusing primarily on the initial reporting stage of a repair. Which included:

- Accessing all relevant policies and procedures.
- Establishing how effective communications sent to customers are relating to repairs.
- Explore methods used to contact customers.
- Review complaints relating to repairs.

The Review

The exercise launched in October 2022, to enable the panel members to carry out a thorough review of the service area, we sought information from key colleagues, including:

- Customer Service Standards
- Complaints Policy
- Draft Repairs Policy
- KPI's for Q3 – 21/22 and KPI targets
- Communications sent to customers (letters and text messages)
- Dashboard (Reporting a Repair)

Members scrutinised the information provided, which led them to interview colleagues from across the business to gain further understanding about the current service and answer any questions or queries. 6 colleagues from Property Care, Neighbourhoods, the Customer Contact Centre, and the Planning Team took part in the face-to-face interviews.

We invited customers to attend a focus group with panel members after a review of recent complaints. The focus session enabled members to listen to customers' own experiences and explore their journey further, discovering where the service failed and didn't meet the customer expectations.

Findings and Recommendations

The group highlighted the following areas of good practice.

- Fully compliant in responses to emergency repairs (24hours).
- CCT colleagues take vulnerability into consideration when making decisions regarding repairs.
- Tenants feel positive that they have an alternate option, and can contact their Neighbourhood Officer when they are unable to get through to the Contact Centre.

The group initially developed an extensive list of recommendations to be considered, which have been reviewed by colleagues in Property Services and the Contact Centre. Due to the upcoming merger, some of these recommendations are unachievable. However, these will be included in the post-merger review of the service area.

Based on the review findings, the panel would like to recommend the following to help improve customer experience when arranging a repair at their home.

1. MSV must give all tenants an appointment for each repair logged. Including a date and time. Additionally, staff must coordinate the repairs, so they are completed in one day by grouping similar repairs in one category where possible.
2. Sub-contractors must update MSV staff at every stage of the repair.
3. Warden controlled schemes - the warden/scheme manager must be kept up to date about communal repairs and issues around access.
4. Introduce penalties for contractors e.g., withhold payment from sub- contractors until their work has been signed off and meets MSV standards.
5. All sub-contractors must give MSV tenants a date and time of when they are attending the property to carry out a repair.
6. MSV must implement a system where external subcontractors must leave a calling card to evidence that they have visited and attempted to complete a repair. Inspect work completed by sub-contractors.
7. MSV staff as part of their day-to-day job must make time to investigate activities causing problems with the repair appointments.
8. No single appointment whether it is a repair or inspection must exceed/ go beyond 28 days.
9. CCT /Planning Team must make tenants aware, whether the operative will be attending to complete a repair, inspection or to measure up.
10. Remove the job number from the text messages sent to tenants. Replace the job number with actual information about the repair e.g., leaking sink, damp.
11. All customer contact centre staff must undertake basic training on how to communicate effectively.
12. MSV must appropriately resource the first point of contact. Tenants must not be kept waiting on the phones for long periods of time, nor should emails and online portal enquiries be left unanswered.

Property Services

Several of the recommendations will form part of the ongoing Repairs Improvement Plan. This has been updated to reflect the current performance of the service. Included within the plan are a number of key themes to stabilise the service including people, processes, commerciality & budget management, operating performance and Health & Safety.

The repairs improvement plan is flagged as a strategic project across the business and meetings have been diarised with representation across the business to drive service improvements. Support to deliver the project outputs is provided by business transformation. The plan will continue to develop during the life of the project as we move through the review.

A number of key actions have been completed and this includes:

- Recruitment of key Head of roles to drive the service forward
- Commencement of restructure and recruitment of key support functions
- Stabilising of the PDA platform and completion of field operative PDA Training
- Reduction in the repairs WIP
- Reintroduction of productivity reporting
- Changes of the operating model to live diary planning

Detailed below are the key actions over the next 3/6 months to improve service delivery and provide an improved repairs service to customers:

- Repairs Improvement Plan – continue to focus on key actions within the RIP to return to BAU.
- Operating Model – embed structure changes which aligns with the Great Places repairs delivery model to support merger transition. I anticipate the new operating model, covering 6 defined geographic areas, will go live on the 1st September.
- Recruitment of key support functions, systems support officer and customer care officer – roles out to advert.
- Continue to focus on driving productivity and further embed live field operative planning.
- Continue to clear WIP and ensure data is cleansed to provide clear visibility on productivity of workforce.
- Embed further controls in Sub-Contractor Management.
- Continue to embed a performance driven approach across the service.
- Focus on H&S controls and ensure colleagues and customers are safe.

Next Steps

- Scrutiny members are invited to visit the Contact Centre; first appointment arranged 24/7/23.
- Assistant Director of Property Services and Contact Centre Manager to attend the next scrutiny panel to update members on recommendations.
- Scrutiny Panel to receive regular updates relating to the Repairs Improvement Plan.
- Work with panel members to review the process used to carry out the review, implementing any improvements on any future work of the group.

3. Recommendation
To note and comment on the contents of this report

4. Further Supporting Information
Appendix 1 – Full panel recommendations