

Repairs and Maintenance

Committee name	Corporate, Finance & Property Select Committee
Officer reporting	Gary Penticost - Repairs, Engineering, Planned Works and Facilities Management
Papers with report	Appendix A - Repairs and Maintenance Service update
Ward	All

HEADLINES

To provide information to the Committee on responsive repairs and maintenance provided by the in-house Repairs Service

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Committee notes the content of the report

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Responsive repairs and maintenance of the Council's residential housing are undertaken by the in-house Repairs Service supported by several specialist contractors and suppliers.

The Repairs Service has a Direct Labour Organisation (DLO) of 44 trades operative, plus works planners, supervisors and managers who deal with 35,000 - 40,000 repair requests annually. Current projections for the financial year 2021-22 are that more than 40,000 responsive housing repairs requests will be received.

Responsive repairs are supported by several approved term contractors who undertake larger and/or specialist repairs such as roofing, drainage, plumbing, fencing, building, plastering and ground works.

The Repairs Service also manages the re-servicing and repair of all void housing properties, delivered via two term contractors. It delivers repairs and maintenance to the Council's corporate buildings stock; it does minor disability adaptations work and minor fabric remedial works associated with fire safety risk assessments.

Please refer to **Appendix A** for details of performance on responsive repairs and maintenance.

Other areas of Housing maintenance outside of responsive repairs:

Statutory servicing and associated maintenance programmes are provided via specialist works contracts and are not included in this report:

- Gas safety checks and domestic gas boiler repairs and replacement
- Gas safety checks and maintenance of communal boilers and associated services
- Asbestos testing and removal
- Water quality, Legionella control and associated risk assessments
- Fire risk assessments and associated works (in house repairs operatives carry out minor FRA works - details below)
- Periodic electrical testing and upgrades
- Communal door entry maintenance and replacement
- CCTV systems maintenance and replacement
- Planned roof renewals
- Planned kitchen and bathroom installations
- Communal painting programmes

Implications on related Council policies

N/A

How this report benefits Hillingdon residents

This report sets out ways in which the in-house Repairs Service benefits Hillingdon residents.

Financial Implications

None.

Legal Implications

Not applicable.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil.

Appendix A - Repairs and Maintenance Service update

Subject: KPI (Key Performance Indicators) Service update for August 2021 KPI

Introduction: This update will take a comparative view of the Service within the month of August 2021 KPI.

Jobs raised and monthly completed

Repair requests have continued to remain high when compared to previous years. Previous software constraints meant that recording of works reported in one month but completed in another were not correctly captured, but this has been resolved. A big part of our success is being able to utilise term support contractors to undertake remedial works where the DLO either do not have the specialist skills or cannot action them within the required timeframe. The charts below depict trends of repairs requested vs completed month by month.

Housing Repairs Data

Number of orders raised per month for all priority's	Numbers	Percentage
Total repairs raised	2770	100%
Total Repairs completed within Month (This includes works outstanding from last month)	2287	83%
Total number of repairs outstanding - with future appointments	483	17%
Percentage of all repairs completed for Month	83%	83%
Total job value of all repairs orders raised	£196,765.17	N/A
Average cost per repairs order	£70.94	N/A
Average time taken to complete all responsive repairs	9.31	Days
Average time taken to complete all stand by orders E1 (4hrs)	02:33:26	hh:mm
Average days taken to complete all Emergency orders E3,E4 (4-24 hrs)	11:08:30	hh:mm
Average days taken to complete all Routine orders R2,R3 (20-90 working days)	16.83	Days
% or all repairs orders completed on first visit	96.26%	96.26%
Total of carded jobs from all orders raised per month	77	3%
Resident satisfaction with Service	96.28%	96%

Corporate Repairs Data

Number of orders raised per month for all priority's	Numbers	Percentage
Total repairs raised	645	100%
Total Repairs completed within Month (This includes works outstanding from last month)	600	93%
Total number of repairs outstanding - with future appointments	45	7%
Percentage of all repairs completed for Month	93%	93%
Total job value of all repairs orders raised	£30,555.12	N/A
Average cost per repairs order	£47.84	N/A
Average time taken to complete all responsive repairs	4.16	Days
Average time taken to complete all stand by orders E1	02:01:00	hh:mm
Average days taken to complete all Emergency orders E3,E4	09:53:34	hh:mm
Average days taken to complete all Routine orders R1,R2,R3	4.21	Days
% of all repairs orders completed on first visit	93.43%	93.43%

Classification: Public

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Demand on Service

The Service received 2,662 repair requests during August 2021. This was fewer than August 2020, but the previous year's figure was increased by the easing of a lockdown period. Following the easing of Covid safety measures, the Service reintroduced routine works that had been placed on hold during the height of the pandemic. Introducing this backlog of works created an increased operational WIP (works in progress) of 2300 repairs.

Creating a strict working recovery plan has assisted with reducing this WIP while services recover. It decreased to 2088 in July 2021 and to 1842 by mid-September 2021. The operational WIP target is 1550. This reduction has been achieved despite the current issues presented to the Service by nationwide material shortages. All possible actions are being taken to actively reduce the figure further, with daily reviews being undertaken.

Table displaying comparison of work requested in current and previous years:

Number of orders raised per month for all priorities	May	June	July	August
Total Repairs raised 2021-22	2941	3225	2974	2662
Total repairs raised 2020-21	2255	3544	3533	3481
Total repairs raised 2019-20	2598	2327	2613	2395

On average the number of repair requests are rising by 3,041 jobs year on year. If this demand increase continues, the Service will need to either expand its establishment levels or subcontract increased workloads at a significant extra cost to meet both resident expectations and service level standards.

Responsive Repairs and Voids Budget allocations:

Responsive Repairs and Voids Budget	£5,095,800
Spend to date as per CP M5 (1 month behind):	£2,504,864

The increase in repair requests is linked to the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018 that came into effect in March 2019. Under this legislation the Council is deemed to know of, and so be liable for, any disrepair once it has been seen by a Council officer or representative (e.g. a contractor). All front-line services are actively reporting new repairs when they visit residents. This shows the Council's positive and proactive approach towards the new legislation, but the added pressure has increased costs and turnaround times, especially where larger repairs are found, which tend to be issued to support contractors.

The introduction of planned replacement programmes to kitchens, bathrooms and roofs will further reduce workloads on the Repairs Service due to reduced reports of specific repairs such as leaks and of general disrepair due to age. New installations will have warranty periods and the items fitted will have more widely available spare parts. Currently the Service sometimes finds

that certain materials are no longer produced, for example kitchen units or roof tile types, so much wider works are required to successfully repair the issue reported.

Benchmarking against other Social Landlords

The Service submits data to HouseMark which collects data from all social landlords and provides a bench marking standard. This enables the Service to better understand the current leading industry standards and set work targets accordingly. Our comparison for the first quarter of 2021 is:

Area of measure	Industry Benchmark	Hillingdon
Average days to complete all repairs	10 Days	9.34
First time Fix	92.3%	93.22%
Resident Satisfaction with Repairs (transactional)	87%	95.13%

In the latest HouseMark review, the figures supplied gave the Service a status of “Good performance, Low cost” and the following statement:

“Your overall maintenance performance was above that of your peers and your front-line costs are lower. This is based on your responsive repairs and void works cost per property of £633, your cyclical maintenance and major works cost per property of £1,558 and your average performance across four repairs and maintenance KPIs.”

It should be noted that first-time fix has decreased due to repairs becoming larger and more invasive. It is also likely to be affected by the national material delivery delays caused by a range of factors including Covid and Brexit.

Complaints, Compliments and Resident Satisfaction

The Repairs Service uses Housemark’s STAR satisfaction format to collect resident feedback on repairs completed, allowing us to submit data to be compared to our peers. The current service supplied to residents is generally perceived as very good when compared to the median produced by our peers.

“House mark’s STAR satisfaction methodology provides a unique balance of comparability and flexibility. Using standardised questions and response scales, landlords can conduct satisfaction surveys in a timescale that suits their business. This means that satisfaction surveys are no longer something that takes place once a year, they can be conducted on an ongoing monthly or quarterly basis, which provides real-time results that are relevant for timely decision making.”

Housemark also provide detail on resident’s expectations of service: “Despite the initial uptake in resident perception early on in the pandemic, overall perception scores for 2020/21 were significantly lower than previous years. This is against a backdrop of slowly declining scores over the past three years as landlords maintain performance, but resident expectations appear to increase.”

The Maintenance Service actively works with residents to reduce the need for official complaints. A significant proportion of received complaints are from residents who have not previously reported the specific repair need. When complaints are wholly or partly upheld, all learning actions are taken on board to improve the overall service to residents.

For comparison, from 1 April to 31 August 2021, the Repairs Service received 35 official complaints, set against 15,075 works orders raised (0.2% of the total). However, 19 of the 35 (54%) were rejected by the Service as the maintenance in question was the resident's responsibility to carry out, and/or investigations found that the complaint did not correctly reflect the situation.

The Service received 124 Members Enquiries between 1 April and 31 August 2021, of which 80 (65%) were reporting repairs previously unknown to the Service, and 44 (35%) were resident complaints. Of the complaints, 31 (70%) were rejected by the Service as the maintenance in question was the resident's responsibility to carry out, and/or investigations found that the complaint did not correctly reflect the situation.

From 1 April to 31 August 2021 the Repairs Service received 84 compliments for jobs well done. Example of some compliments received:

"Received a call from Mrs X, from Sutcliffe House. She wanted to pass on the message that Bradley the electrician was the nicest young man, and she wanted to praise him. She was very thankful for the work, wanted to pass her thanks on again to Bradley and let the management team know how good Bradley was."

"Damien from the flooring department of Housing Repairs came today and fitted new flooring in my kitchen. Damien completed and made an absolutely fantastic job of my kitchen floor today which looks fantastic and is now very safe and no longer a trip hazard. The job was carried out in an extremely efficient & professional manner by him. He is truly an expert in his field and you should be proud to offer him employment as an LBH employee as I understand, at the present moment in time, he is agency staff. If I had to rate him by stars he would definitely score 5 stars and 10/10 for his excellence. I am an extremely satisfied tenant and even though I thanked him most gratefully when the job was finished, I would be even more grateful if you would please convey this message to him for his extremely, friendly, efficient & professional expertise."

Legal Disrepair

The Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018 came into force on 20 March 2019, applying to new tenancies from that date and to all private and social periodic tenancies from 20 March 2020.

The Act lets tenants bring a disrepair case against their landlord for dampness, mould, leaks, kitchen and bathroom defects and other items which affect their quiet enjoyment of their property. Defects do not need to have been previously reported to the landlord and the Act gives landlords only limited protection from defects caused by neglect or misuse rather than fair wear and tear. The Act was intended to help combat 'rogue landlords' but LBH Legal Services advise no-win no-fee solicitors are actively promoting disrepair claims to Council tenants nationwide. Disrepair cases can span years, take up substantial amounts of officer time and incur high internal costs

and external spend on surveyor reports, repairs, compensation awards and complainants' legal costs.

Many disrepair cases are counterclaims against the Council's pursuit of rent arrears. The Maintenance Service believes that the lower number in 2020 is partly due to the stay on repossessions during Covid-19 and that numbers will rise once government restrictions on that procedure end. Already in 2021 on average there has been one new case each week.

Number of disrepair cases by year	Year	Legal disrepair cases
Prior to introduction of the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018	2009 – 2017	37
Following the introduction of the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018	2018	17
	2019	34
	2020	26
	2021 (to 1 st July)	24

In most cases solicitors will request an independent expert to survey properties, often finding a technical liability that will result in works to the property. The Expert will provide a schedule of repairs. The Council can sometimes dispute individual points, but it needs to action them all, including repairs that the tenant is normally liable for under the terms and conditions of their tenancy, and within a legally mandated timescale. Repairs in 'damp' disrepair cases are often substantial projects that are generally sub-contracted as the Council's DLO does not have sufficient capacity.

Operative Productivity

Productivity has risen to meet the increased demand on the Service. The DLO completes on average 5.03 jobs per day, with primary trades averaging 5.28 and secondary trades 4.56. Primary trades comprise carpenters, electricians and plumbers, who usually have a higher turnover due to the reactive nature of their work. Secondary trades include bricklayers, plasterers, decorators and roofers, who usually need a more planned approach to their work and the average job is generally larger, meaning fewer completions per day.

DTD KPI's

	Trade	Average	Change
Average KPI of daily completions for all trades combined	All	5.03	Up
Average KPI of daily completions for Primary trades combined	Primary	5.28	Marginal
Average KPI of daily completions for Secondary trades combined	Secondary	4.56	Marginal
Average daily number of orders completed per trade :	Bricklayer	0	Down
	Carpenters	4.62	Marginal
	Decorator	3.83	Up
	Electrician	6.06	Up
	Floor-layer	4.8	Up
	Plumber	5.36	Marginal
	Glazier	3.51	Marginal
	Multi -trade	3.58	Down
	Plasterers	3.69	Marginal
	Roofers	7.01	Up

Corporate KPI's

	Trade	Average	
Average daily number of orders completed per operative all trades combined	All	5.54	Marginal
Average daily number of orders completed per trade	Electrician	5.22	Up
	Plumber	6.64	Marginal
	Multi-Trader	5.08	Up

Toolbox Talks (TBT)

All operatives attend monthly toolbox talks (TBTs), signing an attendance sheet. Each TBT includes a safety talk from a pre-agreed annual agenda and it also allows managers to update operatives on other aspects of the business, on targets and procedures, and on recent issues in the wider Council. TBTs are currently outside with social distancing, in the rear car park of Harlington Road Depot. Face masks and other PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) are worn.

Current TBT safety talk schedule:

Monday 16th August 2021	Needle Stick Injuries
Monday 20th September 2021	Company Vehicles
Monday 18th October 2021	Confined Spaces
Monday 15th November 2021	First Aid
Monday 20th December 2021	PPE

Lead Operatives have continued to carry out on-site safety spot checks on trade operatives which include checking vehicle conditions, the use and supply of PPE and the quality of works being undertaken. Lead Operatives complete a report and grade the operative. Failed inspections mean an informal warning and operatives know that three informal warnings may lead to formal disciplinary action being taken. This approach has seen a reduction in site accidents, fewer complaints and higher productivity.

Apprentices

The Repairs Service currently have 4 apprentices employed.

Repairs Order system: Oneserve / Active Housing integration Phase 2 - Went live Wednesday 30th June 2021

Oneserve is the software that the Maintenance Service uses to allocate works orders. Active Housing provide the repair-reporting software on the Council's website. Phase 2 of the integration between these programmes went live on 30 June 2021: when residents log in to the website to report repairs, integration with Oneserve's calendar allows them to book appointments for most repairs online. For safety reasons we ask residents to continue to report actual or possible emergencies by phone.

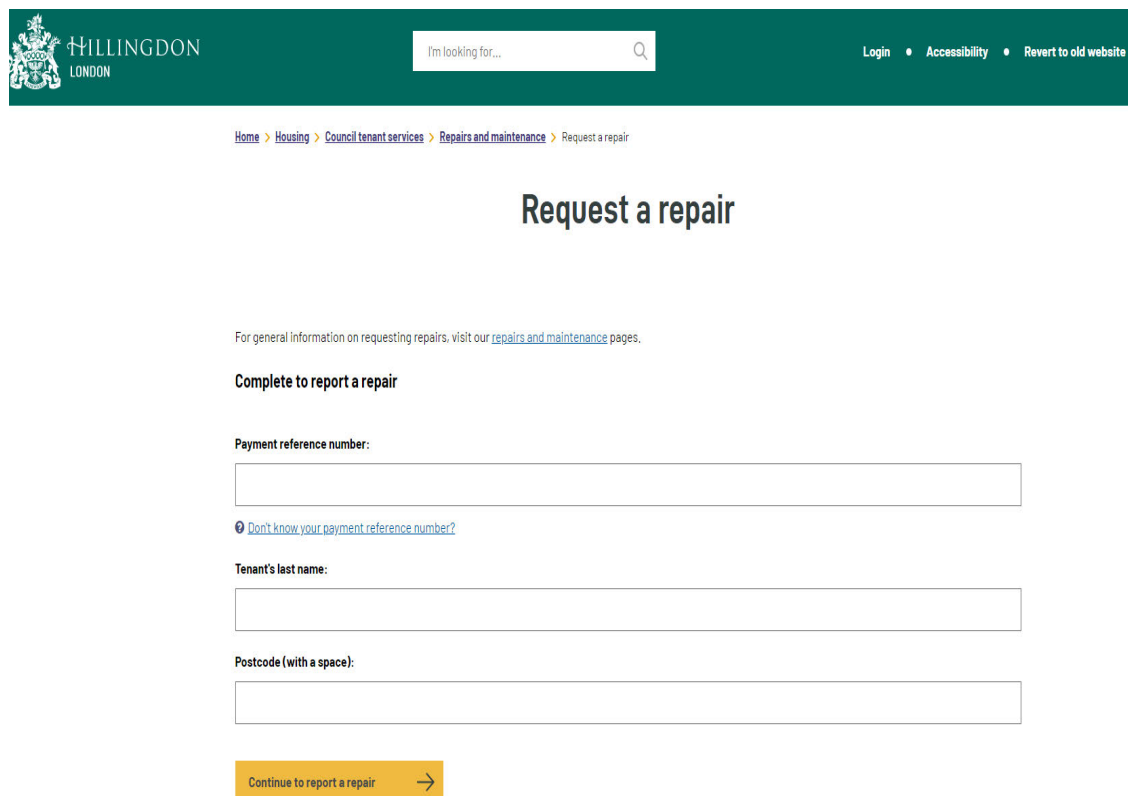
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This has been a major step forward with Repairs reporting. It has directly integrated resident reports into Oneserve, ensuring the Council retains a full property maintenance history, new communal-area repairs for blocks of flats are recorded against the block and residents can book multiple repairs for different trades within a single website session. They can also look at photo and video guides of how to carry out simple repairs that are their responsibility to complete under the terms and conditions of their tenancy.

Since go-live, 207 jobs have been raised via the resident portal, of which 90 are completed so far.

The screenshot below shows the 3-tier verification process to access the repair reporting tool.



The screenshot shows the Hillingdon London website header with the logo on the left, a search bar in the center, and links for 'Login', 'Accessibility', and 'Revert to old website' on the right. Below the header is a breadcrumb trail: 'Home > Housing > Council tenant services > Repairs and maintenance > Request a repair'. The main heading is 'Request a repair'. A link for general information on requesting repairs is provided. The form is titled 'Complete to report a repair' and contains three input fields: 'Payment reference number', 'Tenant's last name', and 'Postcode (with a space)'. A yellow button labeled 'Continue to report a repair' with a right-pointing arrow is at the bottom.

Materials

The current average cost of each repair is £70.94, which evidences effective use of van stock and enforcement of stock usage for operatives. For each invoice, a Team leader checks all lines for each purchase and verifies it was needed on the job raised. This approach has meant that operatives are aware that all materials are cross referenced and verified, allowing for strict cost management.

A full vehicle stock management audit was arranged with Grafton to confirm if operatives had maintained their stocks. This audit required all stock to be removed from operatives' vans, itemised and notes taken of any missing items for Team Leaders to investigate. This audit has now been concluded and found that all operatives have successfully maintained their stocks. This

is mainly due to the enforcement the Service requested be built into Oneserve for operatives to declare what stock is required. Automatic orders are raised with Buildbase then operatives can collect the items.

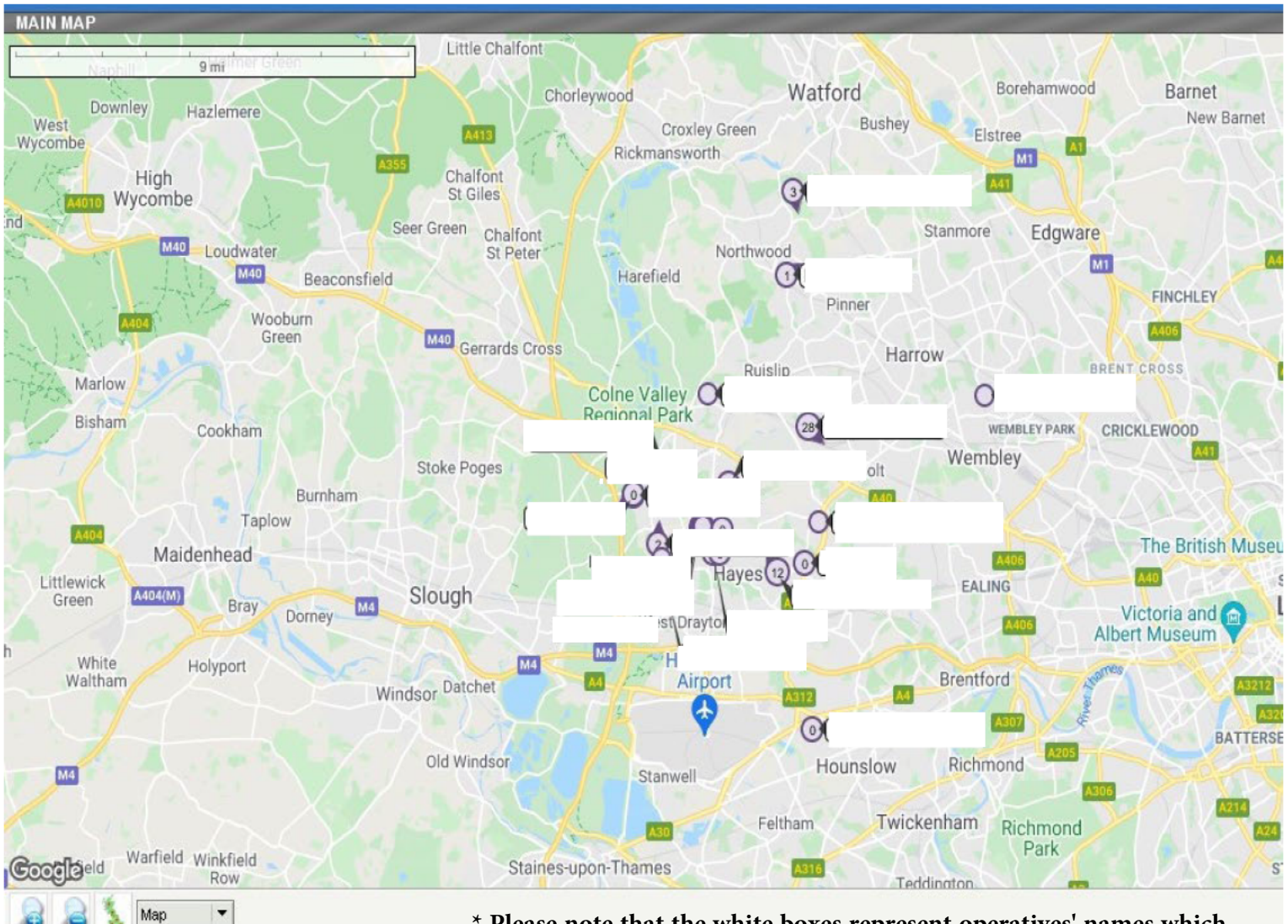
Due to the contract framework agreement that LBH has in place, we have yet to see many issues for DLO part availability due to national material shortages. However, the continued widespread issues are being continually monitored for any potential impact.

IT (Infrastructure and Technology) upgrades and improvements

All operatives recently received new phones as the previous versions had insufficient resources to run the current version of Oneserve.

A separate project called TrackAPhone is also now live, allowing the Service to track all operative phones in real time on Google Maps and to send group text alerts. The group text feature was lost when the previous Mears software contract ended.

The picture below is a sample of the TrackAPhone programme.



* Please note that the white boxes represent operatives' names which have been redacted for the purpose of data protection *

Voids Performance

The Voids Team are currently being impacted by almost a half of their voids being outside the standard area. This budget year (2021-22) Voids have carried out 118 standard void refurbishment vs 126 non-decent/major refurbishment voids.

The team have been working alongside the Regen Team for Phase 1 of Austin Road and Wellings House Estate closures by advising if properties have come to the end of their useful life or if the property can be converted to a short-term lettable property. If the property is deemed at end-of-life stage, it is cleared of all items and all utilities removed and made safe. If identified as short term let, works are specified and issued to the appropriate contractors.

Working closely with the welfare and reform team, any items at clearance stage that are still within a usable state are identified so they can be donated to charities to help those in need.

The voids repairs team have refurbished 244 voids since April 21, which includes Buy Back properties. This is broken down into the following table:

Table Displaying void categories totals and average costs:

Category	COUNTA of Category	SUM of Total Cost of Void
HLV - HARD TO LET VOID	5	£14,990.75
MV - MAJOR VOID	27	£194,762.84
NDV - NON-DECENT VOID	94	£508,814.11
SV - STANDARD VOID	118	£240,745.35
Grand Total	244	£959,313.05

Fire Risk Assessments minor repairs:

The Repairs Service assists the Engineering department by carrying out Fire Regulation Assessment (FRA) upgrade works for LBH to comply with its statutory obligations regarding fire safety to residents. Engineering and Repairs managers routinely monitor progress. The same team carries out works in both Corporate and Housing Stock, ensuring consistency of approach and quality.

So far the Repairs Service has completed FRA works over the course of Phases one to four of the project. With Phase Five commencing from April 2021, the Service has completed 74% of works issued. Three Repairs operatives are dedicated to FRA upgrade maintenance works across all three associated work streams.

The London Fire Brigade stated that the quality of firestopping provided by the LBH Repairs Service is one of the best seen within the London area.

Minor Adaptations:

Minor adaptations were transferred to the Repairs Service in April 2020 at which time there was a backlog of works of 60 jobs which have all now been completed. To date the Service has completed 119 Minor Adaptations requests on both private and Council-owned properties.