

Full Council, 8 October 2024

Councillor Arthur Coote: Portfolio Holder for Housing and Equalities Report

This report provides an update on three critical areas within Property Services:

- 1. Procurement of a New Maintenance Service:** We are progressing through a structured, multi-stage evaluation to secure a maintenance contractor who excels in service delivery, IT systems integration, and sustainability practices, while ensuring adherence to budget constraints and deadlines.
- 2. Fire Safety Improvements:** Focused on rectifying fire safety deficiencies at The Close and Priors Wood Court, this includes installing certified fire doors, upgrading sounders to the alarm systems, and implementing robust risk mitigation strategies to safeguard residents.
- 3. Manor Road Flats Structural Issues:** A comprehensive remediation programme is underway to address significant structural degradation and persistent damp problems.

Procurement of Maintenance Service

We have implemented a multi-stage procurement process to select a contractor capable of delivering comprehensive maintenance services. This process is designed to assess contractors on multiple fronts, including their ability to integrate with our IT systems, manage real-time reporting, and contribute to sustainability goals.

Key Updates:

- 1. Tender Launch:** Successfully launched on the Delta Portal on 22nd July 2024.
- 2. Tender Submission Deadline:** Extended to 9th September 2024 to ensure high-quality bids.
- 3. Tender Clarifications:** Approximately 80 clarifications received, demonstrating thorough review by potential bidders

Table: Procurement Process Stages

Stage	Dates	Evaluation Criteria
Capability Assessment	16-18 September	Evaluation of contract examples, available resources, resident communications, IT integration, quality controls, and carbon reduction measures.

Invitation to Tender (ITT)	20-25 September	Assessment of mobilisation plans, resourcing, repairs and voids delivery, planned works, carbon reduction initiatives, resident communication, IT systems, safeguarding, and social value contributions.
Interview Stage	2-3 October	Face-to-face interviews focusing on scenario-based assessments, operational capabilities, problem-solving skills, and alignment with UDC values.

Next Steps for Maintenance Service Procurement.

- Conduct due diligence on the financial stability and operational capacity of the selected contractor.
- Prepare for contract mobilisation, including planning for TUPE transfers and IT system integration.

Fire Safety Improvements at The Close and Priors Wood Court

We have initiated a comprehensive programme to address critical deficiencies, including the remediation / installation of fire doors and upgrading sounders on the alarm systems to ensure compliance.

Table: Fire Safety Remediation Progress

Component	Actions Taken	Next Steps
Fire Door Remediation / Installations	Coordinated with key stakeholders, requested primary fire tests, and received counter proposals for remediation.	Review UNSL’s response for legal viability and consider further action if necessary.
Alarm Systems	Conducted a follow-up survey, received proposals for new sounders, and planned upgrades.	Implemented remedial works to sounders commenced 19th August 2024, followed by testing and commissioning. (Action completed)
Risk Mitigation	Implemented a 24/7 waking watch and conducted additional door surveys to address immediate safety concerns.	Review survey findings and adjust mitigation measures as needed.

Next Steps for Fire Safety Improvements

- Review UNSL's response regarding fire door installations and determine appropriate next steps, including potential legal action.
- Conduct a full fire risk assessment once remediation works are completed.

Manor Road Flats Structural and Environmental Remediation

A major remediation programme is in progress to address long-standing structural issues and damp problems. The work includes the application of modern liquid-applied waterproofing systems on balconies, the removal and replacement of damaged internal plasterwork, and comprehensive roofing repairs. The target for completion of all works is spring 2025.

Table: Manor Road Flats Remediation Programme

Component	Technical Specifications	Implementation
Balcony Refurbishment	Installation of advanced waterproofing systems, improved drainage design, and potential thermal insulation integration to prevent water ingress and thermal bridging.	Phase 1 (Flats 37 and 39) is currently underway, with subsequent phases scheduled to begin from September 2024.
Internal Remediation	Complete removal of damaged plaster, treatment of underlying structures, re-plastering, electrical rewiring, and window assessment to ensure structural integrity and thermal efficiency.	Prioritised by the severity of water ingress, with temporary rehousing provided for affected residents.
Roofing Works	Comprehensive repairs across three blocks, focusing on enhancing waterproofing and thermal performance.	To be carried out in conjunction with balcony works to maximise efficiency and minimise disruption.

Next Steps for Manor Road Flats Remediation

- Continue with the phased implementation of the remediation programme, prioritising units most severely affected by structural issues and damp.
- Develop a long-term maintenance plan for the flats, incorporating lessons learned during the remediation process.
- Ensure that all works are carried out in compliance with relevant building regulations and health and safety standards.

Compliance Performance

We continue to manage UNSL on the delivery of all areas of compliance achieving 99.85% on our gas servicing, our 5-year electrical programme is at 98.56 a slight increase in performance from the last report, 10-year electrical testing programme is at 99.89%. Asbestos, Legionella and LOLER all remain at 100%.

Repairs Performance

Whilst performance is still at the required level, we continue to work with UNSL to improve performance

Measure	Performance
Orders Completed – On Time	89.23%
Orders Completed – First Time Fix	94.13%
Appointments Made & Kept	91.33%
Customer Satisfaction - Repairs	77.8%

Update on self-assessment against the new Regulatory Standards

The Strategic Director has been leading a project to self-assess all housing landlord services against the rigorous new Consumer Standards arising from the Social Housing Regulation Act 2023. Workshops have been held with all key staff from housing management, communities, property services and housing allocations teams. Our repairs contractor, UNSL has also been involved in this. This work will be complete in the middle of October and the findings will be checked with the Tenants and Leaseholder Panel, so that they can share their views. Members will then receive a report on key findings and the actions the council will be taking to address any gaps. This will help prepare the council for an inspection by the Regulator of Social Housing. All landlords will be inspected by 2028. So far, we have not been told when we will have an inspection and it is important that we are fully prepared.

Update on complaints handling

In June the council submitted their annual self assessment against the Complaints Handling Code to the Housing Ombudsman. The council identified some areas where it is not compliant and an improvement plan is being delivered. This is very near completion. One of the issues was not having published an annual complaints report. This has now been completed.