

Councillor Coote, Portfolio Holder for Housing

Report for Council, 25 February 2025: Property Services Update

Introduction

This briefing document provides an in-depth update on key developments within Property Services, focusing on the recent award of the maintenance contract to Axis Europe, the successful mobilisation of this contract, the demobilisation of the UNSL Joint Venture (JV), and specific updates on Manor Road and fire safety improvements at The Close and Priors Wood Court.

Award of Maintenance Contract to Axis Europe

In January, it was agreed to award Axis Europe the maintenance contract following a rigorous procurement process. This contract is pivotal in ensuring high-quality service delivery, IT systems integration, and adherence to sustainability practices. The contract aims to enhance our maintenance services while maintaining budgetary constraints and deadlines.

Mobilisation of the Axis Europe Contract

The mobilisation of the Axis Europe contract is progressing smoothly and on schedule. Key activities include:

- **Weekly Meetings:** Regular meetings are held with Axis Europe to cover all aspects of the contract, including resident engagement, data transfer, TUPE, consultation, and legal matters. These meetings will continue throughout the contract duration to ensure seamless operations.
- **IT Integration:** Both UDC and Axis IT teams are collaborating to ensure successful system integration. Initial tech testing has commenced, with further testing scheduled.
- **HR and TUPE:** Consultations with the Norse HR team are ongoing, with meetings held to discuss and arrange one-to-one consultations, ensuring compliance with TUPE regulations.

Demobilisation of the UNSL JV

The demobilisation of the UNSL JV is proceeding well and on time. Weekly demobilisation meetings are conducted with both contractors and UDC to ensure a cohesive cutover plan. Key points include:

- **Performance Monitoring:** The Property Services team is closely monitoring UNSL's performance, which remains stable, avoiding the typical end-of-contract performance dip.
- **Data Transfer and Compliance:** A third-party data profiling initiative is underway to ensure all tenant information is accurate and up-to-date before the transition.

Manor Road Update

The remediation programme at Manor Road Flats is advancing as planned. This comprehensive programme addresses structural degradation and damp issues through:

- **Balcony Refurbishment:** Advanced waterproofing systems and improved drainage designs are being implemented.
- **Internal Remediation:** Damaged plaster is being removed and replaced, with electrical rewiring and window assessments ensuring structural integrity.
- **Roofing Works:** Comprehensive repairs are enhancing waterproofing and thermal performance.

Fire Safety Improvements

Efforts to rectify fire safety deficiencies at The Close and Priors Wood Court are ongoing:

- **Fire Doors:** UNSL has been slow in obtaining feedback from their subcontractor regarding fire door installations at The Close. This issue is being escalated to ensure timely resolution.
- **Priors Wood Court:** UNSL has confirmed the need to reinstall secondary doors that were removed and has sought building control approval. Communication with residents is ongoing to keep them informed of progress.

Establishment of the Internal Client Team

The establishment of the internal client team is underway, with recruitment commencing for nine roles. Four of these positions have been filled internally, leveraging existing expertise within the organisation. The remaining five roles will be advertised externally to attract a diverse range of candidates.

Recruitment for the Director of Property role has been deferred pending further information on the requirements of the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). Brian Burton, the interim Director of Property Services, has agreed to remain in post for the immediate future, ensuring continuity and stability during this transition period.

Conclusion

The Property Services team is committed to ensuring the successful implementation of these projects, maintaining high standards of service delivery, and safeguarding resident welfare. Regular updates will be provided to keep all stakeholders informed of progress and any emerging issues.