Transformation

Organisational Re-engineering

Housing Services

(Response Maintenance & Voids Maintenance)

Management Report

June 2015

Management Report for Housing Services (Response Maintenance & Voids Maintenance) - Organisational Re-engineering Review

1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

Following a Major Service Review exercise, Members agreed that the Council's OR Manager would be best utilised to conduct reviews within Housing and Regeneration Services. A 24-month period was allocated for undertaking this work from April 2013 to March 2015. The OR Manager spent 80% of her time conducting this review; the cost of this was funded from the Housing Revenue Account. The remaining 20% of the OR Managers time was funded from the General Revenue Account to allow the OR Manager to conduct corporate work.

This is the second and final review conducted within Housing and Regeneration Services and was undertaken within Property Services Day to Day Response Maintenance and Void Maintenance Service, and completes the programme of planned OR projects.

1.2 Purpose

It was agreed that the OR review must identify opportunities for service efficiencies and improvements to support the Housing and Regeneration Service achieve their vision of becoming *'A top performing Landlord'*.

The Project Initiation Document (PID) stated, 'The project will achieve this by looking to develop new ways of working based on findings from 'the voice of the customer, the voice of the process and the voice of people'. Ultimately, the project will look to create positive change within the Response Maintenance and Voids Maintenance Service. These changes could include culture (championing Continuous Improvement (CI)) as well as changes to roles and structures. It will seek to remove waste from existing processes, through re-design and change; and provide sustainability and agility for the service as a whole.'

The Project Board agreed within the PID that the review would support this by generating service efficiencies and any savings resulting from this could, as an option, then be reinvested within the service to support delivery of this vision.

1.3 How the review was conducted

The review was conducted using the Council's OR model, which incorporates Prince II Principles and Lean Methodology. The Council's OR Manager led the review and worked closely with the Council's Property Service Manager. Accordingly, a Project Board was set up in order to oversee the work.

To assist the OR Manager a Project Team made up of key officers from Housing and other sections of the Council was set up. The OR Manager met with the Project team both collectively and on a one to one basis as and when required throughout the Project.

The review used the three voices method, which captures the 'voice of the Customer', the 'voice of the Staff' and the 'voice of the Process'. Staff were engaged throughout the review and Managers and staff who deliver the service were involved in the following ways:-

- Interviews/workshops to identify issues, map out processes both at the 'As is' stage and 'To be' stages, identify unnecessary activity within processes and 'Blue Sky' Workshops.
- Assisted in the collation of workload volumes, numbers of processes and ICT data, this included completing timesheets sheets.
- Helped with focus groups with customers to obtain their views in relation to current service delivery as well as their aspirations for the future.

- Participated in a site visit to Staffordshire Housing (Registered Social Landlord) to ascertain and share best practice.

1.4 Findings

Section 4 of this report gives a detailed breakdown of the findings from this review including a list of operational recommendations for further service improvement. For ease, these have been grouped into the following high-level headings.

- **Changes to the current Response Maintenance/Void Maintenance works Contracts** - There are high levels of duplication within current processes, this includes a high volume of Variation works and some Recall work. This often creates additional work for both the Repairs Support team, Response Maintenance Surveyors, Void Surveyors and Customer Services. This is due to the high number of 'Schedule of Rates' items which at times makes it difficult to diagnose a repair correctly. By changing the current model to a 'price per property' method this would remove this work completely.
- **Restructure the teams to create a Generic Response Maintenance/Void Maintenance team** - This would enable better planning of resources with Surveyors managing their own geographical areas for both Response Maintenance and Void Maintenance work. As well as providing a more consistent approach in the work completed on properties, as Surveyors will be more familiar with work already carried out/due to be carried out within their patch i.e. Cyclical Programme works.
- **Further promote and develop customer access** - By improving the level and quality of information tenants can access at first point of contact i.e. via the Council's website/Customer Services. This will encourage self-serve as well as reduce the number of calls to Property Services which in turn will allow them to deliver a high quality of service to tenants, with more time.
- **Streamline ICT Systems to further automate processes** - An example of this is the proposal to introduce mobile working for Surveyors. The current service is highly paper driven with Surveyors using paper inspections at properties, then handwriting these in order for the Repairs Support team to input this information. Clearly automation would take away this duplication and as a result the service will become more efficient.

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1.5 Key Recommendations

Below is an outline summary of the main recommendations that have been derived from the findings within Section 4 of this report, together with a general summary of the more salient points and outcomes of the project:-

1. Change Response Maintenance and Void Maintenance Contracts in order to introduce an 'average price per property' model[1]. This will improve the quality of service provided to Tenants, remove unnecessary variation of orders and recall work for the Council and help to ensure that work completed is completed right first time. Removal of this work will provide a resource saving of 1.5 FTE equivalents from the Repairs Support Team.

2. Further develop/Integrate ICT systems, which will stop duplication of work, allow information to be accessed in real time and provide a more efficient service to tenants. This includes further development between 'Repair-finder' and Inter-finder' and Front Office systems and Housings QL client database system, and will further enhance tenants ability to report repairs online.

3. Restructure the Response Maintenance Surveyors, Response Support Team and Void Maintenance Surveyors from three teams into one to provide a more coordinated, flexible, consistent and generic approach. This will provide a resource saving of 1 FTE equivalent

4. Implement Mobile working for the Surveyors in order to streamline current processes.

5. Implement Voicemail across the whole of Property Services.

6. Automate the tenant's survey process to enable these surveys to be completed in 'real-time' to gain a clear understanding of the quality of service delivered.

7. Introduce text messaging for tenants as a way of providing up to date information on repairs ordered and appointments made.

8. Automate Surveyor appointments to allow appointments to be electronically booked into their diaries in 'real-time' via Customer Services and Back Office staff.

1.6 Savings

The following table provides an estimated summary of the cash and efficiency savings that will be generated within the first year i.e. 2016/17 as a result of implementing those recommendations detailed within Section 6 of this report.

Section	Full Year OR Cash/Resource savings (£)	Full Year OR Efficiency (£)
Response Maintenance	£35,271	£11,214
Surveyors	£35,860	£13,498
Additional Savings i.e. stationary/printing etc.	£328	
Sub Total	£71,459	£24,712
Total cash saving/resource 2016/17	**£71,459**	
Total efficiency saving 2016/17		**£24,712**

[1] The 'Price per property' model will be derived at by the Implementation team using in-house specialists

2.0 Background and Overview

2.1 Introduction

Following a Major Service Review exercise, Members agreed that the Council's OR Manager would be best utilised to conduct reviews within Housing and Regeneration Services. A 24-month period has been allocated for undertaking this work from April 2013 to March 2015. The OR Manager spent 80% of her time conducting this review; the cost of this was funded from the Housing Revenue Account. The remaining 20% of the OR Managers time was funded from the General Revenue Account to allow the OR Manager to conduct corporate work.

2.2 Purpose and Aim

The OR exercise within Housing Services (Response Maintenance and Voids Maintenance) has resulted in this detailed findings/recommendations report and it was agreed that the review must identify opportunities for service efficiencies and improvements to support the service in achieving their vision of becoming a top performing Landlord.

The Project Initiation Document (PID) stated, 'The project will achieve this by looking to develop new ways of working based on findings from 'the voice of the customer, the voice of the process and the voice of people'. Ultimately, the project will look to create positive change within the Response Maintenance and Voids Maintenance Services. These changes could include culture (championing Continuous Improvement (CI)) as well as changes to roles and structures. It will seek to remove waste from existing processes, through re-design and change; and provide sustainability and agility for the service as a whole.'

The Project Board agreed within the PID that the review would support this by generating service efficiencies and any savings resulting from this could, as an option, then be reinvested within the service to support delivery of this vision.

2.3 Scope & Key Objectives

It was agreed that the OR would conduct the review across two service areas.
These are:-

- Response Maintenance
- Voids Maintenance

The review commenced in September 2015 and concentrated on the services provided to customers from the above service areas.

The OR Manager was asked to explore alternative methods of service delivery whilst conducting this review to ascertain if there is any merit in restructuring the three teams.

In summary, the key objectives of this project were therefore to:

- Carry out an OR project within the Council's Housing Response Maintenance and Voids Maintenance Services and make appropriate recommendations for improved service delivery. These recommendations will ensure that the services operate in the most efficient, effective and economic manner and support delivery of the vision to be a 'Top Performing Landlord'
- Where possible embed capability and capacity into operational running so that it is sustainable after the project closes. This will enable officers to build on the success of the project by continuing lean systems thinking and seek to deliver continuous improvement.
- To maximise the accessibility of services using customer insight to ensure they are targeted and tailored to the specific needs of the Housing Services customer base and promote channel shift in line with the authorities' corporate objectives.

2.4 Approach & Methodology

The review was conducted using Prince II Principles and Lean Methodology. The Council's OR Manager led the review and a Project Board was set up in order to oversee the projects key deliverables.

To ensure a 360-degree review, a Project Team was set up consisting of two main groups. These were:-

i. Service Managers/Officers responsible for the delivery of the service.

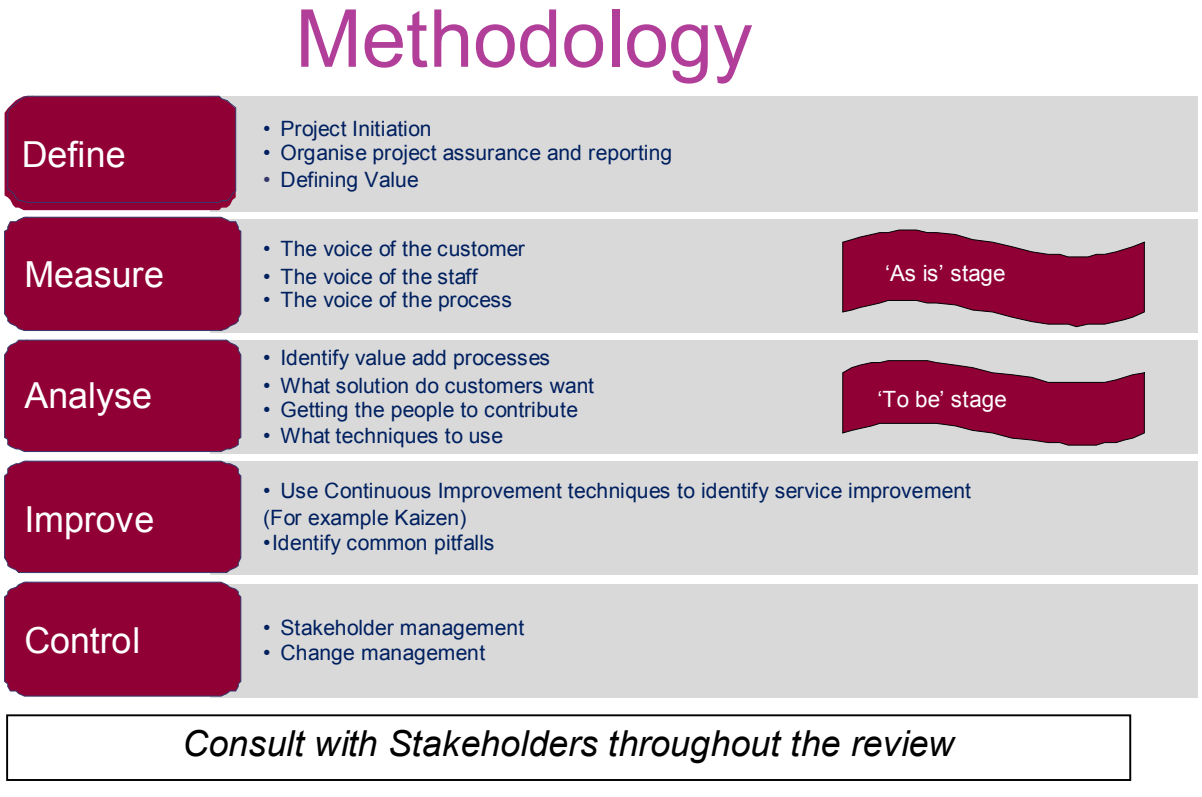
ii. Co-opted Members, comprising of internally designated resources from disciplines such as Housings Performance and Project team, Tenant Involvement, Human Resources, Communications and Consultation, Accountancy, Audit; as well as Union and British Telecom Lancashire Services (BTLS) representatives.

The OR Manager met with the Project team both collectively and on a one to one basis as and when required throughout the Project.

Staff were engaged throughout the review and were involved in activities, which included:-

- Staff interviews to identify their priorities and issues.
- Various workshops including Process Mapping both at the 'As is' stage and 'To be' stage, value adding and non-value adding exercise to identify wasteful activity within processes and 'Blue Sky' Workshops.
- Assisted in providing relevant volumetric data when required, this included completing timesheets.
- Helped with tenant focus groups with customers to obtain their views in relation to current service delivery as well as their aspirations for the future.
- A site visit Staffordshire Housing (Registered Social Landlord) to ascertain and share best practice.

At the beginning of the review, a PID was agreed by the Project Board. This outlined the scope of the project and detailed the methodology for the review, using Six Sigma sub-methodology: DMAIC. The DMAIC model splits the project into five separate phases shown below:-



3.0 The Voice Exercises

As with all OR reviews, it is important to ensure a holistic approach and for this reason a key part of any project is to conduct the 'three voices exercises'. This includes:

- The voice of the Customer - This identifies the expressed and non-expressed needs, wants and desires of the recipient of a service. Because customers' behaviour is key to strategy and process redesign, their insights drive the value levers and mapping, and they define value-added services and products. Additionally, through their use of products and services, they provide on-going feedback and help identify new product development opportunities.
- The voice of the Process - This looks at the performance, volume and capability of a process to meet both business and customer needs. The voices of the customer and staff feed into process classification and relevancy, and further mapping shows the significance and effectiveness of each process. Each step within a process is given value adding and non-value adding ranking, which helps identify what is most significant to customers and the business. This information is then used to redesign services as it provides an opportunity to tie the customer's voice to the process culture and separate what is important in the customer's eyes from more company or business-centric processes.
- The voice of the Staff - This is also linked to the voice of the process in that problem areas can be highlighted along with the voice of the customer to identify potential opportunities. This exercise encourages staff to take personal ownership and a sense of responsibility to ensure that they are directly contributing to the project success. This also has an impact on financial results, as staff can share information related to resources, costs, talent, processes and solutions that provide strategic direction for the review. An overarching impact that is sometimes overlooked is the influence employees have on cultural change, through their voice; employees provide a dialogue within the project that sheds light on how they will apply the company vision to their daily tasks within the proposed redesign.

Analysis from the three voices is used to help form recommendations put forward for future service delivery. It ensures that these recommendations meet the needs of our customers as well as the needs of the business. The next three items (3.1, 3.2 & 3.3) shows common findings from the three voices analysis; however, this analysis is also threaded throughout the rest of the findings section of this report where appropriate.

3.1 The voice of the Customer

In July 2014 the Housing and Regeneration service commissioned M.E.L Research to complete a Survey of Tenant and Residents (STAR Survey). The results of which were produced in a Finding Report in 2014. This survey was undertaken via the telephone and was conducted with a random selection of general needs and sheltered tenants. Tenants were asked a range of questions on all of the services provided to tenants by the Housing and Regeneration Service. In total 984 interviews were undertaken and the overall results of this work were deemed as statistically accurate.

As part of this survey tenants were asked to rate how they felt about:-

- Their Overall Satisfaction
- The Quality of their Home
- The Condition of their Property
- The Repairs and Maintenance Service
- If their views were listened to
- If they were kept informed

The results from this survey were very positive with tenants advising that the service had improved in most areas since the last STAR survey which was conducted in 2012.

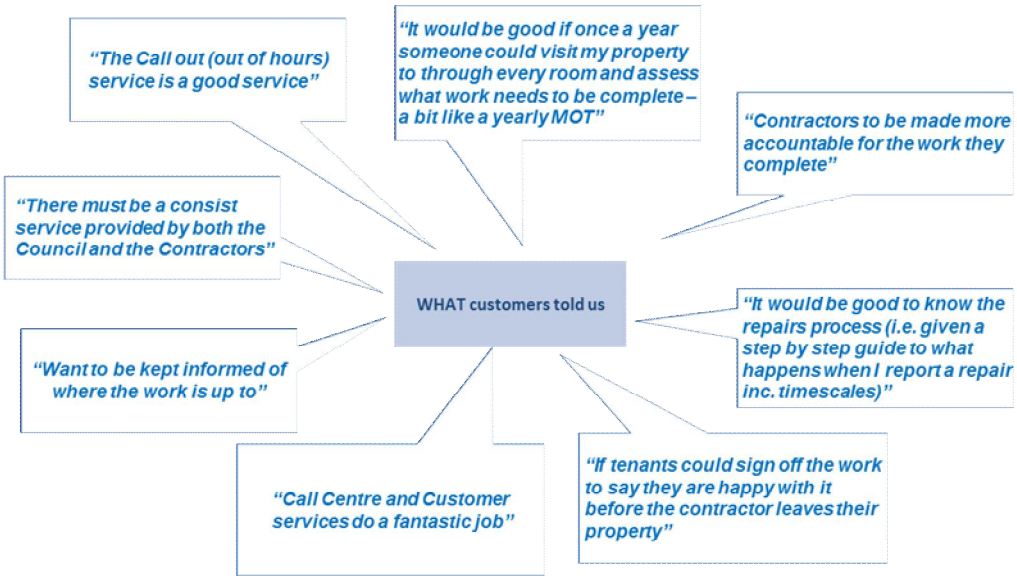
The review used the results from the STAR survey to help form the Voice of the Customer. However the OR Manager also worked with Housing's Tenant Participation team to conduct a number of small focus groups with 'involved' and 'non-involved' tenants. 'Involved tenants' are customers who live in

WLBC Council properties and regularly provide feedback on Housing Services to Housing. 'Non-involved tenants' live in WLBC Council properties however; they do not usually participate in feedback. The purpose of these groups was to ascertain balanced views and aspirations, the Focus groups were put together using a 'Keno' approach, which examines what customers deem as a 'must' from the service, what customers 'want' from a service and what would 'wow' customers if it were part of the service.

Key results from the Voice of the Customer are shown below:-

Customers Wants & Wows from their Repairs Service

- Quick Response & prompt service
- Polite, honest & courteous staff
- Easy to access information
- One call does it all
- To be kept updated and informed - timeline for repair
- Job right first time to a high specification
- To be able to do all jobs in one visit
- If a tenant advises a Contractor of a small repair whilst at their home for it to be done



3.2 The voice of the Process

It was important for the review to focus on those processes and procedures which involved a high volume of customer contact. In order to identify these specific areas the OR Manager met with the Service Managers and staff from the teams to identify which processes to target more intensely during the review.

An initial data gathering exercise took place to help analyse the time, cycle and numbers of those processes deemed to be high volume.

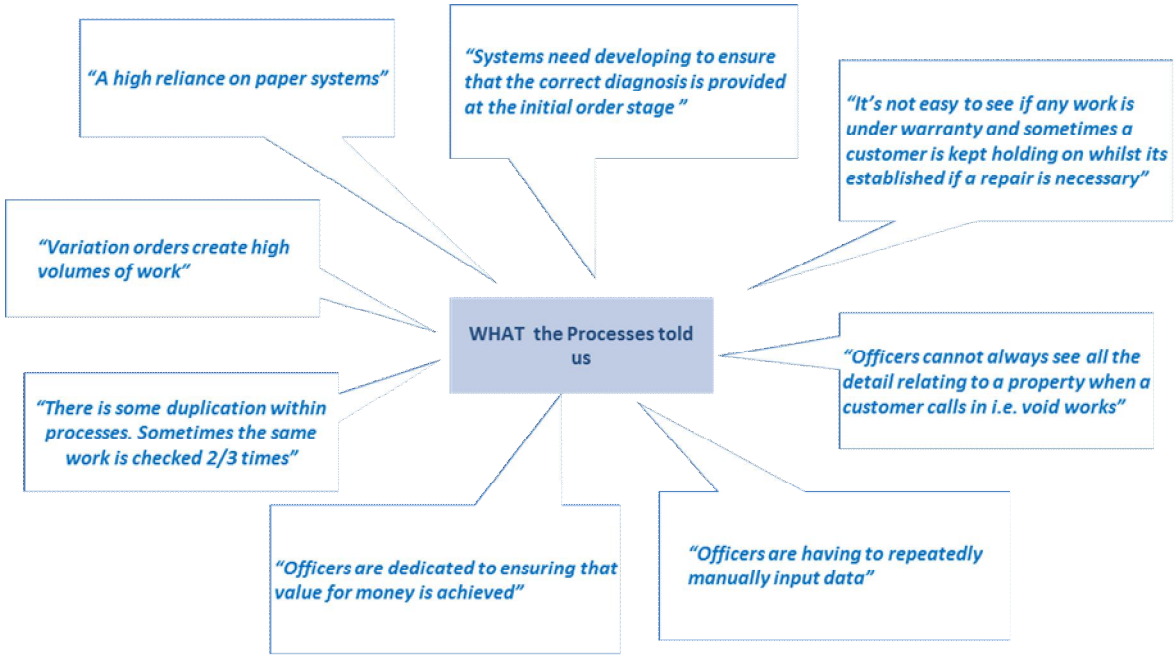
In order to collect the correct information and gain a detailed understanding of the service as a whole, it was important to utilise the skills and knowledge of staff involved in delivering the service. Staff therefore assisted in:-

- Mapping workshops to gain an understanding of current processes including identifying value adding & non-value adding steps within these services.
- Carrying out detailed timings exercises including 'Week in the life of' to identify how officers spend their time on a weekly basis.
- Interrogation of systems in order to extrapolate data regarding volumes.
- Shadowing staff undertaking their daily duties (commonly known as going to Gemba).

The review also:-

- Listened to call recordings in the Contact Centre to help better understand service delivery, and demand.
- Conducted Volumetric and KPI analysis.
- Conducted a site visit to Staffordshire Housing (Registered Social Landlord) together with desktop research with other Social Housing Providers.

The diagram below illustrates key findings from the Voice of the Process:-



3.3 The voice of the Staff

The review involved a number of 'critical questioning' sessions with staff from the two Services areas – Response Maintenance Service and Voids Maintenance Service. This included meetings with Managers & Team Leaders as well as with key officers from other service areas within the Council, for example Customer Services staff.

Meetings also took place with the Assistant Director of Housing & Regeneration and Housing & Regeneration's two Portfolio Holders.

The purpose of these sessions was to identify their main issues, priorities and aspirations.

These sessions highlighted a number of cross cutting themes, which were taken into account throughout the review. These were:-

- Cross team working
- Communication
- Customer access
- ICT
- Partnership working

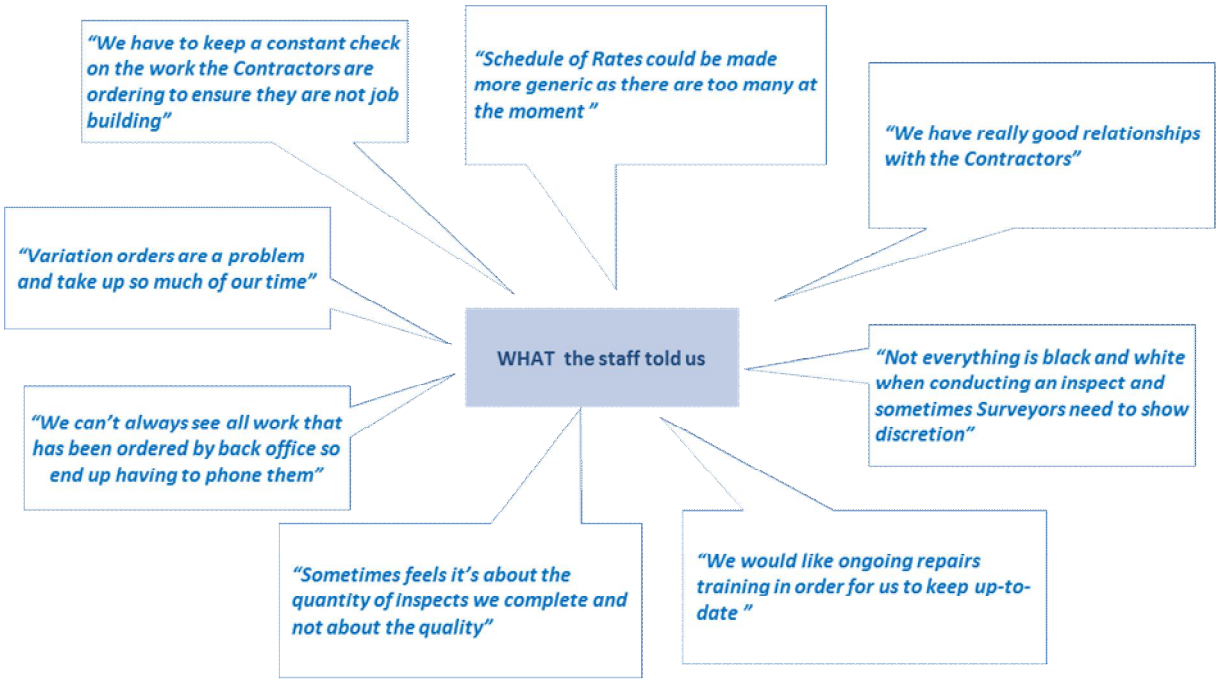
The OR Manager met with the project team both as a group and on a one to one basis throughout the review to discuss findings and identify possible solutions.

The OR Manager and Housing Property Services Manager worked in partnership for the duration of the review.

As well as the 'critical questioning' sessions, officers also took part in 'Blue sky' workshops putting forward innovative ideas for the redesign of the new service.

Key Officers across the authority were consulted with during the project to ensure that findings and recommendations for the review are accurate and viable.

The diagrams below show examples of the data gathered / analysis from the Voice of the staff:-



4.0 Findings

4.1 Repairs Support Team

Orders from Response Maintenance Orders/Void Maintenance Orders

Out of the 23,700 Response Maintenance orders raised per year, the Repairs Support team creates an average of 10,050 Response Maintenance orders per year, approximately 3,050 of these orders are raised from inspections completed by the Councils Response Maintenance Surveyors, the remaining 7,000 of these orders generated from requests Tenants, Contractors and Staff. An average of 4050 Void Maintenance orders per year are created by the Repairs Support team from inspections completed by the Councils Void Maintenance Surveyors. There is a level of cross checking and duplication within this process as Officer's check for any Cyclical programme of works completed and if any work required is still under warranty. The process is paper driven at the moment with the majority of Surveyors completing paper inspections and the Repairs Support Staff manually inputting this work.

The solution here could be to automate this process with Surveyors using hand-held mobile devices which will allow them to access information whilst out on site as well as complete inspection tickets in real time. The Housing ICT strategy involves the implementation of Mobile working and this review would therefore support this strategy.

Variation Orders

Contractors have a £50 variation limit on all orders (i.e. the ability to automate further works up to the value of £50). However there are a high number of Variation Order (VO) requests from Contractors which exceeds the £50 limit. On average 6500 Variation Orders over the £50 limit are created each year and the work involved here equates to 1FTE (although this could be slightly higher as this doesn't capture VO requests which are refused (i.e. representing further unmapped workload). The process for dealing with Variation Orders can be drawn out with both Surveyors and the Repairs Support team having numerous conversations either over the telephone or on site with Contractors before agreeing for this additional work to be completed. There is therefore a lot of duplication in this process including checking paper work once the variation work has been completed and there was evidence to suggest that on occasions the same orders can be check twice both by the Surveyor and Repairs Support team. Throughout the review staff repeatedly suggested that VO monitoring is frustrating as they feel it generates unnecessary work for them which is time-consuming and can be confrontational (when dealing with contractors).

Recalls

Recall orders are raised against previously completed orders at no cost to the Council they are usually raised as a result of the Council being informed that this work has not been completed or is not to the required standard. The repairs support team is responsible for raising recalls, of which there are approximately 450 per year. There are various avenues for identifying a recall however a percentage of these are reported from customers calling into Customer Services either face to face or ringing the Contact Centre.

New Tenant Work

The repairs support team is responsible for the creation of New Tenant Orders these are notified through various channels including via Housing Officers, Surveyors and Customer Services. Approximately 1000 New Tenant Orders are raised each year and the total cost of this work is approximately £55,000 per year. However the Response Maintenance Manager feels that this figure may not reflect all New Tenant Work completed as New Tenant work is not always coded as such.

The review would suggest in order to capture this work in the future it would be helpful if all New Tenant work could be coded to the correct code.

Completing Tenant Surveys

Tenant Surveys are currently sent out in a paper format to Customers via Imail Service[2]. Everyday Officers run a daily report which identifies repairs with completion dates due and this generates a survey to be sent out to the tenant. QL automatically populates some fields within the letter to accompany the survey; however this content is not always correct or may not make sense. For example the heading of the repair may be in capital letters or the wording used within QL does not make sense. Therefore Officers have to check the detail of these prior to them being sent. Completed Survey forms are manually input into QL by the Repairs Support team using dropdown boxes. Approximately 50% of surveys received back require a call back from the Repairs Support Team to the customer to verify comments or order new works.[3]

(During the review Housing's Service Development team were working with the Repairs Support Team to try to address some of the issues around the tenant's survey process. For example automation of postcodes in to letters).

On average 13,000 tenant surveys are sent out each year and approximately 2000 of these are received back. The forms currently identify the level of tenants' satisfaction, and the questions are structured around this. It would be helpful in future to amend the process for following up the survey with dissatisfied customers, in order to analyse how these services could be improved from any lessons learnt.

Other Registered Social Landlords have automated this process, using text messaging or electronic voice responsive call-back surveys once a repair has been completed. An example of this is Accent Housing group who have implemented an automated Survey using a system by Housing Contact called "Call 2 Survey". This system contacts all customers once a repair has been completed with a simple question "were you satisfied with your repair" if a customer answers yes then no further action is taken as satisfaction is deemed to have been achieved. However should a customer answer no then their details are logged to generate a call back to ascertain why they were unhappy. Accent have found by using this system it has:

- Reduced complaints as these are dealt with straight away.
- Problems are identified straight away to stop them from escalating.
- A reduction in incoming repairs calls has been experienced.
- A reduction in 2FTE as a result of stopping their paper based service

The Housing Service Development team has advised that there is the potential within Housing's current ICT systems to develop an electronic voice responsive system/text messaging/email survey which can then automatically populate the appropriate fields within QL.[4]

Surveyor Inspections

There are levels of duplication within the process for raising Surveyor Inspections with officers requesting these on QL (Housings client database system) and then updating a spreadsheet created by the team detailing each Surveyor appointment made.

The process for the allocation of inspections is currently manual and paper driven. At the end of each day a member of the Repairs Support team is tasked with running and printing off a report which gives them a list of all the Surveyor Inspections for the following day. They then spend time checking spreadsheets against the QL report and raising inspection on QL if show on the spreadsheet but have not been raised on QL or vice versa. These appointments are then manually allocated to the two Response Maintenance Surveyors. All inspections for the next day are then printed off along with a further two copies of the report. Each sheet is highlighted to show

[2] https://www.imail.co.uk/using_imail/
[3] Verified with Joan Simpson Repairs Support Team 11/02/2015
[4] Verified with Craig Round Housing Service Development Team 01/04/2015

inspections allocated and a copy of this is pinned to the Repairs Support Team wall. Clearly there is room for automation within this process using electronic diaries. Surveyors would be able to manage their own diaries with QL searching for slots and allocating appointments accordingly, similar and consistent to the recommended management of visits/workloads for Housing Officers as part of the previous OR report

The majority of inspections are raised throughout the day with the exception of Post Inspections. Post Inspections are raised from a list generated by the system once an order has reached its completion date. Approximately 10% of orders between £30 - £300 and all orders above £300 should generate a post inspection. However the Repairs Support team checks this list to ensure that an inspection is necessary depending on the types of works undertaken whereby they usually ring customers with orders under £150 to obtain feedback/confirmation of the job, rather than raising a 'Post Inspection'.

Invoicing

Electronic reports are run to check invoices against orders to ensure that they match whereby a match automatically generates payment to the Contractor. However, should an order and an invoice not match an email is generated to the Contractor to rectify. The Contractor will then either amend this or contact the Repairs Support team to discuss further. (This work was also picked up as part of the 'week in the life' exercises).

The table below shows a list of the processes mapped during the 'as is' stage of the project, the total average number of hours it takes to complete them per year and the estimated Full Time Equivalent it take to complete this work.

Process	Hours to complete
Raising Response Maintenance Orders from Inspections	**490**
Raising Response Maintenance Orders from Contractors/Customers	**539**
Raising Void Orders	**536**
Raising Variation Orders	**1487**
Raising New Tenant Orders	**189**
Recalls	**60**
Tenant Surveys	**193**
Raising Inspections for Surveyors	**455**
Total	**3948**
FTEs	**2.5**

The current number of FTEs within the Repairs Support team is 3.2 FTE's. As can be seen from the above table the total workload of the 'as is' processes mapped out within the Repairs Support team prior to the review equates to 3948 hours, i.e. the equivalent of 2.5 FTE's. As with all OR reviews it's important to note that whilst the processes above show the high volume workloads for the team they do not capture in total how the Officers spend their day as a whole. For example making and receiving telephone calls undertaking general administration tasks; and attending meetings etc. In order to capture this information Officers took part in a "week in the life" exercise, the review also used information from Customer Services to identify the volume of incoming calls into the Repairs Support team. This information highlighted that the Repairs Support Staff are still dealing with a high volume of calls, including offering support to Customer Services, and this process could benefit from being streamlined. This would enable Customer Services staff/Customers to access more detailed information via Customer Services' Northgate Customer Relationship Management System and the

Councils Website, for example access to information relating to Warranty jobs, Void works, Inspections completed etc. will allow the more queries to be dealt with at First Point of Contact under self-serve. This is looked at in more detail later on in this report at item 5.1.

The table below provides a breakdown of the Operational Service Recommendations identified within this item, which contribute towards the cashable/efficiency savings identified at item 7 of this report.

Ref	**Service Recommendations**
SR1.	Implement full, real time Mobile working for Surveyors to enable them to use hand-held mobile devices which will allow them to access information whilst out on site as well as complete inspection tickets. Housing's ICT strategy involves the implementation of Mobile working and this review would support this strategy.
SR2.	Ensure that all work created within QL is coded correctly to help with future budget analysis.
SR3.	Develop an electronic voice responsive system/text messaging/email survey which will contact tenants once a repair has been completed. This information will automatically populate the appropriate fields within QL
SR4.	Automate the Surveyor Inspection process to electronically populate Surveyors outlook diaries.

4.2 Response Maintenance Surveyors

There are currently 3.6 Surveyors within the Response Maintenance Surveyors team and this is broken down below:

- 1FTE Senior General Response Maintenance Surveyor
- 2 FTE General Response Maintenance Surveyors
- 1 Gas Surveyor 30% of time
- 1 Electrical Surveyor 30% of time

Whilst the general Response Maintenance surveyors are solely responsible for Response Maintenance work, the Electrical and Gas Surveyors are also responsible for some Voids work and Capital Investment work. It should be noted that in order to cover illness and additional void related workload, for the past 15 months the Senior General Response Maintenance Surveyor has been seconded to work within the Voids Maintenance Team. However this has meant the Response Maintenance team has not had a Senior Surveyor during this period.

Inspections

Using data from QL on average the Response Maintenance Surveyors conduct approximately 2300 inspections a year, broken down this equates to an average of 5 per person per day. Due to the way information is recorded within QL it is difficult to obtain a breakdown of the different types of inspections completed. However in principle the inspection process is the same regardless of if it is a General Inspection, Work in Progress or a Post Inspection. Therefore the review used generic volumetric timings when analysing inspections which were agreed and verified with the Response Maintenance Surveyors[5]. As already highlighted at item 4.1 of this report the inspection process is highly paper based and there is therefore room for automation. The Surveyors use paper inspections when visiting properties to conduct their inspections and then have to write these up when back at the office. This is then sent to the Repairs Support team to complete the inspection screen and create an order within QL.

Inspection work for the Response Maintenance Surveyors equates to 2318 hours, i.e. the equivalent of 1.5 FTE's. However in order to capture other day to day duties i.e. making and receiving telephone calls; undertaking general administration tasks; and attending meetings etc., Officers took part in a "week in the life" exercise. This highlighted that Officers spend approximately 70% of their

[5] Verified with John Kendall Response Maintenance Surveyors 02/04/2015

time conducting inspections; the remaining 30% is spent on general tasks such as admin tasks, communication, project work etc.

The secondment of the Senior Surveyor from within this team is having an impact on the Response Maintenance Manager's role. Due to the nature of the Response Maintenance service a number of phone calls and complaints are generated and on average this services receives 141[6] official complaints per year (this being a mixture of MP and tenant complaints). These official complaints generate a volume of work including having to investigate previous repairs history, visits to tenant's properties and then drafting responses. As well as dealing with official complaints, the Response Maintenance Manager also deals with a large number of unofficial complaints from tenants via the telephone every day.

Not having a Senior Surveyor also impacts on the day to day Management of the Response Maintenance Surveyors, this includes staff management, development of the team, monitoring of inspections etc. As this type of work would usually be picked up initially by the Senior Surveyor which in turn would allow the Response Maintenance Manager to conduct more planning work, development of systems, monitoring of contracts, less time for strategic work and budget work. In addition due to competing priorities and illness it was difficult for the OR Manager to engage with the Gas Surveyor and Electrical Surveyor during the review.

The recommendations and section 8.0 Continuous Improvement address the issues identified above, and provide a sustainable staffing structure for the service.

4.3 Voids maintenance

Inspections

On average Void surveyors complete 2030 inspections per year, 702 of these are completed once a property becomes vacant and prior to any works being completed. The rest are a mixture of Post Inspection (on Void work completion), New tenant Inspections, Work in progress Inspections and Snagging Inspections. Inspections are highly paper based and all inspections are printed off prior to an inspection taking place.

Once a property has become empty an email is sent to the Void Surveyors to advise, this email is printed off and two copies are made - one for the Surveyor to use, the other being left in a tray with the officers name as a record of who is completing this inspection. Whilst at the property Surveyors make paper notes including completing a visual electrical checklist and taking pictures of any relevant recharges work or work required. Void schedules are then completed when back at the office (66% of which are hand written with 33% being typed into an email, this is down to two surveyors in the team handwrite theirs with the third surveyor typing theirs up via email)and photographs uploaded and saved into an electronic file. The completed schedules are then batched and sent to the Repairs Support team to be input (see item 4.1 above). Using the past two years of data an average price for a void property is currently at £3,000

Post inspections ("key inspections") are raised by Housing Assistants from the Voids and Allocations team once a Contractor returns keys to a property and advises the work is now complete. These inspections are then placed in a file along with a schedule of Building, Electrical and Gas works completed. Surveyors then take this paper information to a property to use as a guide when completing their Post Inspection.

A more streamlined way for the above work would be to automate the inspection process once keys have been returned whereby an inspection could be automatically generated for the Surveyors diary. Mobile working would help streamline inspections for Surveyors and help reduce the amount of paper printed.

[6] Verified with Sian White Housing Performance & Project team, Claire Cassidy PA to Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration 20/04/2015

The table below shows the total average number of hours it takes for Void Maintenance Surveyors to complete Inspections and Variation works per year and the estimated Full Time Equivalent it takes to complete this work.

Process	Hours to complete
Void Inspections	**1030**
Raising Variation Orders	**794**
Other Inspections	**1307**
Total	**3131**
FTEs	**2.0**

The total workload of the above processes for Void Surveyors equates to 3131 hours, which is approximately 65% of each Void Surveyors time, this in total equates to 2.0 FTE's. The current number of Void Surveyors responsible for this workload is 3 FTEs. The above does not take into account other duties within the team. For example making and receiving telephone calls and dealing with emails. The 'week in the life' exercises indicate that these additional duties take up approximately 30% of their time, which collectively equates to approximately 1 FTE.

4.4 Contractors

The Council uses 3 main contractors to conduct the majority of its Response Maintenance and Voids Maintenance works these are:-

- DLP limited – General Building Maintenance Contract
- JC Construction - General Building Maintenance Contract
- Heat 2000 – Central Heating Maintenance and Breakdown Contract

Both DLP Limited and JC Constructions General Building Maintenance Contracts commenced on 01/04/2012 and are contracted for five years, the current contracts are due to end on 31/03/2017.

Heat 2000 Central Heating Maintenance and Breakdown Contract commenced on 01/04/2008, this contract was for a period of seven years and at the time of writing this report WLBC had gone out to tender for this work.

Whilst the three Contractors above conduct the majority of voids works to property it maybe at times that the Council has an influx of void properties. Therefore to ensure that void works are completed as within a reasonable timescale, the Council has a voids 'Call off' contract. This contract allows for the three contractors below to pick up any voids work which cannot be completed by the three main contractors:-

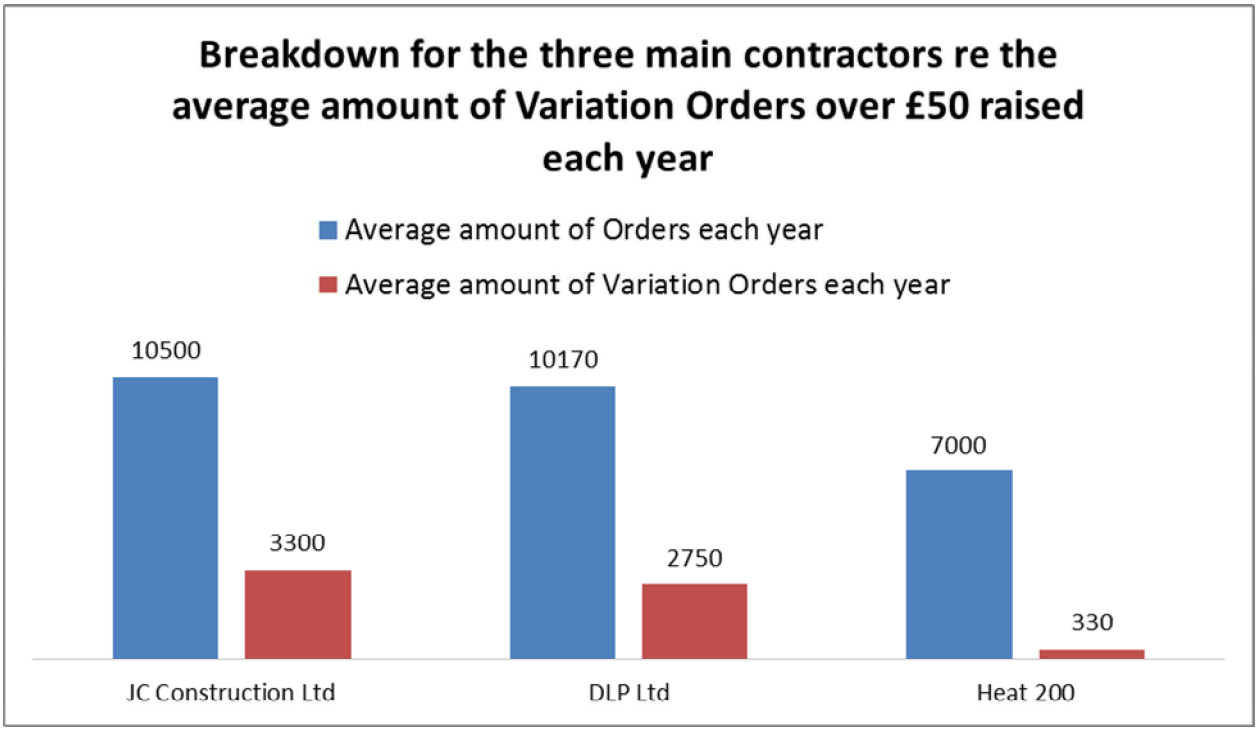
- Paintaway Ltd
- BDM Northwest
- H Tonge & Sons Ltd

The Council operates a number of smaller Contracts for more specialist work, for example in relation to door entry systems, lift repairs, sheltered housing equipment etc.

Both DLP and JC Constructions contract runs on a 'Schedule of Rates' (SOR) delivery model. This model relies on a repair being correctly diagnosed when it's initially reported and allocated the correct SOR code (currently there are over 800 SORs). Whilst on site, should the contractor find that the work required is different or is more expensive to the original order value then the Contractor will raise a Variation Order (VO). Contractors have a discretionary limit of £50 on VO's which allows

them to automatically raise additional works up to this value. For any works above this limit the Contractors must request permission before completion of this work revision. On average 6500 Variation Orders above the £50 limit are raised each year. However this only takes into account VO orders raised and doesn't include the phone calls from Contractors where a VO is refused. As mentioned earlier at item 4.1, VO work can be time consuming for all involved as it requires telephone calls to surveyors and back office for this work to be agreed or alternatively waiting for a surveyor to visit site before the work can be completed which in turn causes time delays for the customer.

Heat 2000 contract is run on an annual sum for all heating repairs (also known as a "price per property"), each order put though is at nil cost and the work required is completed (this work excludes new boilers). As a result Heat 2000 has the fewest VO's out of the three main Contractors. A breakdown of this is as shown in the chart below:



In April 2012 the Council worked with Epix systems, DLP and JC Construction to introduce a booking appointment system to allow Customers to book repairs appointments over the telephone with both Contractors in 'real time'. When reporting a repair, Customers are asked what day is best for them and if they prefer a morning or afternoon appointment. Epix has since conducted a case study and reported that some of the outcomes of implementing this system are that it has "enabled a reduction in telephone calls and improved the number of no access rates of both contractors".[7] Customer Services has also noticed an improvement as they do not have to keep Customers on the telephone whilst they contact the Repairs Support Office/Contractors to try and arrange appointments. They are also able to provide customers with 'real time' information on when a Contractor is due to call at a property should a Customer contact to check. This service is not currently offered for heating work therefore customers are receiving a two tier service. The majority of heating jobs are classed as emergencies (response within 2 hours) and would not require an appointment but non-emergency jobs, i.e. routine jobs would benefit from an appointment system.

The table below provides a breakdown of the Operational Service Recommendations identified within this item, which contribute towards the cashable/efficiency savings identified at item 7 of this report.

Ref	**Service Recommendations**
SR5.	Develop a bookable appointment system for routine Heating orders

[7] http://www.epixsystems.co.uk/casestudy_westlancs.html

4.5 Site Visit/Further Research

Interviews with Housings Property Services Manager, Property Services Staff and Contractors, revealed that a number of Registered Social Housing Providers have changed their Response Maintenance and Voids Maintenance contracts from the traditional Schedule of Rates Model and moved to an 'average price per property' model. This includes:

- Staffordshire Housing Group
- Birmingham City Council
- Northwards Housing
- Spire Homes
- Evolve

As Staffordshire Housing Group (SHG) were highlighted by both the Response Maintenance Manager and DLP as operating an 'average price per property' model, the OR Manager conducted further desktop research and this resulted in a visit to SHG with key Officers from the Response Maintenance team, The Voids Maintenance team and the Transformation team.

For the last year SHG has adopted a 'fixed price per property' model for both their Response Maintenance Services and Voids Maintenance Services. SHG advised that this model has been so successful they are adopting this for future works and are currently in the process of going out to tender specifying this way of working within their Tender document.

SHG has a Housing stock portfolio of 2797 properties. Since 2010 DLP has run their Response Maintenance and Void Maintenance contract, initially operating on a Schedule of Rates model (previously mentioned above at item 4.4). However in March 2014 DLP approached SHG with a proposal to revise their payment terms for the final year of their contract to an 'average fixed price per property' model for both SHG's Response Maintenance and Void Maintenance Service.

To ensure that this model was viable and to assess the risk, SHG appointed Poole Dick Associates to work with DLP to put forward a viable proposal including verifying prices. (See attached at Appendix i). SHG advised that the 'average price per property' model transfers the risk to the Contractor and SHG were insistent when putting this model in place that efficiencies would have to come from the Contractors side. SHG stressed the importance of having the right checks and balances in place when adopting this model and that there is a need to be very clear about boundaries and what's expected from both sides when setting up this model.

Lessons learnt from other Social Housing Providers who have adopted this model have identified that it is best to try to encompass everything within the 'average price per property' and not have any grey areas. For example some Social Housing Providers have 'core' and 'non-core' work included within their Contract, however in practice this can cause operational issues as at times it can become unclear as to what's 'core/non-core'. Therefore SHG have taken this one step further and their current tender document for the next five years is for one contractor to do all i.e. Building, Electricity and Gas repairs.

The points below highlight some of the salient points regarding how SHG have implemented their 'average price per property' model:-

- All incoming repairs are reported to SHG, however these only require a basic diagnosis, for example - leaking tap.
- SHG use an appointment booking system to arrange appointments for DLP.
- Once a repair has been completed DLP update their system with the detail of works conducted, which automatically updates SHG's client database system with the same information.
- SHG have developed reports using past history and Schedule of Rates to monitor the work being completed to ensure that the same standard/level/cost of work is being completed and

that corners are not being cut. For example past history may show that on average 50 taps are replaced a year, therefore if this was to suddenly drop to 30 taps replaced per year, then this would be picked up and queried.

- The trade's person now asks at every visit if there is anything else required whilst they are at the property. This is verified by SHG staff when conducting satisfaction surveys which in turn lead to greater efficiencies and higher levels of customer satisfaction.
- SHG has identified its top 25 customers/users of the service (these are customers who call regularly to report a repair) they now monitor this contact to ascertain if this has reduced. They also gather feedback from these customers on the service they have received.
- SHG has changed how they conduct Response Maintenance inspections - They have increased Post inspections and now do a cross cutting sample of post inspections for governance and monitoring purposes, which includes high and lower priced jobs. So far this has proved positive and work has been of a high standard/quality and "no corners" have been cut.
- Any Response Maintenance/Void works requiring over 75% of work to be completed/renewed, for example kitchen/bathroom work is accessed by an Officer and referred to Cyclical Programme works i.e.
- 10% of void properties are inspected by SHG Surveyors once a property becomes empty. However all void properties are post inspected once void work has been completed.
- Weekly meetings are held between Surveyors, Housing Officers and Contractors to assess void properties about to become empty as well as agreeing works to be completed.
- Tenant reps conduct 'empty property' inspections and produce a quarterly report which is presented to their SHG Board (see attached at Appendix ii).

Payment of invoices is more streamlined under this model and is broken down into two monthly invoices as follows:-

Response Maintenance – the yearly cost for this work is broken down into 12 monthly equal payments and invoice accordingly.

Void Maintenance: - a report is run on a monthly basis to show a tally of how many void properties have had void works completed on them that month. These properties are then multiplied by the agreed 'average price per void property' which in turn produces an invoice. SHG check this and pay accordingly.

SHG have not yet quantified their resource/time savings as they will be doing this at the end of their first year, but they feel it is evident that these savings have been made. This is as a result of: - 100% reduction in Variation Orders and recalls as these are no longer required. 80% reduction in pre inspections, (some customers insist on a 'pre inspection') however these are at a minimum and usually around damp in property etc. Incoming calls from both Contractors and Customers has reduced.

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5.0 Cross Cutting Themes

5.1 Customer Access

Website

Tenants can currently report a repair via the Councils Website using Inter-finder. Inter-finder is an interactive diagnostic tool which allows tenants to click on pictures in order to report a defect. This service is currently not personalised i.e. to the individual person or property and it only allows tenants to input basic details. It does not allow Tenants to access past history so they cannot see if a repair has been reported previously, track where a repair is up to; or book a repairs appointment with a Contractor. All repairs ordered through Inter-finder create an email to Customer Services who then have to manually input this into Repair-finder (Customers Services diagnostic tool for reporting repairs). On average 691 repairs are received via Inter-finder per year, however 85% of these usually require a call back from Customer Services in order to obtain further information or arrange a repairs appointment.

One of the recommendations arising from the OR Review of Housing's Landlord Services completed in 2014 was to create a customer sign in on the Council's website. This will allow customers to register and create a secure password to allow them to log in to an account in order to obtain information and access services 24/7. This promotes digital inclusion and is in line with Governments digital agenda. This review would support this further and recommends that when creating customer accounts repairs information is included to allow a tenant to be able to view repairs history, book a repair, arrange an appointment with a Contractor; and provide a timeline for any current repairs reported.

Customer Services

Customer Services provides a frontline service for Response Maintenance. Response Maintenance Customers have a higher priority than all other callers and on average per year Customer Services answer 98% of all calls offered to them within 14 seconds. Customer Services completes an average of 30,400 Property Services Transactions per year and 13700 of these are where a Customer Service Adviser has ordered a repair. The remaining 16,700 account for a mixture of transactions, including:-

- Contacting a Contractor to check where a repair is up to or when they will be attending a property.
- Contacting Cyclical Programme Works Surveyors regarding recent work completed to a property or to check if it's still in warranty.
- Contacting various teams within Property Services to try to identify which officer is responsible for ordering works.
- Emailing back office requesting a customer call back or chasing up a call back.
- Contacting the Repairs Support team to arrange an Inspection; New Tenant Work; a Variation order; a Recall; to order certain drainage work; arrange a 'turn on and test'; or arrange other types of specialist work i.e. replacement of communal door entry keys.

In order to gain a clearer understanding of the types of calls coming into the Contact Centre the OR Manager spent time listening into calls coming into Customer Services as well as talking to Customer Services staff. Findings from this exercise revealed that:-

- The detail in QL repair history isn't always clear or easy to understand and often results in Customer Services contacting back office, sometimes culminating in around 4 interactions before this information can be obtained.
- Warranty information isn't currently detailed on QL, whilst all Customers are asked if work has recently been completed, this is not efficient as tenants are often unsure and some warranties

can be for longer periods than others. As a result orders can often be put through for work that is under warranty or Customer Services spend time trying to locate someone in the Cyclical Programme Works team to try to establish this whilst the Customer is left waiting. (At the time of the Review Housing's Service Development team were trying to rectify this.)

- Not all void repairs work show in the QL history screen in Northgate and are therefore not visible to Customer Services staff. As a result all New Tenants have to be transferred to back office.
- Sometimes information coming through from Repair Finder is incorrect i.e. it advises work is not the Councils responsibility when in fact it is a Council Property.
- Repair-finder requires development (this is picked up in item 5.3 of this report).

It's therefore clear that if more information was available at 'First Point of Contact' tenants and Customer Services Staff would spend less time searching for information and be able to order the correct work quickly whilst reducing 'avoidable' contact both to Customer Services and Back Office Staff. For example:-

- Arranging appointments with Surveyor
- Arranging 'turn on and test'
- Dealing with New Tenant queries
- Checking Warranties
- Ordering/Checking repairs

Clearly the utilisation of the Customer Relationship Management System (CRM) is crucial in contributing to the approach to service delivery and any future decision to invest in a new CRM will deliver greater benefits; cost savings and customer satisfaction.

Voicemail

When listening into Customer Services' calls, it became apparent that staff often struggle to contact the appropriate officer and often spend time ringing 3 to 4 extension numbers trying to locate the relevant officer, which then resulted in an email from Customer Services requesting the officer to call the customer back. As identified above, Customers Services could deal with a large percentage of these calls once the ICT changes have been implemented because more and greater access to information can be afforded. However there are some calls which will still require a customer to speak direct to a Surveyor/Officer in back office. These remaining calls could be transferred and picked up via voicemail. The benefit of this is that it will reduce the call length for customers as Customer Services will only have to make one phone call to the appropriate officer. Customers can then leave a message regarding their enquiry. Clearly this will have to be monitored correctly possibly with Customer Services staff completing a form when transferring a customer to the voicemail service thus providing a record of that contact.

The table below provides a breakdown of the Operational Service Recommendations identified within this item, which contribute towards the cashable/efficiency savings identified at item 7 of this report.

Ref	**Service Recommendations**
SR6.	Include repairs information when creating customer accounts, to promote self-service allowing a tenant to be able to view repairs history, book a repair, arrange an appointment with a Contractor and provide a timeline for any current repairs reported.
SR7.	Develop systems to provide more information at 'First Point of Contact' i.e. warranty jobs, void works, inspections completed etc. To allow Customer Services Staff to be able to arrange an appointment with a Surveyor, arrange a 'turn on and test', deal with New Tenant queries and check Warranties.
SR8.	Implement Voice Mail into Property Services

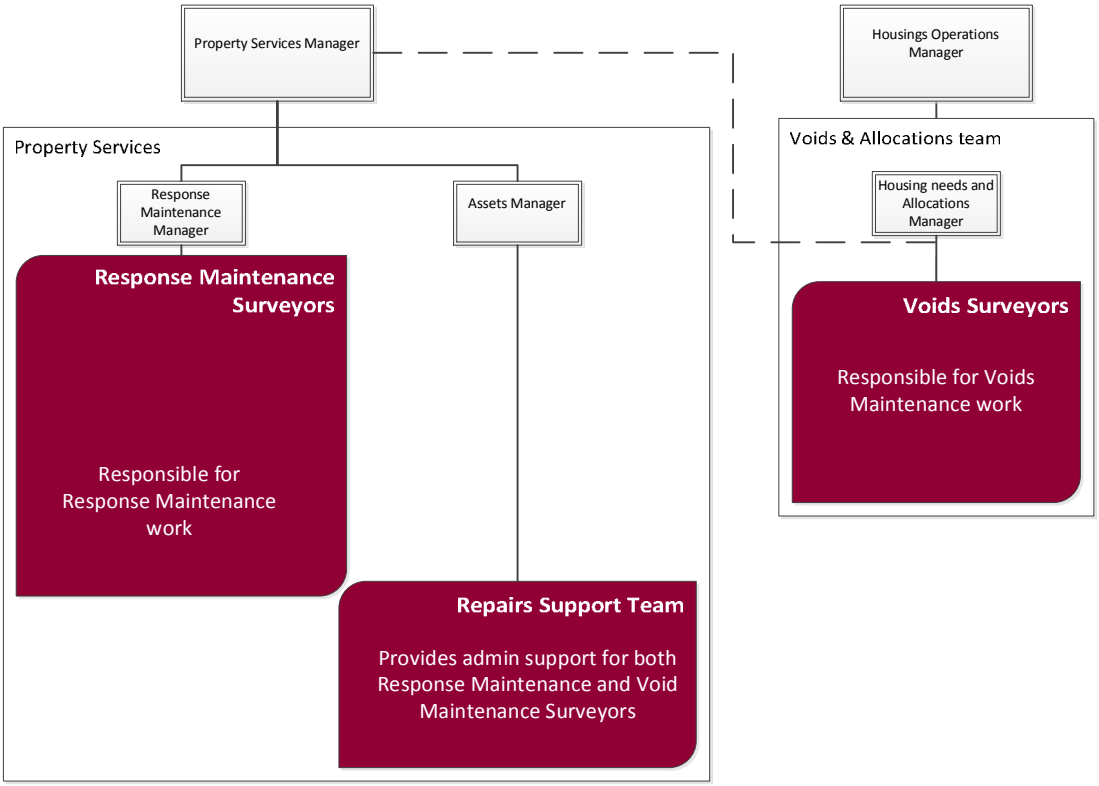
5.2 Cross team working

The Response Maintenance Service is currently split in to two teams which report to two different Managers:–

- The Response Maintenance Surveyors report to the Response Maintenance Manager.
- The Repairs Support team report to the Asset Manager.

The Void Surveyors currently sit within the Voids and Allocations team and are managed by the Housing Needs and Allocations Manager.

The diagram below shows the current structure in more detail.



As can be seen from the diagram above each team has a different Manager which at times can lead to lack of coordination and silo working. The 'Voices Exercises' highlighted that there are high levels of separate working across the two Service Areas as Surveyors are predominately focused on their specialist area. Staff don't always communicate with each other and in some instances it seems, due to the nature of work they work against each other. In addition to this the Voids Surveyors sit within a different building which in turn can add to the barriers.

Having specialist teams has created problems associated with 'silo working' whereby officers work strictly within the limits of their team and as a result, they don't possibly always see or understand the 'bigger picture'. This impacts on how each team shares information and communication is not as effective as it perhaps could be between the teams and indeed with colleagues elsewhere. This has been proven in past reviews, for example Planning and Landlord Services where generic working was recommended and agreed by Members.

As the Void Surveyors work within the Voids and Allocation Team, this can sometimes cause conflicting priorities as they have to adhere to Void turnaround targets which, following discussions, highlighted that non urgent work can sometimes not be completed/included within the voids schedules. This can then impact on Response Maintenance and New Tenant works.[8]

Surveyors from both teams could be in the same area, on the same day, at the same time conducting both Response Maintenance and Void Inspections.

[8] Project team meeting 17/09/2014

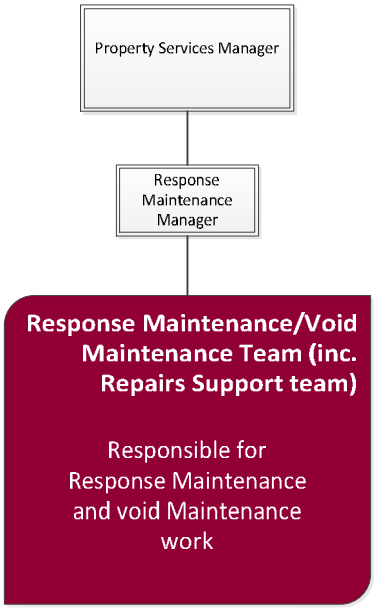
Whilst this model was clearly appropriate at the time as it help reduce void turnaround times it is now suggested that it would make business sense for the three teams to be amalgamated in to one team with Surveyors taking on more of a generic role for the following reasons:-

- Better planning of resources with Surveyors managing their own geographical patches for both Response Maintenance and Void work.
- A more consistent approach in the work completed on properties, as Surveyors will be more familiar with work already carried out/due to be carried out within their patch i.e. Cyclical Programme works
- As recommended within the Landlord Services review, Housing Officers are taking on a more generic role and having a generic Surveyors team will complement this further as it will provide a more coordinated team approach.
- Potential savings in mileage costs.
- Provide a flexible approach to inspections.

However in order to risk manage this change to a more generic approach it is suggested that this be monitored in order to ensure that turnaround times are not compromised. This could be negotiated with the Contractors when agreeing the 'Price per property' model to make it a Contractual risk.

The current Building Surveyors job descriptions are generic and therefore there will be no changes required to this.

To accommodate the above changes, the review would recommend restructuring the three teams in to one team as shown in the diagram below:



It is estimated that the implementation of the above-proposed structure would free up a minimum cashable resource of approximately 1 FTE. The Assistant Director of Housing will produce a detailed staffing structure prior to the implementation of the proposed restructure. This will be subject to the normal consultation arrangements and redeployment considerations as appropriate.

It's important to note that there are a number of temporary posts within the wider Property Services team, which are subject to separate consideration, to make the posts permanent on the structure and to simultaneously offer permanent contracts to existing long term temporary staff, as all temporary employment contracts held by this group of staff are in excess of two years, providing these officers with redeployment entitlements in any event. Consequently, consideration has been given to the implications of this report and suggested time frame, and it has been determined by management that this report does not impact on these separate proposals. Clearly consideration will be given to any future redeployment options for displaced staff at the time of implementing this new structure.

The table below provides a breakdown of the Operational Service Recommendations identified within this item, which contribute towards the cashable/efficiency savings identified at item 7 of this report.

Ref	**Service Recommendations**
SR9.	Restructure the Repairs support team, Response Maintenance Surveyors and Void Maintenance Surveyors from three teams into one to provide a more coordinated, flexible, consistent and generic approach.

5.3 ICT

Mobile Working

The Service Development team has indicated within their ICT action plan that they will be rolling out Mobile working across the Housing and Regeneration Service in accordance with their ICT Strategy. The OR review would support this recommendation as it provides high efficiencies whereby tasks can be completed out in the field and within real time.

Repair Finder

Repair-finder is a diagnostic tool which helps Customer Services Staff identify and order repairs. Repair-finder was implemented in 2009, whereby the implementation team used past repairs history when building this tool. Due to the large number of SORs it was agreed that Repair-finder would be reviewed and on-going development would take place to ensure that this tool was updated and remained fit for purpose. There is a facility to develop this tool up to four times a year within the Repair-finder contract, however due to staffing changes and competing priorities, minimal enhancements/improvements have taken place during the last 6 years. As a result there are some gaps in the information provided to Customer Services Staff. For example some repairs priorities are wrong i.e. heating jobs, advice for tenants is not always accurate and not all repairs are within the system which in turn results in a telephone call to back office in order for them to raise this work. Warranties are not built in to the system and as a result orders are sometimes raised when they are not necessary. The system should be further improved to ensure that all tenants have the ability to report repairs online.

Text Messaging

Tenant receipts are generated for all repairs ordered and are currently sent out in paper format. The receipts advise tenants of the work to be done and the date and time when this work will be conducted. Often these receipts arrive after the work has been completed and on occasions tenants receive more than one copy. It would make more sense, where appropriate, if these receipts were sent out by text message or email as soon as this work was reported. This could even be taken one step further to include a reminder text to a tenant the day before this work is due to ensure access is afforded. Housing has the facility to develop this using Task Centre.[9]

The table below provides a breakdown of the Operational Service Recommendations identified within this item, which contribute towards the cashable/efficiency savings identified at item 7 of this report.

Ref	**Service Recommendations**
SR10.	Roll out of mobile working across the Surveyors
SR11.	Further develop Repair-finder to ensure that missing information gaps are updated
SR12.	Implement text messaging as a way of informing customers of works due etc.

[9] Verified with Craig Round – Housings Service Development team 17/04/2015

6.0 Project Recommendations

This section provides a summary of recommendations that have been arrived at from the review's findings detailed in Section 4. It does not therefore provide a comprehensive list of savings and efficiencies achieved; instead these are fully detailed within the table in Section 7.

1. Change Response Maintenance and Void Maintenance Contracts in order to introduce an 'average price per property' model[10]. This will improve the quality of service provided to Tenants, remove unnecessary variation of orders and recall work for the Council and help to ensure that work completed is completed right first time. Removal of this work will provide a resource saving of 1.5 FTE equivalents from the Repairs Support Team.

2. Further develop/Integrate ICT systems, which will stop duplication of work, allow information to be accessed in real time and provide a more efficient service to tenants. This includes further development between 'Repair-finder' and Inter-finder' and Front Office systems and Housings QL client database system, and will further enhance tenants ability to report repairs online.

3. Restructure the Response Maintenance Surveyors, Response Support Team and Void Maintenance Surveyors from three teams into one to provide a more coordinated, flexible, consistent and generic approach. This will provide a resource saving of 1 FTE equivalent

4. Implement Mobile working for the Surveyors in order to streamline current processes.

5. Implement Voicemail across the whole of Property Services.

6. Automate the tenant's survey process to enable these surveys to be completed in 'real-time' to gain a clear understanding of the quality of service delivered.

7. Introduce text messaging for tenants as a way of providing up to date information on repairs ordered and appointments made.

8. Automate Surveyor appointments to allow appointments to be electronically booked into their diaries in 'real-time' via Customer Services and Back Office staff.

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[10] The 'Price per property' model will be derived at by the Implementation team using in-house specialists

7.0 Savings

Based on full year's savings, the following table provides a detailed summary of the likely cashable/resource savings and efficiencies to be gained.

	Savings/investment (£) (1st full year implementation)	Efficiency (£) (1st full year implementation)	Savings/investment (£) (Subsequent years)	Efficiency (£) (Subsequent years)
Cash/Resource Saving				
Response Maintenance	£35,271		£35,271	
		£11,214		£11,214
Surveyors	£35,860		£35,860	
		£13,498		£13,498
Additional Savings				
Automation of paper systems (paper costs)	£328		£328	
TOTAL SAVINGS –	**£71,459**	**£24,712**	**£71,459**	**£24,712**
BTLS costs (this is an overall indicative cost to ensure that all recommendations can be implemented)	**RFQ submitted to BTLS, BTLS will provide cost once the Project Board have agreed recommendations to be put forward to Cabinet**			
NET SAVINGS	**£71,459**		**£71,459**	

The OR Manager has engaged with the Housing Service Development team and BTLS during the review in order to confirm, in principle, that all of the recommendations requiring ICT development are achievable. However in order to obtain detailed costings for each recommendation and to satisfy a business case for each initiative, Service Managers will continue to work closely with BTLS to produce a detailed Action plan.

8.0 Continuous improvement

As with any OR review some findings are either out of scope or alternatively further work needs to be completed before these can be put forward as recommendations. These findings are listed in the bullet points below:-

Consider extending the current use of NPS (a JVC between Wigan Council and Norwich City Council), to cover peaks in workloads for Gas, Electrical and Surveying.

9.0 Implementation

It is estimated that it will take a minimum of 9 months to implement the recommendations contained within this report and this will be done over managed stages, each representing a practical approach for delivering the proposed service improvements within a realistic timescale, whilst taking account of the limited resources available from within Housing and Customer Services.

The quality and achievability of this implementation rests with the implementation team and those participating in the management of the transfer, together with the front/back office staff whom will assume day-to-day responsibility for delivering the practical changes. For clarification, those managing the changes are also those responsible for delivering the service and therefore the overall responsibility will remain within the Housing and Regeneration Service, requiring major input from Customer Services and British Telecom Lancashire Services. The Property Services Manager will be responsible for ensuring the agreed recommendations are implemented in a timely manner. However, to allow for flexibility it is proposed, therefore, that a more detailed timeline produced by the Property Services Manager under direction of the ADHR once this findings report has been agreed by Cabinet.