

Committee:	Scrutiny Committee	Date: 3 February 2026
Title:	Housing repairs and maintenance	
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Arthur Coote Portfolio Holder for Housing and Equalities	
Report Author:	Brian Burton Director of Property Services - Interim	Key decision: No

Issue Summary

1. This report provides a comprehensive update on the Council's review of its current, externally contracted housing repairs and maintenance provision.
2. The current maintenance contract commenced in April 2025 following a competitive procurement exercise, which included extensive stakeholder engagement to inform the service requirements.
3. Since the contract's mobilisation, the Council has made sustained and intensive efforts to manage the contract and ensure the provider delivers the high-quality repairs and maintenance services commissioned.
4. Performance data indicates that the contract has failed to achieve the required targets across all critical service areas and measures. Key performance indicators (KPIs) have consistently fallen below acceptable thresholds, necessitating a thorough review of the service delivery model.
5. An action plan was implemented to enhance performance, communication, and robust management of work variations. Despite these efforts, performance has not materially improved, leading to the need for a strategic reassessment of the service delivery framework.
6. In December 2025, both Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet were provided with a detailed update on the repairs and maintenance service. Due to commercial sensitivity, the update and detailed discussions were held in private. Cabinet made a proactive decision to conclude the current contract early, allowing the Council to focus on establishing an in-house service for delivery of housing repairs and maintenance services. This decision reflects a commitment to improving service delivery and responsiveness to tenant needs.

7. Recommendations

- That Scrutiny note this report.
- That Officers are requested to provide regular updates to Cabinet and Scrutiny Committee regarding the progress of the in-house establishment and performance metrics.

8. Financial Implications

9. The 2026/27 HRA budget has been built on the basis of an in-house service.

10. Impact

Communication/Consultation	Tenants of the Council's housing will be significantly impacted by the establishment of the in-house service, which aims to enhance service delivery and responsiveness to tenant needs at no additional cost to the HRA. A comprehensive communications and engagement plan for tenants and wider stakeholder groups will be developed to ensure transparency and collaboration throughout this transition. This plan will include regular updates, feedback mechanisms, and opportunities for tenant involvement in shaping service delivery.
Community Safety	The establishment of the in-house service will incorporate measures to ensure community safety is prioritised in all housing repairs and maintenance activities. This includes adherence to safety standards and protocols during all repair works.
Equalities	The Equality Health Impact Assessment for the service will be fully reviewed and updated to ensure that it meets the diverse needs of our community. This assessment will evaluate how the in-house service can effectively serve all demographic groups, ensuring equitable access to services.
Health and Safety	Health and Safety responsibilities will be a priority in the establishment of the new service. A comprehensive plan will be developed to ensure compliance with all relevant policies and procedures, including regular training for staff and contractors on health and safety best practices.
Human Rights/Legal Implications	The Council will continue to seek legal advice to ensure that the transition to an in-house service model is conducted in accordance with all legal requirements. This includes reviewing existing contracts and ensuring that all actions taken are compliant with relevant legislation, regulations and constitutional arrangements.
Sustainability	The establishment of the in-house service will include a focus on sustainable practices in housing repairs and maintenance, aligning

	with the Council's commitment to environmental responsibility. This will involve implementing energy-efficient solutions and sustainable materials in repair works.
Ward-specific impacts	No specific ward impacts have been identified at this stage, but the Council will monitor any potential implications as the in-house service is established.
Workforce/Workplace	The transition to an in-house service will create new opportunities for staff within the Council and local Small to Medium Enterprise (SME) contractors, fostering a more integrated and responsive workforce dedicated to delivering high-quality housing services. Training and development programs will be implemented to equip staff with the necessary skills for effective service delivery.

11. Situation

12. Following the initial mobilisation, the Council identified emerging challenges that have hindered the effective delivery of housing repairs and maintenance services. The implemented action plan for recovery has not delivered the results required, necessitating a strategic reassessment of the service delivery model.
13. To date, the contract has failed to deliver the required service standards, with all key performance indicators (KPIs) falling below the required targets.
14. The Council's client team has implemented intensive management arrangements, including weekly, monthly, and quarterly performance reviews. Despite these extraordinary efforts, performance has remained poor, prompting the need for a more sustainable and effective service delivery model.

15. Future Direction

16. The Council is now focused on the establishment of an in-house service for delivery of housing repairs and maintenance services. This transition will allow for direct control over service delivery, enabling the Council to respond more effectively to tenant needs and improve overall service quality.
17. The new service will enable the Council to streamline operations, enhance accountability, and foster a culture of continuous improvement. By bringing services in-house, the Council can ensure that repairs and maintenance are conducted in a timely and efficient manner, with a focus on quality and tenant satisfaction.
18. The Council's client team is working closely with Axis Europe to demobilise the current contract effectively. An extensive plan is being implemented to ensure a smooth transition to the in-house service, with a focus on maintaining service continuity and quality during this period.
19. The Council is committed to engaging with tenants and stakeholders throughout this process to ensure their voices are heard and their needs are met. Regular updates will be provided to keep all parties informed of developments and progress.

20. Next Steps

21. Officers will continue engagement with Axis Europe to facilitate the demobilisation of the current contract.
22. The detailed appraisal will be presented to Cabinet following Scrutiny Committee consideration.

23. Conclusion

24. The decision to establish an in-house service represents a significant step forward in enhancing the quality and responsiveness of housing repairs and maintenance services. The Council is dedicated to ensuring that this transition is managed effectively, with a focus on delivering the best possible outcomes for our tenants and the community. By prioritising tenant needs and fostering a culture of accountability and continuous improvement, the Council aims to provide a housing repairs and maintenance service that meets the highest standards of quality and efficiency.