

Regina Road update, repairs performance & Temporary Accommodation Review

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Presentation to Scrutiny
18 May 2021

Agenda Item 5

ARK – independent investigation report

ARK appointed 24th March, first draft report provided 9th April. Following further interviews and investigation, final report provided 26th April.

Terms of Reference focus principally on 4 affected flats and the wider 1-87 Regina Road block: **how did we get here?**

Key findings:

- no single reason as to why the situation at Regina Road occurred
- ‘a failure to deliver even basic ‘core’ housing services effectively. They are potentially symptomatic of poor performance across the council’s housing service and impact on its ability to drive for self-improvement’

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a lack of capacity and competence;

a poor operating culture with a lack of care and respect for tenants;

systemic problems in how the council communicates and deals with tenants’ concerns and complaints;

weak performance management, meaning senior managers do not appear to know what is going on; and

poor use of data and ‘intelligence’ by the council and its contractors

Cabinet agree recommendations to respond to the findings on 17th May

voids

- ARK report flags 'silo working' within and between Council housing teams as a major contributor to the situation at Regina Road
- Void management is a process that falls between tenancy, allocations and repairs teams, with the voids team sitting in repairs
- Currently recruiting to fill vacant posts in the voids team
- Weekly meetings between all services with Axis contractors present
- Void management to form one of the main themes for improvement under the housing service initial action plan

Homelessness & Temporary Accommodation

LA Housing Committee [report](#) 'Living in Limbo':

Rising numbers of households are living in Temporary Accommodation (TA), some for very long periods

The housing crisis, welfare reform and other issues make it difficult for councils to find adequate affordable temporary accommodation for those in need.

Rent arrears and temporary accommodation costs are rising as a result.

People are living in insecure housing, sometimes overcrowded and often of poor quality with little recourse to complain, and they can wait indefinitely for permanent housing

Temporary Accommodation – review/strategy

Homelessness demand and pressures on temporary accommodation are increasing in Croydon

A Temporary Accommodation Strategy is in development to address – demand management & supply issues

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- A business case is due for consideration internally and with members imminently
- Proposals for 2 targeted pilots
- Resources to deliver the strategy

Axis – repairs contract performance and management

Axis contract extended by 4 years in December 2020 (February 2021 Cabinet report). Full appraisal of repairs contract options due this financial year.

Previous repairs performance review for 2019/20 gave an overall satisfactory report of Axis performance against the contract KPIs: flagged growing number of 'high volume repairs' properties & the complaints timescale KPI was not met for several months.

2020/21 repairs performance data highlights:

- 92% customer satisfaction with service after repairs completed
- Average 24 day voids turnaround vs. 10 day target
- 16% calls abandoned vs. 5% target

Council currently recruiting for Head of Repairs and Maintenance

ARK report flags a need to review the approach to repairs contract management to move away from adversarial management towards a more contemporary partnership approach

Initial housing service action plan sets out the following actions:

Consider delivery of the repairs service, in order to identify the most cost effective means of providing the service that meets the standards expected by tenants.

Draw intelligence and data together to give a holistic view of asset performance and inform strategic decision making budget setting; Take account of high levels of responsive repairs in order to make proactive investment decisions.