

Blueprint for Housing Services

Final v 6.1

City of York Council

September 2009

Distribution

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Background

The blueprinting process for Housing Services included the removal of the client contractor split and the development of a vision for the service. The process encompasses the nature of the service and the principles on which it will be based and the benefits derived from implementing the changes. This document sets out a planned course of action to deliver the vision.

Context and Housing Service journey

The delivery of the service is currently split across two directorates. Housing Management functions lie within Housing & Adult Social Services (HASS) and Building Repairs & Maintenance lies with Neighbourhood Services (NS). This structure has proved problematic in terms of effectiveness and value for money.

The focus of the blueprint within year 0 and 1 is to deliver the initial benefits arising from removing the client contractor split and achieving efficiencies from the Building Repairs & Maintenance function. The Building Repairs & Maintenance function will benefit considerably from modern IT systems including dynamic scheduling and mobile working and repairs diagnostics.

There will be an opportunity to expand the scope of this blueprint to the wider Housing Management functions during year 1.

Housing Services Vision

A service that delivers its promises to tenants and exceeds expectations in:

- Quality, cost and performance, challenging itself to match or exceed the best performing local authorities and private organisations in the country.
- Choices in how tenants may access the service, including in person, by phone, text, email or on line.
- Flexibility in how the service is delivered though a choice of access points and appointment times, including appointments outside of normal working hours to match tenant expectations.
- Personal service via a motivated and tenant focused workforce that is valued and empowered to challenge its own standards and performance.

The Business Case

This section considers the business case for a service that delivers the vision for the Housing Services.

Strategic Fit

The service is currently split between two directorates. Housing Management functions and Decent Homes delivery lies within Housing and Adult Social Services (HASS) and Housing Repairs lies within Neighbourhood Services (NS). The resulting partnership arrangement is that of a typical client (HASS) and contractor (NS).

This type of relationship leads to a duplication of roles and resources as the client seeks to monitor and control the contractor. Conflicting objectives exist such as the client seeking to control the budget while the contractor seeks to balance the trading account.

The overall outcomes of the existing structure are:

- higher costs due to duplication of roles;
- conflicting objectives leading to mistrust and micro management;
- a less responsive service due to excessive bureaucracy.

The current structure is a barrier to the service delivering its full potential in terms of costs, performance and service quality.

The blueprint seeks to address this through removing the client contractor split.

The blueprint also seeks to improve the overall operational and financial performance of the service through a combination of:

- organisational restructure and service integration;
- optimum utilisation of IT to support performance improvement;
- staff development and training.

The blueprint for Housing Services contributes to the organisation's business strategy in the following ways:

- It is targeted to deliver efficiency gains in excess of £1.58m by 2013.
- It is targeted to deliver service delivery performance improvements that will match or exceed the best local authorities and private service providers in the UK.

The merging of the Housing Management Service (client) and the Neighbourhood Services Housing Repairs (contractor) functions leads to other strategic considerations:

 Does Housing Services best fit into Housing & Adult Social Services or Neighbourhood Services? (See Appendix 4)

The blueprint makes no recommendation on this as it is outside the scope and likely to be part of a wider review of the council's directorate structures.

 The blueprint scope does not include the long term strategic direction of the Housing Service and the impact of the current national HRA subsidy review on stock retention.

Objectives - What will the service look like?

To deliver the promises of the vision by 2013 the Housing Service must provide a housing management and a planned and responsive maintenance service to the tenants of York that provides:

- 1. a service without a client contractor split;
- 2. wider access to the service through a range of access media that meet existing and future customer expectations;
- greater flexibility in service delivery such that customers have choices in how they access the service and in appointment times, including out of normal working hours and weekends;
- 4. maximum utilisation of technology to drive performance, operational improvements and customer service. This includes:
 - a. repair diagnostics to better manage demand and improve jobs completed in one visit;
 - b. dynamic scheduling to improve repairs appointments, productivity and repairs performance;
 - c. mobile working across the service to improve productivity, job processing, reduced back office costs and reduced overall customer contact time.
- 5. an organisational structure that sets clear roles and operational and financial responsibilities;
- 6. a multi skilled, motivated, well trained and resourced repairs and maintenance workforce that is flexible and responsive to tenant needs;
- 7. a service that empowers and supports staff to own and develop the improvement programme and service delivery;
- 8. clear and transparent financial reporting;
- 9. a performance culture that sets and delivers challenging operational targets that deliver upper quartile performance in all key indicators across the service;
- 10. a performance culture that sets and delivers demanding financial targets that deliver unit costs that can be realistically benchmarked against the market place to determine the long term viability of the in house repairs and maintenance service;

11. a service that puts Health & Safety at the forefront of both its provision to customers and the well being of its staff.

Options Appraisal

The blueprint options are considered at two levels.

The high level options for the integration of the service and its place in the overall organisational structure of the council are reviewed first.

At a lower organisational level the options for the Mechanical and Electrical (M&E) Department are also reviewed. M&E currently sits in the Housing Repairs and Maintenance Department within Neighbourhood Services.

Options Appraisal for the Integration of the Housing Service.

The following options were considered:

- 1. Retain the existing contractor client structure i.e. no change.
- 2. Restructure the Housing Management Service and market test the Housing Repairs & Maintenance function.
- 3. Restructure the whole Housing Service and separately market test the Repairs & Maintenance function within the next 2 years.

Option 1. – Retain the existing Contractor/Client structure.

This option is discounted.

Although this option will deliver some efficiency gains, for the reasons already highlighted, it will not deliver the optimum outputs required and would retain all the disadvantages of the client contractor relationship.

Option 2. - Restructure Housing Management and market test Housing Repairs & Maintenance.

This option is discounted.

Outsourcing Housing Repairs and Maintenance at this time is not likely to deliver the most cost effective outcome. The service is currently relatively expensive and as such the market would not need to be as competitive as it could be. The blueprint recommends that the Housing Repairs & Maintenance Service be subject to a radical financial and operation

improvement programme. A low cost, high performing service will force the market to be much more competitive.

Option 3. - Restructure the Housing Repairs and Maintenance Service and market test it within the next 2 years.

This option is the preferred option.

This option allows for the delivery of the maximum financial and performance improvements and incorporates a market testing of the service, which in itself creates a focus for change within the service team.

The focus of the improvement plan will be to:

- Remove the client contractor two parts of the service;
- initially concentrate on efficiency and operational improvements in the Housing Repairs function to deliver quick wins and build momentum;
- follow up within the first year a wider review of other Housing Management delivery functions. Efficiency savings and performance improvements will be determined following the review and will be in addition to those in the Benefits Realisation Plan in Appendix 3;
- market test the service within the first two years. Whether this will be
 a 'soft' market test or 'hard' market test will depend on the progress of
 the service improvement plan. A 'soft' market test is likely to involve
 informal discussions on costs with providers and other users while a
 'hard' market test is likely to involve a full formal tender process.

Options Appraisal for the Mechanical and Electrical (M&E) Department.

The M&E Department is a distinct operational section within the Housing Repairs and Maintenance Department in Neighbourhood Services. It has a staff of 20 tradesmen including 2 supervisors plus a further 2 staff on administrative support.

The M&E Department provides a repairs, maintenance and service function to other non - housing council services e.g. public buildings, schools and social services. It also provides a maintenance and service function to housing, mainly in communal areas e.g. lifts, door entry systems, communal lighting.

75% of the M&E Department's workload is with other non-housing council services.

A decision has to be made on the location of M&E following the removal of the client contractor split of the Housing Service. (see Appendix 4)

This options appraisal considers the following options:

- 1. Include M&E within the new Housing Service.
- 2. Exclude M&E from the new Housing Service i.e. retain M&E as a retained function within Neighbourhood Services.
- 3. Transfer M&E to Property Services

Option 1. - Retain M&E within the new Housing Service.

This option is under review

As 75% of the current work load of the M&E department in non-housing this function is viewed as a non core activity. As such the retention of the M&E function will detract from the core business activities of Housing Service. Therefore retention of M&E within Housing Service is the least preferred option for HASS.

Option 2. - Exclude M&E from the new Housing Service i.e. retain M&E within Neighbourhood Services.

This option is the preferred option

The M&E Department is retained within the Neighbourhood Services Directorate as a retained service. The housing functions it currently delivers would continue to be provided via a Service Level Agreement to the new Housing Service. It is anticipated that as resources are released in the housing service so the requirement for M&E support will reduce.

The M&E function would still be subject to the wider efficiency review if it is retained within Neighbourhood Services when this reduction in demand from housing will be factored into the final structure for M&E within Neighbourhood Services.

NB: As a retained function, Neighbourhood Services management have concerns that M&E may not have long term sustainability as a stand alone service with NS, and will have to be merged into another part of Neighbourhood Services such as Civil Engineering.

Option 3 - Transfer M&E to Property Services

This option is under review.

Property Services has the overall asset management responsibility for the Council. At this time the housing stock is not included in the Property Services brief but the Property Services Blueprint recommends the inclusion of the housing stock in its overall asset management responsibilities.

Sovereignty of the housing stock is a complex issue as it is funded by the Housing Revenue Account which is ring fenced to housing.

Irrespective of who ultimately has sovereignty over the housing stock Property Services may at some future point in time wish to take control of the M&E Department as part of its corporate repairs and maintenance function. However it is not structurally equipped to do this immediately.

Given the timing issues Option 2 provides the optimum solution in that:

- It allows the Housing Service to focus on core business
- It provides a management umbrella for M&E.
- It mitigates the risk of the M&E service failing as a stand alone service in the short term as it could be supported by colleagues in the Housing service, and vice versa, as happens now.
- It provides time for the long term strategic decisions on the housing stock to be confirmed.

Commercial Aspects

The blueprint has the following initial requirements for external procurement;

| • | Upgrading and installation of the Dynamic Scheduling and Working System. The basic scheduling system has alread procured but not installed. Estimated costs of implement including server Estimated annual service charge | ly been |
|---|---|---------------------|
| • | Hand held devices (PDA's) for mobile working. Estimated costs 50 @ £300 Estimated Annual service charges | £15,000 £18,000 |
| • | Vehicle tracking. Estimated installation costs 70 @ £50 Annual rental charge 70 @ £22.50 per month | £3,500 £18,900 |
| • | Repairs Diagnostics Estimated improvement costs Annual service support | £25,000 £6,000 |
| | Total Initial Costs Annual operating costs | £143,500 £52,900 |
| | Total Set Up and 1 st Year Costs | £206,400 |

Market Testing

The market testing of the Housing Repairs & Maintenance Service will take place within the first two years of the project. The exact nature of the test will be specified within the next twelve months and will be determined by the progress made in the delivery of the blueprint.

Affordability

All costs incurred in the life of the projects are to be covered by efficiency savings generated by the project over and above the original £1.58m project target savings.

NB: The Benefits Realisations Plan (Appendix 3) lists a Housing Management Efficiency Review planned for early in 2010 – 11. It is expected that this review will deliver significant additional benefits to those shown above but have been excluded from this blueprint as they have yet to be quantified.

Achievability

See Appendix 2 for the high level milestone plan. The proposed option will not require the relocation of any staff, however this could be a long term outcome as capacity becomes available.

Risks

The risks associated with this business case are included in Appendix 5

- IT Dynamic scheduling and mobile working is targeted for January 2010 implementation. These two IT systems are a cornerstone of the improvement and efficiency plans. As with any IT based solutions they may be subject to delays. These delays may result from:
 - IT issues such as support, equipment and contractor availability:
 - System issues;
 - Staff and HR issues.

The IT issues lie largely with the contractors who provide the systems and much of their work can be done remotely by dial in connection. Dynamic scheduling and mobile working are estimated to require a maximum of 4 weeks of central IT support and the procurement of a dedicated server to replace the obsolete server currently hosting the scheduling system. The systems themselves are tried and tested in the local government market place and major operational issues are not predicted. Staff and HR issues must be mitigated by following the agreed consultation process and engaging staff at every opportunity.

- HR Any staff efficiencies resulting from this project will not be confirmed until April 2010 with a three month notice period to the end of June 10. This extended period will allow for any minor project overruns to be accommodated. Discussions with the suppliers indicate that a 3 month implementation period is the norm.
- The major elements of the system install are done by the suppliers on line by remote access. The actual on site IT resource requirements are low.

 HR - The Blueprint is recommending a rapid implementation of the improvement programme by January 2010 leading to any staff efficiencies being announced by April 1st 2010. The delivery of this time frame will rely heavily on the specialist support of the Human Resource department to ensure that full consultation and discussion is maintained with all staff affected by the improvement programme.

Source Information

Information leading to the completion of this blueprint has been obtained from:

- City of York Council Efficiency review Housing Services
- Service & Business Plan 2009/10 Building Maintenance
- Interviews See Appendix 1

Benefits Realisation Plan

The Benefits Realisation Plan is detailed in Appendix 3.

The timing of any staffing efficiencies resulting from efficiency improvements is determined by the formal staff consultation process. This is specified by CYC Human Resources.

However, programmes to deliver the following non staff related efficiency benefits can be started immediately on sign off of this blueprint. These non staff related benefits include:

- Van fleet cost reductions:
 - Reduced fuel and operating costs as a result of vehicle tracking and dynamic scheduling which aims to optimise route plans by post code.
 - Reduced fleet size through reduced head count and 'fit for purpose' review e.g. use of crew cabs for voids teams where one crew cab could replace three standard vans.
- Material cost reductions:

- The use of standard materials and lower cost alternatives.
- Range rationalisation and improved impress van stock control
- Overhead cost reduction programme in partnership with Jewsons via either an increased turnover through sharing stores facility with another user or Jewsons staffing reductions.
- Material costs are currently being benchmarked against other authorities. Data not yet available.
- Increase in tenant recharging and warranty take up:
 - Improved awareness and identification of appropriate tenant recharges.
 - Through improved data availability from the Codeman Asset Management system increase number of repairs referred back to contractors as warranty claims.
- Sub Contractor cost reductions:
 - Utilising surplus staffing resource to target reduced sub contractor usage. This may require some element of retraining for existing staff.
 - Review of contractor pricing arrangements.
 - NB: This will have an impact on local sub contractors as contracted work will decrease by a targeted 5% per annum. (See Appendix 4)
- Improved rent collection rate via a targeted one week reduction in void relet time as a result of:
 - Improved job scheduling:
 - Balanced multi skilled teams:
 - An agreed void standard.

The delivery of the Benefits Realisation Plan will be led by the Blueprint Implementation Team. This will initially be made up of the current members of the Blueprint Group. This may be supplemented with appropriate additional members as required.

The Implementation Team will be lead by the NKA lead for this blueprint.

The Benefits Realisation Plan will be supported by a detailed Service Improvement Plan (SIP), Organisational Improvement Plan (OIP) and Financial Improvement Plan (FIP).

The individual improvement plans will show all the elements required to successfully complete the various plans with relevant timescales and individuals with designated responsibility for the delivery of each element of the plan.

Key Benefits to be realised by the plan are:

- A tenant focused service.
- A service that matches or exceeds the best local authorities and private service providers and sets itself demanding targets in the delivery of all key indicators including:
 - Average time to complete responsive repairs
 - Void relet time
 - % Repairs completed within target time
 - % Proportion of repairs classed as emergency
 - % Repairs appointed and appointment kept
 - % Properties with a current Gas Safety Certificate
 - Average cost of a repair
 - No. of repairs per property
- Efficiency savings in excess of £1.58m over three years.
- A housing service that is flexible and responsive to the long term strategic demands of the social housing sector.
- Increasing tenant satisfaction and engagement.

Appendix 1

List of Interviewees

Bill Hodson Director Housing & Adult Social Services
Adam Wilkinson Director Neighbourhood Services (Interim)

Sally Burns Director Neighbourhood Services

Richard White Assistant Director Neighbourhood Services

Steve Waddington Head of Housing Services

Mark Grandfield Asset Manager

Debbie Mitchell
Finance Manager - HASS
Tom Brittain
Housing operations Manager
Paul Morrison
Tenancy Services Manager
Chris Pinder
Responsive Repairs Manager
Denis Southall
Support Services Manager

Steve Peel Operations Manager
Kevin Bray Operations Manager
Rachel Harrison Finance Manager – NS
Graham Frodsham Management Accounts - NS
Andrew Skelton Maintenance Manager

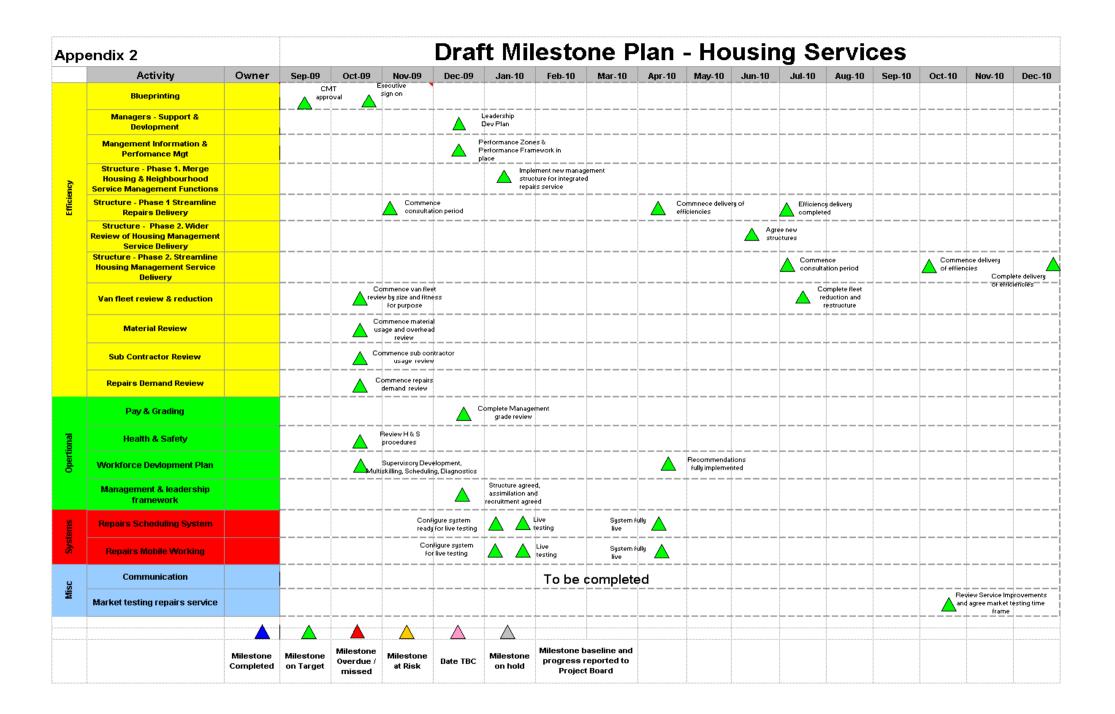
Kim Marsden Senior Services supervisor - Gas

David Wray
Kevin Wakefield
Paul Ezard
Sonia Dyball
Julie Page
Gas Supervisor
M&E Supervisor
Repairs Supervisor
Technical Support
Customer Support

Vince Thurlby Jewsons Regional Manager Mick Nelson Jewsons Branch Manager

Dave Atkinson Business Change Manager – moreforYork

Ben Lynch Business Analyst – moreforYork Paul Kear Business Analyst – moreforYork



Appendix 3: Housing Services Financials

| | Year 0 | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | |
|--|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| HRA SAVINGS | 2009/10 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 | 2012/13 | Total |
| Review of Service Delivery | £ - | £ 183,750 | £ 61,250 | £ - | £ 245,000 |
| Staff Efficiencies | £ - | £ 407,083 | £ 157,917 | £ 100,000 | £ 665,000 |
| Management Efficiency Review (tbd) | £ - | £ - | £ - | £ - | £ - |
| Reduced van fleet costs 23@£6k+8 | £ 7,500 | £ 103,500 | £ 63,000 | £ 12,000 | £ 186,000 |
| Reduced Material costs @ 5% p.a. | £ 19,998 | £ 75,000 | £ 75,000 | £ 75,000 | £ 244,998 |
| Reduced Overtime £260k@20% pa | £ 12,600 | £ 37,800 | £ 20,000 | £ 20,000 | £ 90,400 |
| Reduced Demand 5% pa @ £3.2m | £ - | £ - | £ - | £ - | £ - |
| Tenant Recharges | £ 3,000 | £ 12,000 | £ 12,000 | £ 12,000 | £ 39,000 |
| Reduced sub contractors £600k @ 5% pa | £ 7,500 | £ 30,000 | £ 30,000 | £ 30,000 | £ 97,500 |
| Improved collection rates of housing rents | £ - | £ 18,000 | £ 18,000 | £ - | £ 36,000 |
| | | | | | |
| Total HRA savings | £ 50,598 | £ 867,133 | £ 437,167 | £ 249,000 | £ 1,603,898 |
| Investments | £144,000 | £223,000 | | | £367,000 |
| | | | | | |
| | Year 0 | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | |
| General Fund Saving | 2009/10 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 | 2012/13 | Total |
| M&E Efficiencies | £ - | £ 73,333 | £ 46,667 | £ 20,000 | £ 140,000 |
| (General Fund Saving) | _ | L 13,333 | £ 40,007 | 20,000 | 2 140,000 |

Appendix 4 Decision log

| | Decision | Who | When |
|---|---|------|---------|
| 1 | Blueprint Vision sign off | CMT | Sept 09 |
| 2 | To Integrate the Client & Contractor elements of the repairs | Exec | Oct 09 |
| 3 | To develop and implement dynamic scheduling to improve repairs appointments, productivity and repairs performance; supported by mobile working across the service to improve productivity, job processing, reduced back office costs and reduced overall customer contact time. | CMT | Sept 09 |
| 4 | Retain the M&E function within Neighbourhood Services and as part of the property services review consider the long-term viability of the service and its future location. | CMT | Sept 09 |

Appendix 5 - Risks

| See | RIS | K FSI | IIME |
|-----|-----|-------|------|

| Risk ID | Date Raised | Raised By | Owner | Risk Type / Description | Potential Impact | Risk Rating |
|-----------|--------------|-----------|---------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| | | | | | If this extends more than 3 | |
| | | | | Delays to start of Scheduling & | months beyond 1st Jan 2010 then | |
| | | Norman | Norman | mobile working due to IT resource | | |
| HG-R-001 | 1.4th Con 00 | | | I. | | 1.4 |
| HG-K-001 | 14th Sep 09 | Euwards | Edwards | issues | Deleva in project start data of 1st | 14 |
| | | Norman | Narman | Delays to start of Scheduling & | Delays in project start date of 1st | |
| HC D 000 | 15th Can 00 | Norman | Norman | mobile working due to system | Jan 2010. Loss of credibility of | 10 |
| HG-R-002 | 15th Sep 09 | ⊏awards | Edwards | issues | project | 19 |
| | | h. I | h1 | Delays to start of Scheduling & | Delays in project start date of 1st | |
| 110 B 000 | 400 00 | Norman | Norman | mobile working due to staffing or | Jan 2010. Loss of credibility of | 40 |
| HG-R-003 | 16th Sep 09 | Edwards | Edwards | HR issues | project | 19 |
| | | | | | | |
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| Appendix 6 | 6 - Communications Pla | n | | | |
|-------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|------------------------------------|----------|
| TIMESCALE | ACTIVITY | TO WHOM | HOW | WHAT MESSAGE | COMPLETE |
| September | | | | | |
| | ONE - RMT and CMT Approval o | of Blueprint | | | |
| October | | | | | |
| KEY MILESTO | ONE - Executive sign off of Mor | e for York programme | | | |
| | - Commence Management | : Briefing | | | |
| | - Commence staff briefing | | | | |
| | - Commence consultation | process | | | |
| | Cascade of Blueprint | | | | |
| TBC | information | SMG | Briefing session | Blueprints and plans | |
| | | Team Leaders & | _ | Service improvements & restructure | |
| TBC | Briefing for managers | Supervisors | Briefing session | (More Money for York) | |
| TBC | Blueprint Briefing Sessions | All staff | TBC | Service improvements & restructure | |
| TBC | Start of consultation process | Unions & staff | твс | Service improvements & restructure | |
| November | | | | | |
| | ONE - Commence wider stakeh | older briefing | | | |
| | | | | Service improvements & restructure | |
| | | | | (More Money for York)(More for | |
| TBC | Briefing for members | Council members | твс | Customers) | |
| | Briefing for tenants & | Tenants & leaseholders | | Service improvements (More for | |
| TBC | leaseholders | groups | твс | Customers) | |
| | Briefing for suppliers and | | | Service improvements & efficiency | |
| TBC | contractors | Contractors and suppliers | твс | review | |
| | Briefing for internal and | | 1 | Service improvements & efficiency | |
| TBC | external customers | Customer representatives | твс | review (More for Customers) | |
| | | | | | |
| December | | | | | |
| KEY MILESTO | DNE | | | | |
| | | | | | |
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