

SUBJECT:	SCHEDULED REPAIRS PILOT
DIRECTORATE:	HOUSING AND INVESTMENT
REPORT AUTHOR:	M HILLMAN, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide an interim review on the implementation of the Scheduled Repairs Pilot within the Housing Repairs Service.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Housing Repairs Service has recently begun a pilot of a new way of managing housing repairs. This process is called 'Scheduled Repairs'. Repairs will be carried out at set times of the year, across set areas of the city. A scheduled repair is a repair that needs to be completed but is not urgent and unlikely to cause risk to our customers, their home or belongings.

Based on the number of repairs we currently complete, the city has been divided into four different areas. Repairs for each of these areas will be scheduled in every 12 weeks over a 3 week period:

- North - Ermine East, West and Newport
- East - St Giles and Monks Road
- Central - Boutham Moor, Bracebridge, Manse, City Centre
- South - Birchwood & Hartsholme

We will continue to complete priority repairs within 24 hours and urgent repairs within 3 days, all other repairs will be delivered on a scheduled basis.

Based on previous feedback, our customers said that they would like, fewer appointments and follow on work, less missed appointments, minimal disruption and more flexibility in appointment time slots. Scheduled repairs allow us to plan all the work in each area, and ensure we have all the right resources and materials in the right place so we can complete any repairs reported in one visit. This gives everyone more certainty that the repair will be carried out on the expected date.

3. Pilot feedback to date

3.1 Repairs data

During the first week of the Scheduled Repairs Pilot launch, the Housing Repairs Service were given permission to resume internal repairs, previously ceased in March as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak. Due to the number of repairs that had been reported during this time, it was agreed that this new way of working would

be introduced in an attempt to manage the outstanding backlog of repairs, over 1,700 in total. Our aim was to have these completed within the first 12 weeks of implementation.

The pilot was first introduced in area 'North' on 17th August covering Ermine East, Ermine West and Newport. Throughout the 3 week period, we completed a total of 609 repairs. Compared to the 367 repairs we completed last year, this shows almost a 40% increase in completed repairs as a result of the Covid-19 backlog. There were 6 missed appointments and 41 follow on appointments all of which were successfully re-scheduled and completed within that same 3 week period.

The second batch of Scheduled Repairs began on 7th September in area 'East' covering St Giles and Monks Road. In total, we completed 761 repairs. Compared to the 359 repairs we completed last year, this shows a 52% increase in completed repairs. There were 25 missed appointments and 41 follow on appointments, all of which were successfully completed within that same 3 week period.

We are currently reviewing last year's data to demonstrate the reduction in follow on appointments and missed appointments as requested by our customers.

- 3.2 By working in one area for a concentrated period of time, we have reduced time spent travelling between jobs. This has increased overall productivity across the workforce and confirmed that we have the capacity to complete more repairs. As the Covid-19 backlog depletes and we move into the second 12 week cycle of the pilot, we can begin utilising this productivity and supporting other contracts including Voids and Aids & Adaptations. We can also consider bringing some of our repairs back in-house that we currently sub-contract out.

3.3 **Vehicle data**

Less travelling between jobs has resulted in a reduction in mileage and a subsequent reduction in fuel costs. In August and September last year, we recorded almost 72,000 miles and £15k in fuel expenditure. Since the launch of Scheduled Repairs, we have recorded just under 60,000 miles during the months of August and September and only £10.5k in fuel expenditure. Over the next year, we have the potential to reduce our total mileage by 17% saving between £27-30k on fuel expenditure. All contributing towards the council's commitment in achieving a **zero carbon** target by 2030.

Further additional benefits that we are currently exploring include the potential for less vehicle accidents by the fleet travelling less mileage and less repairs.

3.4 **Travis Perkins data**

Encouraging less vehicle usage will eventually reduce the number of visits made to Hamilton House to collect materials. Now that we're adapting a more proactive approach, we can plan the work in advance and ensure that the correct materials are ordered and delivered to the job on time.

Throughout the months of August and September last year, total visits to stores totalled 1,438. Compared to the number of visits made since the Scheduled Repairs pilot, there has been 1,355 visits. Although only a small reduction, we do expect to see this number decline as we move away from the Covid-19 backlog. Currently our Labourer/ Drivers continue to assist with the delivery of materials which contributes significantly to the number of visits made. To alleviate this, we are encouraging the workforce to utilise the delivery service provided by Travis Perkins. Our data shows that there has been a 40% decline in the use of the Travis Perkins delivery service compared to last year.

Not only will outsourcing our entire delivery service to Travis Perkins drive our fuel consumption and mileage down further, but will also increase our labour cost savings.

In 2019 alone, we made 9,090 visits to stores to collect materials. If we assume each visit took 30 minutes to complete including the time taken to travel there and back, this equates to approximately 4,545 hours. Based on the current average hourly rate of £35 per hour, that's a potential saving of almost £160k a year that could be re-invested back into the service.

3.5 Customer Survey

The Resident Involvement Team attempted to contact all 186 customers that had repairs completed to their home in the North area. They managed to complete 86 surveys in total resulting in a 46% response rate. The remaining 54% of customers were either uncontactable (on more than one occasion), unwilling to take part or unable to do so because of a language barrier or disability.

The majority of customers in the North area were satisfied not only with the Scheduled Repairs Pilot scheme but the Housing Repairs Service as a whole. Most found that Scheduled Repairs had resulted in less disruption and was easier to secure timeslots fitting around their own routine. Although the majority agreed that the service has always been flexible with appointments, they would appreciate the option of evening and weekend appointments too. The majority of respondents also preferred to see text messaging as a form of communication.

As part of the pilot, these surveys will also be conducted within area East, Central and South.

3.6 HRS Staff Survey

The Housing Repairs Service circulated 40 copies of the staff survey to all operatives and office staff involved. We have received 16 surveys so far, resulting in a 40% return rate. We are currently analysing this data and highlighting any trends with the customer survey results

Additional benefits that have been highlighted by our staff within the pilot scheme include better planning of workloads, more accurate information on job types, correct increased time on site for operatives, more customer interaction for team leaders and correct materials.

3.7 **Communications**

Prior to the launch of the pilot, we worked alongside Optima Graphic Design Ltd and put together a 5 minute animation introducing the new scheme. The video has been uploaded onto the Scheduled Repairs web page on our website and was also uploaded to our social media accounts. Alongside the animation, we also uploaded a 'Scheduled Repairs Booklet' that highlights the difference between Priority, Urgent and Scheduled Repairs, ways in which our customers can report these repairs and a 'Calander of Works' that shows when we are due to visit each area. The booklet was also uploaded onto our website and social media accounts. In preparation for the launch on the 17th August and prior to the press release, the Communications Team also uploaded 'Coming Soon' graphics and a short video presented by the Director of Housing informing customers of the pilot. The City of Lincoln Council Facebook page alone had almost 10,000 views as a result of these uploads.

3.8 **Welfare Unit**

To support this new way of working we also introduced a 'Welfare Unit' in the form of a portakabin. The aim of the Welfare unit is to provide the necessary facilities to our workforce and sub-contractors whilst on site, reducing the need for them to travel to and from Hamilton House throughout the day and to ensure compliance with the Covid-19 guidance. We are looking at developing several 'drop down' sites to provide welfare support and material storage.

Welfare unit location according to area:

- North – Lenton Green
- East – Greetwell Gate (subject to a planning application for change of use)
- Central – Turner Avenue (This will be relocated to Newland Street West Depot)
- South – Woodfield Avenue (This will be relocated to the Birchwood Depot)

The unit is equipped with a toilet, washing facilities, first aid and somewhere to rest and eat. HRS Team Leaders have also been alternating shifts at the unit, providing support to the workforce and completing any necessary inspections within the area. The unit will also be used as a drop off point for materials being delivered by Travis Perkins.

4. **Strategic Priorities**

4.1 Let's deliver quality housing

The pilot is initially showing that we are continuing to deliver quality housing and improving our repairs service to meet customer demands.

4.2 Let's enhance our remarkable place

The implementation of the 'drop down' sites will deliver not only service needs but utilise land/property that is currently underused.

4.3 High performing services

The implementation of the Scheduled Repairs pilot has seen positive impacts in service delivers, customer expectations and service, reduced carbon emissions and increased productivity.

5. **Organisational Impacts**

5.1 Finance (including whole life costs where applicable)

Financial impacts are to be evaluated once the pilot period has finished to ensure accurate costings are provided.

5.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules

N/A

5.3 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

The Public Sector Equality Duty means that the Council must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, in shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

It requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

5.4 Human Resources

N/A

5.5 Land, Property and Accommodation

N/A

5.6 Significant Community Impact

N/A

5.7 Corporate Health and Safety implications

The implementation of the 'drop down' points is enhancing the delivery of our Health, Safety and Welfare provision to our workforce and staff.

7. Recommendation

- 7.1 To support the continuation of the Scheduled Repairs Pilot and changing the service based on customer feedback.
- 7.2 To support continuation of developing the data to provide exact comparisons.
- 7.3 To support the provision and delivery of the 'drop down' sites.

Is this a key decision? No

Do the exempt information categories apply? No

Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply? No

How many appendices does the report contain? None

List of Background Papers: None