

## **Gas Safety Testing**

### **Update Report to Overview & Scrutiny**

At the last meeting of Overview & Scrutiny the following was resolved:-

“An update report be received by the Committee in respect of the Gas Testing and this report to include any Internal Audit Report recommendations.”

Overview and Scrutiny are advised of the following actions/events that have taken place since the “all Member briefing” held on 26<sup>th</sup> August 2015.

#### 1. Member Updates

Regular updates have been provided to all Members detailing numbers of overdue gas safety inspections including a breakdown by Ward.

As of the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2015 there were 40 overdue inspections, all of which are being proactively pursued to meet gas safety requirements.

#### 2. Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)

The Council self-referred this matter to the Homes and Communities Agency verbally on the 21<sup>st</sup> August 2015 and formally, in writing, on the 25<sup>th</sup> August 2015.

The HCA as the Social Housing Regulator are currently considering if this matter represents a breach of consumer standards and a formal decision is currently awaited.

#### 3. Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

This matter was referred to the Health and Safety Executive following a press release in the local media. The HSE are currently undertaking an enquiry into Redditch Borough Council's system of carrying out annual gas safety inspections, including how the backlog of overdue inspections accumulated.

Officers are complying fully with the HSE inspector's requirements and their enquiries are ongoing.

The HSE have confirmed that they will seek to recover their costs for the work undertaken by them if, as a result of their enquiries, the Council is found to be in contravention of health and safety law.

#### 4. Internal Audit Report

Members were advised that Internal Audit had been asked to undertake a special investigation into the gas servicing/maintenance arrangements to assist in identifying the cause of the issue and to make recommendations to avoid similar problems occurring in the future.

Internal Audit have provided a confidential interim audit report, however, there is still work to be undertaken in respect of the Management responses to the issues raised. The document is to be retained as confidential until such time as a final version, approved for publication, has been completed.

Members are informed that the interim findings have been provided, in confidence, to the HCA and HSE to assist with their own deliberations.

#### 5. Officer Actions

Since the last meeting of Overview & Scrutiny, officers have continued to deal with, and respond to, this issue as a matter of utmost priority including the following actions:-

- Additional and dedicated team resources – Contact Centre/Engineers being deployed.
- Ongoing dialogue and liaison with gas contractor(s).
- Support from Locality teams and Council support services.
- Comprehensive review of gas testing schedules/process and all documentation.
- Accelerated legal processes and arrangements.
- Regular consideration by the Corporate Management Team.
- Consideration at Health, Safety & Welfare Committee with an inspection policy commissioned.

Senior Officers will be available at Overview & Scrutiny Committee to deal with any further queries in respect of this item.