



**EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE:
9 November 2023**

Report of: Corporate Director of Transformation, Housing & Resources

Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor Nicola Pryce-Roberts

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**SUBJECT: CUSTOMER FEEDBACK Q1 & Q2 2023/2024 IN RELATION TO
WATES**

Borough Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To provide an update on the Quarter 1 and 2 Customer Feedback data received in relation to the Council's responsive repairs contractor Wates, and the actions being taken as a result of the data to improve the service provided.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 The update provided in this report be noted.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 On the 31st March 2020 the Council entered into a responsive repairs contract with Wates Property Services Limited. The contract includes responsive repairs and maintenance, works to void properties, cyclical decorations, ad hoc planned works, and component replacements. The contract is a 10-year contract with an option to extend for a further 5 years.

4.0 REPAIRS DATA

4.1 To put the data received via our Customer Feedback Policy into context it is necessary to understand the number of repairs that have taken place over Quarter 1 (Q1) & 2 (Q2). Q1 includes data from 1st April 2023 to 30th June 2023 inclusive, and Q2 from 1st July 2023 to 30th September 2023 inclusive.

4.2 The number of repair jobs attended by Wates is as follows,

April: 1,198

May: 1,196
 June: 1,439
 July: 1,389
 August: 1,353
 September: 1,117

Wates carried out a total of 3,833 jobs in Q1 and 3,859 jobs in Q2.

5.0 ANALYSIS OF CUSTOMER FEEDBACK DATA

- 5.1 This report analyses the data received via our Customer Feedback Policy, along with Voicescape data. Voicescape is a system that sends phone surveys as soon as a repair is completed, allowing us to gain instantaneous feedback from our tenants. Detailed data is shown at Appendix A.
- 5.2 An analysis of complaints received via our Customer Feedback Policy in relation to Wates is detailed as follows.

Quarter	Number of complaints received about the repairs service	Number of complaints received in relation to Wates	% of total complaints in relation to Wates	% of complaints in relation to repairs carried out
Q1	60	38	63%	0.99%
Q2	50	38	76%	0.98%

- 5.3 We have looked at the main themes for complaints received. In Q1 it was the standard of service provided which covers a range of issues from poor quality repairs to communication. In Q2 the main theme was timeliness, which relates to how quickly the repair was completed.
- 5.4 Voicescape data shows that in Q1, of the 34% of tenants who responded to the survey, 88% were satisfied. The main reasons for dissatisfaction were "other" or "works not being completed". In Q2, of the 36% who responded, 85% were satisfied. The main theme of dissatisfaction was works not being completed.
- 5.5 Wates record their own satisfaction data which is derived from their automated text messaging system. The satisfaction target is 95% and has been recorded at April 97%, May 97%, June 95.4%, July 98.4%, August 95.5%, and September 95.3%. The satisfaction target has therefore been met each month in Q1 and Q2.
- 5.6 We have benchmarked complaints data against Housmark data. Housemark is the leading data and insight company for the UK housing sector and is jointly owned by the National Housing Federation and the Chartered Institute for Housing. For 22-23 the median percentage of tenant satisfaction with the overall repairs service received over the last 12 months was 77.8%. The median satisfaction with the time taken to complete the most recent repair was 71.45%. Therefore, both the Council's and Wates satisfaction data shows that tenants are more satisfied than the average benchmarked by Housemark.

6.0 IMPROVEMENTS BEING MADE TO THE REPAIRS SERVICE

- 6.1 The Council has been working with Wates to improve the service provided to tenants. The Council now receives weekly reports from Wates of all repairs that are cancelled and not completed on time so that both parties can ensure that these are remedied as soon as possible.
- 6.2 The Council has increased the number of surveyors to enable more post inspections to take place to ensure the quality of repairs is acceptable.
- 6.3 All complaints are followed up after the scheduled repair date to ensure that a Wates operative did attend, that tenants are satisfied with the work, and that the issues raised have been resolved.
- 6.4 Wates and WLBC discuss complaints and lessons that can be learnt to ensure that where possible issues are resolved to ensure that similar complaints do not present in the future. Senior staff at Wates are made aware of every complaint to ensure that they can put appropriate actions into place. A complaint action plan is being developed.
- 6.5 Partnership away days have taken place and further days have been scheduled to discuss issues arising from complaints and about how we can improve the service provided to tenants.
- 6.6 A new urgent category is being developed to ensure that where appropriate customers do not have to wait 20 working days to have urgent issues repaired under the routine category of repairs. Emergency jobs will still be made safe within 24 hours and completed within 4 working days.
- 6.7 Wates have employed extra operatives to support these changes.
- 6.8 An improved process has been implemented focusing on better communication with customers from Wates scheduling team who are responsible for the scheduling and booking of all repairs.
- 6.9 Wates hold daily review meetings to look at the previous day's work and to look forward to the next day's tasks. The Council feed into this process by working closely with Wates to inform them of any issues and complaints as they arise.
- 6.10 Wates have engaged additional contractors to allocate more complicated, larger works to.
- 6.11 Wates have recruited a Divisional Customer Services Manager to support the team from a customer journey perspective.
- 6.12 Trades are being developed internally at Wates so that the number of multiskilled operatives increases. This will also assist with succession planning.
- 6.13 We are conducting a joint exercise to analyse where larger works on a non-responsive nature sit outside the repairs function. This will better enable us to understand required resources, planning, and supervision of such works.

- 6.14 Wates and officers of the Council regularly meet in person in order to build better working relationships. There is also shared working space to support collaborative working and to resolve issues as soon as they arise.
- 6.15 Wates have appointed an additional resource to reduce the aged work in progress, that is those jobs that have fallen outside of target for completion.

7.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no significant sustainability impacts associated with this report and, in particular, no significant impact on crime and disorder.

8.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 A more effective repairs service and relationship with repairs contractors will ensure that that resources are used more effectively and reduce costs.

9.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 This report is for information only and does not require a separate risk assessment.

10.0 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 An improved repairs service will promote good health and wellbeing and enable people to flourish and enable us to more effectively repair issues which can lead to ill health.

Background Documents

There are no background documents (as defined in section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this report.

Equality Impact Assessment

The decision does not have any direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Appendices

A – Customer Feedback Data