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**Manchester City Council  
Report for Information**

**Report To:** Communities and Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 14 July 2009

**Subject:** Boiler Repairs in Council Stock

**Report of:** Director of Housing

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**Recommendations**

To note the report and the work going on between Housing Services and Corporate Technical Services to further improve the Boiler Repairs service.

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**Wards Affected:**

Ardwick

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**Background documents (available for public inspection):**

N/A

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The report sets out the process and timescales for reporting, ordering and undertaking repairs to boilers and central heating systems, including, where appropriate, replacement in the remaining Council housing stock of around 3000 properties

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 With effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 provision of the specialist Mechanical and Electrical Service has been provided by the Corporate Technical Service Team including oversight and management of the Gas Servicing and Repairs contract, currently with Manchester Working Limited. To help them deliver this service CTS have engaged a specialist gas engineering contractor SI Sealey. CTS are working with colleagues in Housing to improve monitoring and management of Gas Servicing and Repairs

## **3. Current Process**

### **3.1 Repairs**

- 3.1.1 Repair faults for heating and boilers are reported in the same way as other repairs mainly via the OnCall service either during or out of office hours usually indicated as "No Heat, No Hot Water". This generates a repairs visit by a Manchester Working operative to the following timescales:

- If it is an Emergency, eg: vulnerable tenant with no heating outside the summer period, a 3 hour deadline is set.
- If it is not an Emergency eg: if the weather is fine and or the household have alternative sources of heating the job will be classed as Urgent and an appointment will be set within 3 days, normally as an 'Emergency' job.
- If the fault cannot be repaired at the first visit using parts held in the contractor vehicle the operative will raise a follow up job which will usually resolve the problem. The timescale for the follow up visit may be determined by the need for spare parts, some of which may be difficult to obtain but it will normally be within 5 days.

### **3.2 Boiler/Central Heating Replacement**

- 3.2.1 If the boiler or heating system is of an obsolete make/model and parts cannot be sourced or the failure of the boiler is so severe the operative will request the client's engineer to inspect and decide whether replacement is appropriate. The client engineers, S.I Sealeys, operating on behalf of Corporate Technical Services, will inspect all potential replacement events including, where necessary, central heating systems. They will arrange a joint visit to the property with the MWL surveyor (to reduce the number of visits to the property) usually within 24 hours but this can sometimes depend on the tenant's availability. A decision can be made on the spot as the MWL surveyor will measure up and provide a cost for SI Sealey's engineer to approve. MWL

would then make an appointment with the tenant as soon as possible after the 2 or 3 days it normally takes to order and collect the necessary parts/materials.

- 3.2.2 In order to minimise delay an order for the replacement is placed against the repairs budget with the costs later being set against the Obsolete Boiler Replacement (OBR) capital budget, which is set at £225k for 2009/10. This sum includes other related capital works to heating systems including central heating upgrades/replacements and radiator/piping replacements. In view of the higher cost of ad-hoc boiler replacement and other major heating renewals/replacements, and the amount of physical disturbance which could be involved, the preferred option is to repair where it is economically and practically possible to do so.
- 3.2.3 Given that the balance of the Council's housing stock will be included in future transfers or regeneration proposals all properties are treated the same in terms of the approach to boiler or central heating replacement. It is stressed that there is no presumption or policy against boiler replacement in situations where a more cost effective repair cannot be effected.
- 3.2.4 In the first quarter of 2009/10 boiler/central heating replacements are running slightly higher than anticipated at around 12 per month. Jobs can cost from £500 minimum up to a maximum of about £6000. It is currently taking around 3 to 4 days on average from ordering a new boiler to installation.

### 3.3 Information on Performance

- 3.3.1 Performance information in relation to gas servicing is monitored on a regular basis with quarterly reports to the Housing Departmental Management Team. However, data on repairs performance is subsumed within the general repairs performance data so it not possible to provide specific information on gas repairs. However, CTS are currently developing and populating a new database specifically for gas servicing and repairs which will help with future monitoring of this key area of maintenance activity. The following PI information relating to general repairs does however give an indication of general performance by MWL. It is likely, in view of the priority given to gas boiler and heating repairs, that PIs relating to this particular area will be slightly better.

- **Appointments Made and Kept:** Target - 96% April/May – 96%
- **Urgent Repairs within Government Timescale:** Target – 95% April/May -99%
- **Emergency Repairs on Time:** Target – 98.5 April/May – 99.4%

Generally performance in this area seems to be quite good but like any service can be improved further.

## 4. Potential Improvements to Service

- 4.1 As indicated above work is in hand to develop and refine a database on the overall gas servicing and repairs service which will improve monitoring of performance.
- 4.2 A process mapping exercise will be undertaken with a view to identifying opportunities for streamlining and improving processes going forward.
- 4.3 Customer complaints and comments will be recorded and analysed in order to further improve the service in a positive way subject to financial constraints.