

Councillor Mary Jones
Chair – Scrutiny Programme Committee

BY EMAIL

Please ask for: Councillor Andrea Lewis
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Our Ref: AL/KH
Your Ref:
Date: 9 December 2019

Dear Councillor Jones

Thank you for the opportunity to present the findings of the Housing Commissioning review report to Scrutiny in August and November this year. I am pleased to advise you that Cabinet on 21st November 2019, approved the implementation of the review findings and that the proposed changes to the District Housing Office Service should be subject to a formal tenant consultation exercise. The consultation results will be reported back to Cabinet prior to implementation.

Your letter dated 20th November 2019 made a number of key points which I will respond to in turn. These are:

- Detail of an implementation plan
- Support for tenants for new technology roll out
- Resources for the Rents Team
- Breakdown of how each pound in rent is used
- More information on service complaints.

In relation to the District Housing Office Service changes and roll out of new technology, an implementation plan will be included in a report back to Cabinet in April 2020 following the formal consultation process. Subject to approval, proposed office closures will be implemented when the new IT improvements are in place. I agree that as far as possible tenants should be supported to equip them with the necessary skills to use online services and officers will liaise with the Council's Poverty & Prevention team to consider what further support and specific events can be put in place to facilitate this for those who may need it.

Your letter highlighted the challenges facing the Rents team. Senior officers are currently considering what new structure is needed for the team. Additional resources for this team are planned and intended to be released from the overall restructure of Housing offices. I agree with your comments that this team has to include fully trained specialist officers who are well equipped to carry out their role.

Information was requested on how each pound paid in rent is used. Below is a breakdown:

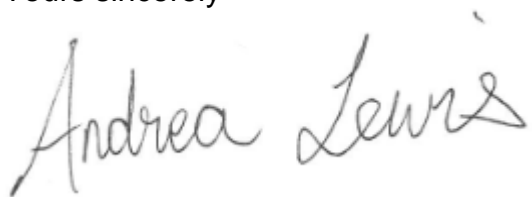
- 55p is spent on major housing repairs, improvements and day to day repairs.
- 23p is spent on employees, premises, transport, supplies and support services.
- 16p supports borrowing costs and 6p is used for new housing.

In relation to analysis of complaints data, whilst Housing services continue to experience high volumes of service user demand, over the last 3 years the level of justified and partly justified complaints have remained fairly static. These totalled 73 in 16/17, 77 in 17/18 and 83 in 18/19. For each of these years, just under half of the complaints received have related to the significant WHQS works programme taking place. The complaints have mainly related to disruption, time taken to complete works and standard of work. A number of improvements have been put in place over this time to support tenants during the works process including contractors having their own dedicated liaison officers, improvements to communication/information and scheme specific feedback from tenants. During 2018, the Wales Audit Office carried out a review of the delivery of the WHQS programme/tenant engagement and, despite the scale of the programme we have delivered, the outcome was generally positive. An action plan has been put in place to implement some further improvements as our aim is to continually increase levels of tenant satisfaction.

For the remaining complaints received across each of these years, there have been no distinctive themes. The numbers have been relatively small and spread across a diverse range of services and topic areas. The majority of these do however relate to dissatisfaction with the outcome of their service request as opposed to failings in the service received. All complaints continue to be monitored and the relevant manager reviews the findings to ensure any related service improvements are considered and put in place.

I hope this addresses your points, if you have any questions or queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Y Cyngorydd/ Councillor Andrea Lewis

Cyd-Ddirprwy Arweinydd Dros Do Aelod Y Cabinet Dros Cartrefi, Ynni a Thrawsnewid
Gwasanaethau

Joint Interim Deputy Leader - Cabinet Member for Homes, Energy & Service
Transformation