

**Housing Scrutiny Committee**  
**Responsive Repairs Scrutiny 2015/16**  
**Draft Recommendations**

1. The service prioritise increasing the number of “first time fixes” in order to improve efficiency and tenant satisfaction. To achieve this it is suggested that officers further investigate the feasibility of a “ring and bring” service, to enable parts to be delivered to a repair without the operative leaving the property, and continue to invest in the multi-skilling of staff. The council should aspire for all operatives to be skilled in multiple trades as part of a “first time fix culture”.
2. The Committee welcomes the improvements expected through service’s new ICT system, to be implemented in Autumn 2016. The system is intended to lead to a number of service improvements including improved diagnostic processes, automated repair allocations to staff, greater use of handheld technology, the ability to track operative progress remotely and improved communication with residents via the use of text messaging. It is hoped that the implementation of the system will lead to corresponding increases in efficiency and satisfaction, and it is suggested that performance be reviewed after the new system has bedded-in to ensure that the improvements have been achieved. The Committee is keen to see the new technology fully utilised and supporting all aspects of the service, and in particular suggests that electronic checklists or scripts be introduced as an aide-memoire for operatives to check that all aspects of a repair are completed in line with service standards.
3. The Committee heard from residents that communication is key to a positive customer experience. The Committee recognises the work already underway to improve this aspect of the service, however notes that residents should be made aware as soon as possible if the operative is running late, if their appointment has been rescheduled, or if a communal repair has been completed. It is recommended that the service makes use of the resident’s preferred communications channel; this may be telephone, text message, email, or for a message to be delivered through estates staff in the case of vulnerable residents.
4. Following the best practice of other in-house repairs services, the Committee recommends that operatives be empowered and supported to take decisions at the front-line in order to increase the speed of repairs, drive efficiencies and improve accountability. Operatives should be supported in identifying and completing any additional repairs required while at the property, as part of the “first time fix culture”.

5. The Committee notes the positive working relationship between the responsive repairs and capital programming teams and how defects identified through the responsive repairs service are fed into the capital programme. To reassure residents that such defects will be rectified, it is recommended that clear escalation policies are established and residents are advised when defects are referred to the capital programming team.
6. The Committee recognises that estate services co-ordinators and caretakers have a wealth of knowledge about their area and suggests that their relationship with the repairs service be developed further, as these staff may be able to assist in the diagnosis of communal repairs, assist with communication, and carry out an advocacy role for residents as required.
7. The service should seek to improve the quality of its data through investment in detailed performance reporting software and the use of photography. The Committee would support the implementation of software such as Clickview, which enables repairs satisfaction and other metrics to be analysed in depth. The use of such technology would assist in the identification of areas for further improvement. Operatives could assist the service in further developing its asset data by taking photographs of the repair and other fixtures and fittings while at the property. Analysis of the most frequently requested repairs could contribute to effective asset management.
8. The repairs service should have a diverse workforce which reflects the residents of the borough. The Committee is encouraged by the service's introduction of an apprenticeship scheme and would like to see this expand over time as the service has the potential to provide quality employment and training to local people. It is hoped that, following the successful implementation of service improvements, the service will be able to seek commercial opportunities in order to generate income and expand the service.
9. The Committee notes the similarities between the in-house repairs services of Islington and Camden and recommends that the scope for joint working opportunities be explored in order to generate efficiencies and share best practice.
10. The Committee welcomes the recent implementation of online repairs reporting and is keen to see this develop in usage and effectiveness. It is recommended that detailed resident feedback on this is sought in order to improve the customer experience.