

Board questions 16 May 2016

The Royal Mint Estate has long been neglected by Tower Hamlets Homes evidenced by the dilapidated state of the portfolio and lack of community engagement. Poor policy and budget integration between Repairs and Capital works results in a downward spiral of quality and an exponentially escalating capital repairs bill. Continual cost-reduction pressure on repair and Maintenance budgets simply realise higher costs for residents in the longer term. By way of example, the ongoing balcony repairs to the rear of the Royal Mint Street block; Scaffolding has been erected for over 3 months yet only 6 days of actual work have been performed. The conflicting policies and budgets prevent the other identical balconies being repaired at the same time despite them being in the same dilapidated condition. Almost comically, the policies prevent the underside of the balconies to be repainted while the scaffolding is present as repainting is deemed to be "Capital Works". The same policies have resulted in bodged repairs to 30 year old single-glazed window frames where replacement with UPVC would have been more cost effective but would fall under a Capital Works budget. This lack of integration between capital expenditure and operational expenditure demonstrates the absence of a cohesive Whole-Life Asset Management strategy required to maintain a portfolio of properties of this nature. Ultimately it is the residents who are paying for this poor performance.

Please can The Board state:

1. How they intend to resolve the issue of poor policy and budget integration so that the examples given cannot reoccur?

THH recognise that there is a need for an integrated approach to asset management. Following the delivery of large scale decent homes programmes over the past 5 years we are in the process of producing an asset management strategy that addresses the concerns you have raised. By November we will have verified our five year investment plan and completed our asset management strategy plans. Our approach will, in practice, involve component life cycle replacement introducing the principles of component accounting. Importantly we will undertake enhanced consultation with residents that provides a holistic solution to maintenance to our buildings. We will not simply rely on stock information, we will meet with residents and draw on local knowledge to specify and commission works. Importantly we will review our working arrangements between repairs and capital works teams to avoid waste and priorities those blocks in urgent need of capital investment.

2. How they intend to assist THH to adopt a more innovative approach to whole-life asset management?

The Board will review the asset management strategy to ensure that it is fit for purpose and properly reflects good practice in delivering asset management services, the board will have regard to the items you have raised to ensure these are properly addressed in our forward planning.

3. What is the THH policy for responding to claims notices under Right to manage legislation?

Tenant associations or other bodies wishing to exercise the right to manage will be referred to the Council's relevant officers for decision.

Tower Hamlets Homes is a managing agent for the Council and is therefore not in position to agree these requests, nevertheless any requests we receive will be passed to the council officers. The council contact for right to manage enquiries is John Kiwanuka or John Coker, LBTH.

4. Finally why were The Board's own pages on the THH website last updated in 2012?

The Board's pages on the THH website are regularly updated and Board member profiles were last updated in September 2015.