

**Cabinet Response to Overview and Scrutiny Recommendations
Completed Action Plan**

Kier North Tyneside Joint Venture

In accordance with Section 21B of the Local Government Act 2000, Cabinet is required to provide a response to the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee within 2 months. In providing this response Cabinet is asked to state whether or not it accepts each recommendation and the reasons for this decision. Cabinet must also indicate what action, if any, it proposes to take.

Overview and Scrutiny Recommendation	Officer Commentary	Cabinet Decision (Accept or reject)	Action to be taken (if any) and timescale for completion
<p>Recommendation 1: That investigation is progressed to see what if any alternative/ sustainable and suitable proposals could be put in place with regards to the use of the Killingworth site to aid both the Council and JVCo</p>	<p>Officers are currently in the process of undertaking a review of depot accommodation across North Tyneside which includes the Killingworth site and involve discussions with Kier.</p>	<p>Accept</p>	<p>Options will be presented to the meeting of the Strategic Property Group at the meeting in September with a subsequent report being considered by Cabinet at the October 2015 meeting.</p>
<p>Recommendation 2: That consideration is given to offering a wide range of minor works/services by extending the current offer to private sector clients</p>	<p>Following a recent soft market testing exercise for a future Solar PV Project, Kier have advised that they will be actively investigating the opportunities to engage with non Council residents for smaller projects.</p> <p>Officers will work with the members of the Strategic Partnering Board to further consider the opportunities available to the JVCo to offer a range of additional works to privately owned homes across North Tyneside.</p>	<p>Accept</p>	<p>Future report to the Strategic Partnering Board once Kier have prepared a business plan regarding Work stream 5 and smaller private projects.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 3: That consideration be given to the introduction of efficient payments processes that would avoid delay in receiving payments</p>	<p>Officers are currently in the process of working closely with Kier NT to explore potential options to procure a system and develop a robust process. This will enable payments to be made over the phone prior to the commencement of works.</p>	<p>Accept</p>	<p>Officers to ensure that the project is included within Kier's business plan. Kier NT is planning to have a process implemented by March 2016.</p>
<p>Recommendation 4: That establishing a customer charter providing a named contact that customers could call would be beneficial as a clear communication process would be established to deal with customer concerns and requirements.</p>	<p>This recommendation is in the main focussed towards the works undertaken within the school estate. Although established arrangements have been in place to offer a dedicated support service for schools, a review of the current arrangements will be undertaken with the support of the Schools Sub Group to consider a more appropriate model to support customer concerns.</p>	<p>Accept</p>	<p>Future report to the Strategic Partnering Board.</p>
<p>Recommendation 5: That further efforts be made to reduce the time taken for completing the lettings process to a more acceptable level i.e. under 25 days. It was thought that better programme planning and developing a multi skilled workforce would help in achieve this goal.</p>	<p>The time it takes to repair a void property is critical to the overall end to end empty homes process and is reliant on an effective multi skilled workforce and effective resource management. However, like many other housing providers, the Authority are seeing a dramatic rise in tenancy failure, directly related to pressure on income and aspects of welfare reform</p> <p>Taking a little more time to match the right tenant to the right home will make a big difference to their lives and our rent collection</p> <p>Recent changes to the officer teams have now led to a clear focus on tenancy sustainability.</p>	<p>Reject</p>	<p>Kier North Tyneside to continue with their workforce multi skilling programme as detailed in the North Tyneside Homes 2014/15 service plan.</p> <p>Officers to carry out a review of the lettings policy by March 2016. A Specific project has been included in the Environment, Housing and Leisure Business Plan 2015/16 to help tackle this recommendation.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 6: That the JVCo investigate smarter working approach to enable and encourage housing staff to identify potential back to back lets. This may require investigation if some financial incentive would enable agreed works to be carried out once the new tenant has moved in or before the old one departed.</p>	<p>Following a tenant review of the Empty Homes Process in 2012, an incentive scheme was introduced along with a further 40 other recommendations. At that time, the incentive scheme was designed to allow access for repairs to be completed prior to the termination, along with a second incentive should tenants ensure the property was in a good state of repair, a good level of redecoration and free from furniture.</p> <p>In 2013 the incentive scheme was reviewed by tenants where they were able to evidence that the incentive scheme did not deliver value for money.</p> <p>Between April and December 2012 the costs to deliver the void incentive scheme resulted in an increase in a repair and maintenance spend of £43.13 per property where an incentive had been paid. In addition, it was evidenced that 480 hours of officers time had been spent administrating the scheme which tenants felt could have been better spent focussing on improving the quality of the empty homes service.</p>	<p>Reject</p>	

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<p>Recommendation 7: Right first time should be investigated to discover the reasons why jobs cannot be completed first time and put procedures in place to reduce the amount of delays as much as possible.</p>	<p>A Specific project has been included in the Environment, Housing and Leisure Business Plan for 2015/16.</p>	<p>Accept</p>	<p>By March 2016 it is expected that Officers along with Kier North Tyneside will be able to demonstrate an increase in customer satisfaction and value for money through, where feasible by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completing repairs to a consistent standard and quality • Completing the repair at the first visit without the need for multiple visits and inspections • Completing the repair to the satisfaction of the customer • Completing the repair at the right cost.
<p>Recommendation 8: There should be a greater focus to ensure better online services are available to customers to allow them to report faults and create better appointment management etc</p>	<p>A specific project has been included in the Environment, Housing and Leisure Business Plan for 2015/16 which will help address this recommendation</p>	<p>Accept</p>	<p>By March 2017 it is expected that Officers along with Kier North Tyneside will be able to improve value for money and customer satisfaction by improving on line reporting of repairs by developing an online appointment system.</p> <p>In addition, exploring the potential use of photos to help reduce the need for pre-inspections and to also help support on-line choice of fixtures and fittings by tenants and measuring customer satisfaction.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 9: That greater focus was needed from the Strategic Partnering Board on creating a clear Strategic Vision as to how it would deliver and grow the business.</p>	<p>The Strategic Partnering Board has been focused on strategic issues and the development of the Joint Venture. Unfortunately, the strategic issues were more local and practical; for the first two financial years the focus of the SPB and the Board of the Joint Venture was keeping the company solvent in the face of dramatic reductions in capital expenditure. The second two financial years focused on recovering performance and dealing with significant local issues. The last two years have seen a focus on performance improvement and wider work.</p>	<p>Accept</p>	
<p>Recommendation 10: The most appropriate time to consider a rebranding exercise may be addressed when consideration is being made to how the JVCo will look like post 2019.</p>	<p>Although the need to rebrand the Partnership has been identified through the work undertaken by the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee, it is accepted that any rebranding should be undertaken as part of the post 19 arrangements.</p>	<p>Accept</p>	