

SUBJECT:	UPDATE ON HOUSING DEPT OPERATIONS POST COVID 19
DIRECTORATE:	HOUSING AND INVESTMENT
REPORT AUTHOR:	DAREN TURNER, DIRECTOR OF HOUSING AND INVESTMENT

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update the Housing Scrutiny Committee on the position on the operating position of the services within the Housing Directorate during current national lockdown arrangements.

2. Background

- 2.1 Following the national guidelines relating to the easing of the lock down position and then the re imposition of lockdown at the end of last year the department, like all others at the City of Lincoln Council, constantly reviews and adapts its service offer in order to protect our customers, our staff and our partners staff. We have always tried to keep elements of service in place, sometimes only responding to emergencies, for our most vulnerable customers.
- 2.2 Initially lockdown in full commenced in March 2020, then government moved to a further lockdown in November 2020 as infection rates climbed again. In March 2021 the cabinet office released a “road map” that gradually moved the country to a fully “opened” position potentially by June 21st. At each stage of the road map certain tests needed to be passed before the next could be taken. At the time of writing the new DELTA variant is causing a spike in case numbers across the country and this, it is thought, will have an impact on announcements due to be made on 21st June. A verbal update will be given at the Committee meeting should the situation change.
- 2.3 At each key date, 12th April and 17th May (to date) we have adjusted our service offer and operations to fall in line with guidelines (some services have not needed to change). The detail below shows the position from 17th May easing (IE current) and what is expected if all tests are passed for the final easing on June 21st.

3. Summary of Current Position

- 3.1 Housing Strategy and Investment: -

- Housing Strategy.
 - May – Largely working from home with limited site visits to individual properties or construction sites (De Wint Court). Sincil Bank office now open two days a week.
 - June – Continue with site visits, Sincil Bank Office open (initially still two days). Staff generally working to agile workstyles.

- Safety Advisory Team.
 - May - Continue to work mix of remote working and site visits where required. Contractor support in place.
 - June – Continue as above with agile working arrangements.
- Resident Involvement –
 - May - Continue with remote meetings with limited outdoor visits.
 - June – LTP meetings recommence. Staff working with agile arrangements.

3.2 Maintenance and Investment: -

- Maintenance (Repairs/Aids & Adaptations/Fire compliance)
 - May - HRS have continued with priority, urgent and the scheduled repairs process. HRS completed 1,398 priority, urgent and scheduled repairs. Office staff on a rota for Hamilton House with a dedicated Welfare unit on site.
 - June – HRS continue with priority, urgent and scheduled repairs. 803 completed repairs in June so far. Staff on a rota for Hamilton House. Business as usual with safety restrictions.
- Hamilton House
 - May – Open with safety measures. Managed stores take over underway. PPE stocks available.
 - June – Open with safety measures. New ways of working implemented. Rota for office days. PPE stocks available.
- Voids
 - May – Safety measures in place to ensure working bubbles. 39 voids completed.
 - June – Safety measures, LFT's issued. 16 voids completed so far.
- Investment
 - May – Staff working from home with an office rota.
 - June – Staff working from home with an office rota. Focus on direct to site.
- Aarons
 - May – Office Rota in place. All electrical and gas inspections and repairs underway.
 - June – Office Rota in place. All electrical and gas inspections and repairs underway.

3.3 Housing Management: -

- Homelessness/Housing Solutions

- May – continue to provide service remotely with Officers working from City Hall as required
- June – continue as above with agile working arrangements.
- Rough Sleeper Team
 - May - continue to work from City Hall with agile working arrangements.
 - June – as May
- Tenancy Services/Voids Support
 - May – continue to provide service remotely with duty officers and an area manager working from City Hall.
 - June – continue as above with agile working arrangements.
- LinCare/Supported Housing
 - May – Lincare continue to work remotely and from CH/ Supported Housing, telephone calls and urgent visits.
 - June - continue as above with agile arrangements.

4. Organisational Impacts

4.1 Finance

The services outlined above are being delivered within the current Department for Housing and Investment budget.

4.2 Legal Implications

All current services are being delivered following government guidance.

4.3 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

The Council is compliant with all requirements.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 That members note the current operating conditions and those proposed post the announcements on June 21st.
- 5.2 That members agree to receive verbal update at the meeting due to the impending changes to the governments lock down easing road map scheduled for 14th June 2021.

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?

0

List of Background Papers:

None

Lead Officer:

Housing Management Team