



**Audit Advisory Committee**  
5 December 2017

**Report from the Strategic Director  
of Community Wellbeing**

**Brent Housing Partnership / Housing Management  
Transformation**

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	N/A
<b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>	N/A
<b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b> <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
<b>No. of Appendices:</b>	None
<b>Background Papers:</b>	N/A
<b>Contact Officer(s):</b> <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Minesh Patel, Head of Finance Tel: 020 8937 4043 Email: <a href="mailto:minesh.patel@brent.gov.uk">minesh.patel@brent.gov.uk</a>

**1.0 Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 On 24 April 2017, Cabinet took a decision to end the management agreement with Brent Housing Partnership (BHP), and bring housing management services back under direct control of the Council.
- 1.2 This paper aims to give an update on the progress of the BHP/Housing Management Transformation. This is to assist the committee in taking on the functions that were carried out by BHP's Audit Committee by providing them with background to key current issues in housing management. It sits alongside another report on this agenda which summarises recent audit reports to the former BHP Audit Committee.

## **2.0 Recommendation**

2.1 For the Audit Advisory Committee to note the report.

## **3.0 Detail**

### **Housing Management Transformation:**

3.1 The Housing Management Transformation board was jointly formed of officers from Brent Council, and from Brent Housing Partnership (BHP), in order to oversee the transformation of the Housing Management function provided to Brent Council Tenants and Leaseholders. The Board was also responsible for overseeing the integration of Housing Management Functions from BHP to the Council's core operations.

3.2 The aims of the Housing management transformation are:

- To produce a new operating model which is fit for purpose and fit for the future, evidenced by the availability of granular real time information about the customer experience being available via web self-service to managers and members
- A 'customer comes first' culture, evidenced by a 50% reduction in controllable upheld complaints (benchmarked at March 2017), and faster processes
- A compelling digital self-service customer offer, and a digitised back office evidenced by the ability to keep customers informed real time (either by text or email)
- Deliver a target of £1m savings for the HRA via Housing Operations' Transformation.

3.3 An internal recruitment process was adopted in order to build change capacity within the organisation. The team was in place on 5 June 2017.

3.4 IT Analysis was commissioned and conducted to understand the current IT environment, and future desired IT architecture. This resulted in a proposal/business case for a Customer Relations Management (CRM) system, and associated interface environment (which needs to link to some 18 housing systems).

3.5 The Council's Digital Strategy has also made a case for a corporate CRM solution, and so the Housing requirement has been incorporated into a single council-wide procurement, which commenced in July 2017 with contract award occurring on 12 October. The project will be mobilised to commence in December 2017.

3.6 Comprehensive and detailed analysis of the current working practices and performance of 11 functions within the Housing Management Service have been completed, with findings being presented and discussed at the Housing Operations Transformation Board, chaired by the Council's Chief Executive. The

analysis included over 40 half day workshops with all staff across the Housing organisation, in order to achieve real staff involvement, engagement and buy in.

- 3.7 A digital vision, a demo of a smartphone app, which sets out a contemporary customer experience has been produced by officers, and is ready for wider consultation now with customers, members, senior managers across the council and our delivery partners. Customer consultation about how services will change and how the digital customer portal will look and feel , will span the next 4-6 months in order to ensure that the planned changes and customer portal are ratified by and genuinely influenced by the people who use and receive them.
- 3.8 The design phase has commenced, and a new operating model, spanning people (structures), technology (and data), and processes (and policies) is currently being drafted, due to be finalised by January 2018, ready for staff consultation.
- 3.9 The past year has been a challenging time for the organisation, and this has made it harder to sell Transformation and sustain the required focus. Several managers and officers have moved on ahead of the decision making process, when the decision was not known, leaving gaps in the managerial layers of the organisation for sustained periods of time. This gap in management capacity has affected the performance in some areas of the service such as the contact centre, void management, planned maintenance, responsive repairs and general customer care. However, as of 2 October 2017, the 3 most senior managers of the Housing Management service are now all in post and an action plan is now being implemented, which will address and improve performance.
- 3.9 The new operating model is scheduled to go live on 1 July 2018.

#### **BHP Transition:**

- 3.10 BHP staff successfully TUPE transferred to the council on 2 October 2017 following the conclusion of the formal TUPE consultation on 31 August 2017.
- 3.11 All relevant Housing Management and Development contracts held by BHP were successfully novated to the council via a Deed of Novation at the point of BHP transition.
- 3.12 The outgoing members of the BHP Board met on 27 September for their AGM, at which the revised articles of association and the new name (First Wave Housing) was adopted and the new board of members (14B board) were sworn in.
- 3.13 As First Wave Housing (FWH) has no employees, a reverse Service Level Agreement (SLA) between FWH and the council was put in place to ensure continuity of services for tenants of stock held by FWH.

#### **4.0 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications beyond the committee noting that one of the aims of Housing Transformation is to deliver £1m savings for the HRA.

## **5.0 Legal Implications**

5.1 There are no direct legal implication to note.

## **6.0 Equality Implications**

6.1 There are no direct equality implications to note.

**Report sign off:**

***Phil Porter***

Strategic Director of Community Wellbeing