City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee(s): Housing Management & Almshouses Sub-Committee	**Dated:** 01/07/2026
Subject: Housing Out of Hours Provision – Update	**Public report:** For Discussion
This proposal: • **delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes**	 Providing Excellent Services
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	n/a
What is the source of Funding?	n/a
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	n/a
Report of:	Judith Finlay – Executive Director Community and Children's Service
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Summary

Following the previous update on Housing Out of Hours (OOH) provision at the 13 April Housing Management and Almshouses Sub Committee and in response to questions raised by . It outlines recent service issues, the interim measures now in place to ensure continuity and resident safety, and the phased improvement programme being delivered.

The report confirms that immediate actions have been taken following the May Bank Holiday incident to stabilise the service, alongside a structured programme of short, medium and long-term improvements aimed at delivering a single, coordinated Out of Hours service. Members are asked to note the update

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Note the actions taken to address recent service issues
- Note the interim measures in place to ensure a safe and reliable service
- Note the proposed timescales for delivering a more coordinated Out of Hours model.

Main Report

Background

Current Out of Hours arrangements are split between Housing (Call Care) and Repairs (contractor helpdesk), which can result in:

- Reduced coordination between services
- Inconsistent communication and handoffs
- Limited oversight during peak periods (including public holidays)
- Resident confusion regarding contact routes

Current Position

1. The Bank Holiday incident highlighted operational risks within existing arrangements, particularly where demand increased and assurance mechanisms were not sufficiently robust.

   Recent complaints further reinforce the issues identified. These include cases where:

   - Residents did not receive effective assistance through the out-of-hours service, including being left to arrange emergency repairs independently
   - Confusion over responsibilities between Housing and contractors led to delays or lack of response
   - Incorrect or unclear advice was provided
   - Telephony routing issues affected residents' ability to access support

These complaints highlight recurring issues relating to coordination, communication, and clarity of service responsibilities.

2. A phased improvement approach is being delivered:

Immediate (already implemented)

- Review of job descriptions to include emergency escalation cover
- Strengthened escalation arrangements ensuring contractors have up to date escalation contact details
- Improved information sharing on emergency repairs and service issues
- Reinforcement of emergency-only criteria
- Improved capture of vulnerability information

Short-term (Q2 2026/27)

- Completion of the review of current arrangements and resourcing
- Clarification of roles between Housing and Repairs
- Strengthened reporting and escalation processes

Medium-term (Q3 2026/27)

- Agreement of a single operating model
- Introduction of clearer performance standards
- Alignment of rotas and responsibilities

Long-term

- Delivery of a fully integrated, resident focused Out of Hours service with a single access route and consistent response approach

Members asked how improvements would be communicated to residents. This will be addressed through a phased and proportionate approach, linked to the wider Housing Improvement Strategy.

Immediate communication improvements will focus on providing clearer messaging to residents about what the Out of Hours (OOH) service covers, how to report emergency repairs, and what they can expect when contacting the service.

As improvements are implemented, updates will be shared through a range of channels, including resident newsletters (@Home), estate communications, and website updates to ensure consistent and accessible information.

In the longer term, a programme of meaningful consultation and communication will support the introduction of the new OOH model as part of the wider improvement programme. This will include consistent messaging across Housing and Repairs services, simplified contact arrangements, and clear reassurance around service standards and reliability.

This phased approach is designed to ensure transparency for residents while avoiding confusion during the transition period.

Key Data

Performance monitoring is being strengthened to provide improved oversight, including:

- Call volumes and response outcomes
- Escalations and unresolved cases
- Analysis of complaint trends (including communication failures and unclear responsibilities)

Recent operational data indicates variation in call volumes and call handling times across Housing (CallCare) and the Repairs helpdesk, reinforcing the need for a coordinated service mode.

	CallCare		Repairs Call Desk	
Month	Calls Handled	Average call time	Calls Handled	Average call time
Mar-26	50	05:23	140	05:47
Apr-26	50	05:00	122	04:00
May-26	26	04:51	71	02:22

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications
The proposals support delivery of the Corporate Plan 2024–29 by improving service reliability, resident experience, and safeguarding arrangements within housing services.
Financial implications
None at this stage. Improvements are being delivered within existing resources pending outcome of the service review.
Resource implications
Service redesign and improved coordination will require alignment of staffing, rotas and contract management arrangements.
Legal implications
The service must continue to meet statutory obligations relating to housing management, repairs, and health and safety.
Risk implications
Failure to improve Out of Hours arrangements presents risks to resident safety, service continuity, and organisational reputation. Interim measures are in place to mitigate these risks while longer-term improvements are delivered.
Equalities implications
Improved identification and escalation of vulnerable residents has been introduced to ensure urgent cases are prioritised appropriately, supporting compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty.
Climate implications
None identified.
Security implications
Improved coordination and escalation supports more effective response to emergency situations, including those with safety or security implications.

Conclusion

3. The bank holiday incident highlighted weaknesses in current Out of Hours arrangements, particularly relating to coordination, communication and assurance.

   Immediate actions have been implemented to stabilise the service, while a structured programme of improvement is underway to deliver a more consistent, coordinated and resident focused Out of Hours service. Members will receive further updates as the review progresses

Appendices
None

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