

## Hexagon Housing Association

### social housing



#### Fast facts:

**Client:** Tom McCormack, Chief Executive, Hexagon Housing Association

**Industry:** Social Housing

**Start:** June 2014

**End:** July 2014

**Capita Services:** Programme Review

#### Executive summary

Hexagon is an innovative and responsive Housing Association working in partnership with a range of local authorities to meet housing and care needs across South East London with an annual turnover of nearly £26m. It has over 150 staff providing over 4,000 good quality affordable homes for rent with supporting services to people in South East London, and works to extend opportunities and improve the neighbourhoods they live in.

As part of a three year ICT Strategy, Hexagon embarked on a programme aimed at ensuring it had a better flow of information across a range of processes to support its staff in providing better customer services. The original three year plan was to develop a Contact Management Information (CMI) system, introduce workflow and electronic document management, and to integrate the CMI system with the existing housing management system.

This was to be supplemented by a new reporting system to improve management information and performance reporting. The existing main ICT supplier was engaged to support the delivery of the programme.

After getting off to a good start by delivering the first phase to time and budget, the programme began to experience delivery issues, and although a number of reviews and revisions were undertaken, the issues continued to occur. Capita IT Professional Services (ITPS) was engaged to undertake a review of the programme and to recommend the best way forward to resolve the programme's issues.

#### Challenges and goals

The key challenge was to understand why, although everyone involved fully believed that each time the programme was revised that it would be back-on-track, the programme continued to experience issues.

Our goal was to identify the underlying causes of the issues so that we could provide real insight into the workings of the programme, and thus be able to agree a set of recommendations with Hexagon that would enable it to deliver its ICT Strategy and so realise the benefits for itself and its customers.

### Our approach

After initial discussions to understand the approach that would best fit with the culture of the organisation, it was agreed that Capita ITPS would use a combination of off-site desk based reviews of programme documentation and informal interviews with key programme personnel and stakeholders.

The documentation reviews identified that the project documents had increased in quality as the programme progressed and contained the key elements required to plan, manage and report on progress. Recommendations were made on how to streamline the documentation to focus on the essential information to improve reporting to the programme board so that the key items that needed attention were clearly presented and prioritised for consideration.

The key findings were from the interviews, which revealed that although detailed plans and requirements were being generated, the allocation of work to some key staff did not match their skills or experience, responsibilities were not clear and there were conflicts in the prioritisation of work for project team members that resulted in delivery delays.

The people aspects of any programme are often the most complicated to resolve and it required a number of meetings with key stakeholders to discuss the findings before recommendations could be presented that would be workable and acceptable for the organisation.

How to balance the potential impact on team members so that the morale and capability was not adversely impacted, while also meeting the key business needs of getting things done faster and better, required careful consideration.

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### Results and benefits

The review resulted in Hexagon having a clear understanding of why its programme was failing to deliver as expected and a set of recommendations that it could implement as it became ready to do so. Some could be implemented quickly to improve the situation and others required the organisation to make some structural changes aimed at ensuring its business analysis and project management skills were strengthened.

The benefits were that Hexagon had a series of actions that it could use to resolve the difficulties around the non-delivery of the programme while also putting in place plans to prevent this type of situation occurring again in the future. This required some changes in the organisation's structure and approach so that responsibilities were clearer and conflicts of resource allocation could be resolved.

“We were very pleased with the work that Capita did for us on this project. We found their approach to be professional, practical, and insightful in equal measure and this has allowed us to take a renewed and invigorated approach to our business improvement initiatives right across the board.”

Tom McCormack, Chief Executive of Hexagon