

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **GOVERNANCE AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 23 SEPTEMBER 2011**

#### **HOUSING ASSET SERVICE PROGRESS REPORT 2010-2011**

#### **Report by Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services**

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Governance and Scrutiny Committee with information on the performance of the new Housing Asset Services during the first year of its operations.

### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 In July 2008, Cabinet approved the Cross Cutting Best Value Service Review of the Council's Property Maintenance Arrangements including the amalgamation of Housing and Building and Works Services to create a new Single Business Unit (now known as Housing Asset Services) for carrying out improvement works and housing repairs to the Council's housing stock.
- 2.2 In June 2009, Cabinet and Governance and Scrutiny Committee considered the outcomes of the investigation into fraud allegations and related matters made against Building and Works employees and agreed to receive periodic reports on the resulting Improvement Agenda.
- 2.3 In February 2010, Cabinet approved the Housing Service Plan Update which confirmed the establishment of Housing Asset Services from 1 April 2010, with an implementation structure and arrangements for future service provision throughout the 3 year transition period.
- 2.4 In June 2010, Cabinet considered the Housing Asset Services Improvement Agenda Update/Assessment and noted the substantial progress made and the outcomes of the work carried out.

### **3. DELIVERY OF BUSINESS OBJECTIVES**

- 3.1 The Joint Inspection Report issued by Audit Scotland and the Scottish Housing Regulator following their recent review of Housing Asset Services, as reported separately on this agenda, confirms that the direction agreed by the Council remains valid and that sound progress is being made towards achieving the business objectives agreed by Cabinet in February 2010. The learning points arising from the Inspection are welcomed and provide useful indicators against which to measure future progress.

### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 None arising from this report.

## **5. POLICY AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 None arising from this report.

## **6. COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 The Community Plan sets out the overall vision for the local area as:

*“East Ayrshire will be a place with strong, vibrant communities where everyone has a good quality of life and access to opportunities, choices and high quality services which are sustainable, accessible and meets people’s needs”*

6.2 Although not a specific theme, housing provision and quality having a direct impact on an individual's quality of life, is a key factor to the attainment of the Community Plan's overall objective.

6.3 The annual Housing Investment Programme improves the condition of the council housing stock towards achievement of the Scottish Housing Quality Standard by 2015 and supports the East Ayrshire Community Plan themes of “Delivering Community Regeneration” and “Improving Health and Wellbeing”.

## **7. RECOMMENDATION**

7.1 It is recommended that the Governance and Scrutiny Committee:

- (i) consider the progress made by Housing Asset Services during the first year of operation as set out in Appendix 1;
- (ii) otherwise note the content of the report.

**Elizabeth Morton**

**Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services**

**23 September 2011**

## **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

1. Cross Cutting Best Value Service Review of East Ayrshire Council's Property Maintenance Arrangements” Report to Cabinet 2 July 2008.

2. Housing Services: Service Plan - Single Business Unit Update to Cabinet 24 February 2010.

For further information on this report contact Chris McAleavey, Head of Housing Services, telephone 01563 554876.

# NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES



**East Ayrshire**  
COUNCIL

## Housing Asset Services PROGRESS REPORT 2010/11

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## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Governance & Scrutiny Committee with a report on the new Housing Asset Service's performance during its first year of operations in 2010/11.

## 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At its meeting on 2 July 2008 Cabinet endorsed the Cross Cutting Review recommendation that Building & Works (B&W) employees, together with a number of staff from Housing and Asset Improvement Services, be merged to form a new Single Business Unit, known as Housing Asset Services.

- 2.2 All recommendations of the Cross Cutting Best Value Service Review of 2 July 2008 have been fully implemented. A list of the achievements is set out below:

- **Creation of a Single Business Unit**

The Housing Asset Service was established in April 2010 and is an integral part of the Housing Service.

The management restructure of Housing Asset Services was completed in June 2010. This brought together for the first time the former Building & Works staff, client staff from Asset Improvement and a number of staff from Housing.

- **Adopt the efficiency savings framework for Housing and property maintenance services**

Building & Works was a trading organisation and was obliged to make a return on capital. From 1 April 2010, Housing Asset Service no longer operates as a trading organisation. Housing Revenue Account (HRA) work is now charged at cost and the savings derived from charging at cost are reinvested in additional housing repair works

and to resource the achievement of the Scottish Housing Quality Standard by 2015.

- **Remove the Client/Contractor split**

The client/contractor split, operated as a consequence of the trading organisation, has been removed. The former client staff have transferred from the client Departments to Housing Asset Services and now carry out post inspection of work, appraise performance and best value. This group of staff has been co-located to Burnside Street to improve communication and performance.

- **Adopt a Hybrid "Mixed Economy" approach to the delivery of housing and property maintenance**

Housing Asset Services operates a mixed economy to carry out Housing maintenance and repairs, employing a range of private sector contractors and is currently, working with the Lovell Partnership who are the Councils Property Maintenance Contractor. This provides Housing Asset Services with current benchmarked prices.

- **Adopt the principles of the Vanguard Repairs by Appointment System**

A repairs by appointment system has been introduced based on lean systems thinking. This has resulted in an improvement in the number of repairs performance measures (see Section 7 below).

- **Improve Productivity Levels**

Productivity in Housing Asset Services has improved. This has been achieved within the confines of the inherited bonus system (see Section 9 below).

The Housing Asset Services craft operative bonus scheme ceased in July 2011. This will provide savings and enable

additional financial resources to be reinvested into housing repair and improvement works in 2011/12.

- **Improve Customer Satisfaction Levels**

Customer satisfaction measures are now monitored and benchmarked against the private sector (see Section 10 below). Initial results indicate that Housing Asset Services is performing in line with private sector comparator companies and will continue to be monitored and scrutinised.

- **Agree a future procurement strategy for Housing and Property Maintenance**

A number of housing and property maintenance procurement strategies are currently in operation, these include:

- The use of the Council's property maintenance contractor, the Lovell Partnership, to undertake housing repairs where there are capacity issues due to workload peaks and provides Housing Asset Services with current price benchmarks.
- Housing Asset Services work with the Corporate Procurement Team to procure trades and work packages from private sector contractors to manage workload peaks and help ensure the delivery of the capital elements of the Housing Improvement Plan.
- Housing Asset Services have developed and operate a number of framework contracts for services; these include contracts for gas maintenance and servicing and scaffolding. All framework contracts are developed and operated in line with the Council's agreed procurement protocols.

### **3. PERFORMANCE 2010-11**

3.1 The Housing Services Service Plan Update approved by Cabinet in February 2010 identified the following initial performance objectives for the Single Business Unit:

- Achieve greater total output from the same or reduced resources. Measured in terms of increases in overall volumes of improvement work being undertaken and/or increases in the volume of cyclical or planned work
- Increase the % of work undertaken by appointment and the % of appointments kept.
- Achieve level of first time fix in 95% of applicable jobs.
- To achieve and maintain gas servicing levels, within 365 days for all occupied dwellings, in excess of 99%.
- To reduce the volume of jobs and end to end administrative turnaround time for jobs held as 'work in progress' in the Servitor system

3.2 The range of performance measures reported in each section of the report are summarised as follows. Progress against the objectives in 3.1 will be reported within each section.

- Section 4 – Management of Resources
- Section 5 – Governance
- Section 6 – Gas Safety
- Section 7 – Repairs Performance
- Section 8 – Housing Improvement Plan Performance
- Section 9 – Productivity
- Section 10 – Customer Satisfaction
- Section 11 – Health & Safety
- Section 12 – Training

3.3 Housing Asset Services performance is routinely reported on the Council's Electronic Performance Monitoring System (EPMS). The information from the Housing Asset Services Score Card is included in the "East Ayrshire Performs" report which is submitted to Cabinet six times per year.

3.4 The information within the EPMS allows service performance to be monitored and challenged at several levels. This includes one to one sessions between the Chief Executive and the Depute Chief Executive/Executive

Director of Neighbourhood Services, between the Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services and the Head of Housing Services, and between the Head of Housing Services and the Housing Asset Services Manager.

3.5 The Housing Asset Service reports performance indicators on an annual basis to Audit Scotland. The Statutory Performance Measures are reported to Cabinet annually in June and form part of the Council's Annual Performance Report.

3.6 The table provides a summary of statutory and non statutory performance measures that have been maintained/improved over the three year period to the 31 March 2011 and will be discussed in more detail in Sections 6-12.

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Properties with gas safety certificates	89.93%	99.7%	99.8%
% of Response repairs in target*	81.5%	86.7%	89.2%
Appointments Kept	90.9%	96.8%	94.8%
End to End Times	3.2 Days	3.4 Days	3.0 Days
% of Council Houses meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard	55.1%	58.4%	71.0%
First Time Fixes	94.6%	92.7%	93.2%
No Accesses	5.5%	5.1%	5.9%

\*Repairs by Appointment and Non-appointed within target time

#### 4. MANAGEMENT OF RESOURCES

4.1 The Housing Asset Service commenced operations on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010, with the management restructure of Housing Asset Services completed in June 2010.

4.2 The overall aim of the new functional structure, providing a one stop approach to housing repairs and improvement delivery, is to introduce transparency and improved governance through clearer lines of management responsibility and accountability. The structure is designed to allow the new Housing Asset Services to focus on developing a new shared business culture founded on;

- o more effective management & processes
- o ongoing lean systems thinking
- o better workforce planning

#### Staff Numbers

4.3 At the time of the Cross Cutting Best Value Service Review report to Cabinet in July 2008 there were 246 craft operatives in Building & Works. As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011, 210 craft operatives/apprentices were employed within Housing Asset Services.

Staff Numbers	2008	2011
Craft Operatives	246 (July)	212 (Sept)
LGE	71 (July)	101 (Sept)*

\*Includes 35FTE from Housing Services and 5FTE from Asset Improvement Service that transferred to Single Business Unit

4.4 In line with the decrease in staff numbers, budgeted employee costs have been reduced by £658,000 between 2010/11 and 2011/12, This will be reinvested in works to help achieve the Scottish Housing Quality Standard across the Council housing stock by 2015.

#### Absence Rates

4.5 Enhanced absence procedures were put in place in 2009 which included a letter issued to staff covering all absence reporting procedures, annual leave, special leave and unauthorised leave arrangements, and introducing an absence telephone line. These arrangements continue to be monitor closely by Senior Managers.

4.6 The dedicated absence reporting phone line allows operatives to leave a voice message prior to office opening hours to report sick or absence for any other reason with the operatives then being contacted during office hours as appropriate by line management. This has been successful in ensuring the whereabouts of operatives is known.

4.7 Timekeeping and attendance controls continue to be improved with absence being monitored with individual cases managed by relevant line managers in accordance with the Council's Absence Policy. This is demonstrated by return to work interviews being completed for all absences in 2010/11 as well as 68 absence reviews and 148 follow up reviews taking place through the year.

4.8 To support managers/supervisors with absence management, the following training has been provided:

- The Sickness Absence Management DVD
- Managing Absence Course
- Managing Stress in the Workplace.

4.9 As per the table below, Housing Asset Services absence levels have reduced between 2009/10 and 2010/11.

	2009/10	2010/11
Council	5.28%	4.92%
Building & Works / Housing Asset Services	5.77%	5.22%
Council Target	4%	4%
Number of Building & Works / Housing Asset Services Operatives	213	210

4.10 Improved time keeping and attendance arrangements have had a positive impact on service delivery through:

- Higher productivity – more repairs and improvement works being done with fewer operatives;

- As a result of a reduction in craft operative absence during Q4 of 2010/11, £42,840 of efficiencies were released for reinvestment in Housing Improvement Programme Works.

4.11 Monthly absence levels in Housing Asset Services continue to be monitored closely by the Departmental Management Team, Senior Service Managers and Departmental and Service JCCs.

### Fleet Management

4.12 The Housing Asset Service fleet has been reduced by 17% between September 2008 and March 2011. The fleet numbered 196 vehicles in September 2008 (this included 17 housing vehicles) and by the 31 March 2011 it numbered 162, as below.

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Number of Vehicles Fleet	196 (September)	179	162

4.13 The Council's Head of Roads and Transportation and the then Acting Head of Building & Works prepared a fleet transport needs and utilisation plan in May 2010.

4.14 The Housing Asset Services fleet transport needs and utilisation plan is continually monitored and reviewed, by Housing Asset Management, to ensure the most efficient use of transport assets.

4.15 All Housing Asset Services vehicles are now linked to the Masternaut vehicle tracking system, for which monitoring controls are now fully implemented.

4.16 The ongoing review of the Housing Asset Services vehicle fleet has:

- Enabled forward business needs planning.
- Through the effective management of the transport asset the service has reduced fuel usage by 87,086 litres and the carbon footprint by 232,694 Kg CO<sub>2</sub> (as per table below).
- Resulted in more effective use of assets and improved service efficiency.
- Delivered fuel cost reductions of approximately £108,604 based on current fuel prices.

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Housing Asset Services Fuel Usage / Litres	353,372 litres	312,652 litres	266,285 litres

- 4.17 The Council conducted a review of fleet utilisation and subsequently terminated the permanent use of vehicles for home to work travel in August 2010. All vehicles therefore remain in Housing Asset Services depots overnight with the exception of those employees who respond to their first job directly from home. New welfare facilities were installed at Burnside Street depot prior to the introduction of the policy

## 5. GOVERNANCE

- 5.1 The Improvement Agenda identified the need for a review of the Employee Code of Conduct and the Disciplinary Procedures in order to improve employee governance and provide the ethos of a more professional and focused service.
- 5.2 The following policies and procedures were revised and circulated in 2009.

### **Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure**

Approved by Cabinet on 3 June 2009 and were issued to all employees in PER Circular 5/09 on 6 July 2009.

The Head of Human Resources continues to consider annually the need to review all HR Policies and Procedures, with particular reference to the external

environment and including new legislation. There has been no identified need by management, employees or Trade Unions, to undertake an ad hoc review of the Code of Conduct for Employees, the Whistleblowing Policy and Procedures, or the Disciplinary Policy and Procedures all of which are operating effectively. A scheduled review by the Head of Human by the Resources of the each of the policy documents, referred to above, is to be undertaken, as planned, during 2011/12.

### **Disciplinary Policy and Procedure**

Approved by Cabinet on 17 June 2009 and issued to all employees in PER Circular 8/09 on 6 July 2009.

### **Employee Code of Conduct**

Approved by Cabinet on 16 Dec 2009 and was issued to all employees in PER Circular 02/10 on 30 March 2010.

### **Letter of Private Work/Purchases Ban**

Letter issued to Building & Works employees on 6 May 2009, instructing an immediate ban on private work where conflicts of interest could exist and stopping use of stores for delivery/receipt of personal purchases and personal use of vehicles, plant and equipment.

### **APB12A (Certification by Authorised Signatories)**

Revised procedures on intranet and all services advised of new procedures. Issued to Building & Works signatories and instruction provided to staff on correct financial procedures. All employees were required to confirm their understanding.

### **APB12B (Processing Creditor Invoices)**

Revised procedures on intranet and all services advised of new procedures. Issued to Building & Works signatories and instruction provided to staff on correct financial procedures. All employees were required to confirm their understanding.

5.3 Regular invoicing checks continue to be carried out each period by the Financial Service Manager, providing objective assurances, who remains satisfied that invoice processing measures established are in compliance with the Council's established procedures, as detailed in the Accounting Policy Bulletins referred to above. In 2010/11, 1,266 invoices were checked with a value of £1,950,247 with no significant issues of concern identified.

5.4 The table below shows the volume of contractor invoices as well as the number of approved invoices returned by Finance for the two year period to 31 March 2011. The figures reflect the reduction in use of contractors over the 2 years and that improved invoice administration arrangements within Housing Asset Services resulted in no invoices being returned by Finance in 2010/11.

**5.5 APB 11C (Disposal procedures)**

Procedure for disposal of scrap metals was introduced in June 2009. APB 11C (Disposal procedures) was updated in January 2010 to include agreed disposal procedures for scrap materials.

Sub Contractors Invoices	2009/10	2010/11
Total Received	3,242	2,044
Total Discrepancies Identified	15	0

5.6 In terms of salvageable and non salvageable materials:

- A re-roofing practice note produced to give explicit instruction detailing how residual slates should be dealt with being disposal or returning of slates to the Burnside Street Depot.
- All residual scrap metal is returned to the Burnside Street Depot and signed in to the stores.

5.7 The table below shows that scrap metal sales have increased from £2,000 in 2008/09 to £45,600 in 2010/11 as a result of the measures taken.

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Scrap Metal Sales	£2,000	£20,000	£45,600

5.8 The Masternaut Fleet Management System is used to manage and monitor craft operatives. In particular the Masternaut monitoring and checking procedures require Supervisors to check 2 employees per week for time keeping.

5.9 The increased focus on employee governance during the investigation period and implementation of Housing Asset Services resulted in a significant rise in the number of grievances and disciplinary action taken. The table below highlights the marked increase in 2009/10 and a reduction in 2010/11.

	2009/10	2010/11
Disciplinary	28	5
Grievances	58	3

5.10 The improved employee governance within Housing Asset Services:

- Provides a clear framework for the relationship between employees council roles and outside activities
- Provides management with rules to implement and ensures consistency across the council
- Provides a channel for concerns to be raised
- Enhances reputation of council
- Improves transparency.

5.11 The Head of Human Resources continues to consider annually the need to review all HR Policies and Procedures, with particular reference to the external

environment and including new legislation. There has been no identified need by management, employees or Trade Unions, to undertake an ad hoc review of the Code of Conduct for Employees, the Whistleblowing Policy and Procedures, or the Disciplinary Policy and Procedures all of which are operating effectively. A scheduled review by the Head of Human by the Resources of the each of the policy documents, referred to above, is to be undertaken, as planned, during 2011/12.

## 6. GAS SAFETY

- 6.1 Gas safety performance is monitored and reported on a weekly basis.
- 6.2 Following the formation of Housing Asset Services, there is now a dedicated Gas Co-ordinator in post with sole responsibility for the Gas teams. It is the Gas Co-ordinator's remit to review and amend operational procedures across all areas of gas safety, which will continue to be reflected in the improving gas safety performance information.
- 6.3 In March 2011, 99.84% of properties had a current gas safety certificate. 96.45% of these services were carried out within 12 months of the previous service.

	2009/10	2010/11
Properties with current gas safety certificates	99.7%	99.8%

- 6.4 Gas Servicing is programmed and appointed with tenants and now allocated to specific operatives using the Optitime mobile working system.
- 6.5 The weekly gas safety performance report is circulated to the Head of Housing, Housing Asset Services Manager and Gas Team.

## 7. REPAIRS PERFORMANCE

- 7.1 It was agreed by Cabinet in July 2008 to adopt the principles of lean systems thinking for housing and property maintenance repairs in East Ayrshire.
- 7.2 The new approach included the implementation of a repairs by appointment system for all response repairs, including gas repairs.
- 7.3 Calls to report a repair are received through a central call centre and appointed using the electronic diary system, Optitime.
- 7.4 In addition, Housing Asset Services use a repair diagnostic system, Repair IT, to enable call centre staff to accurately identify the repair and reduce administration time and costs.
- 7.5 The current key performance measurements of the appointment system are as follows:
- Appointments Kept
  - First Time Fixes
  - Average End to End Time
  - No Accesses

These measures will be reviewed in consultation with tenants in 2011/12 and redefined if required to meet the changing business and customer needs. Following this exercise, a review of Electronic Procurement Management System indicators will be carried out to ensure that the information provided to management and Members is in line with any new or redefined measures.

### Repair IT

- 7.6 Call handlers use the Repair IT system to identify repairs through a series of predefined questions. By using the system to improve the accuracy of repair diagnostics, Housing Asset

Services aims to further improve the percentage of repairs that are fixed first time.

- 7.7 Repair categories and timescales within the system are developed on an ongoing basis which has enabled the service to appoint more jobs per operative and improve the accuracy of jobs categorisation.
- 7.8 Once a repair is logged in the Repair IT system, Optitime is used to diary and schedule work effectively, taking into consideration both trade and travel times.
- 7.9 Development of Repair IT to accurately categorise a repair will positively influence the first time fix rate. This improves the accuracy of the correct trade being appointed to each job and the time allocated to carry out the repair.
- 7.10 The overall performance of response repairs in target has improved between 2009/10 and 2010/11, as per the table below:

<u>SPI</u>	2009/10	2010/11
% of Response repairs in target*	86.7%%	89.2%

\*Repairs by Appointment and Non-appointed within target time

### Appointments

- 7.11 The number of jobs that are appointed by Housing Asset Services have increased by 11.5% between 2009/10 and 2010/11.
- 7.12 The table below indicates that the percentage of Appointments Kept has increased between 2008/09 and 2010/11. This indicator has been consistently above 95% in 2011/12.

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Appointments Kept	90.9%	96.8%	94.8%

- 7.13 Housing Asset Services are striving to further improve on this

	2009/10	2010/11
First Time Fixes	92.7%	93.2%

indicator through improving the accuracy of job categorisation using Repair IT, the current review of call centre procedures and the relocation of call centre operatives to the Risk Management Centre. This will allow management and administration staff within the response repairs section to have a focus on job management.

### No Accesses

- 7.14 The table below indicates that the No Access rate remained below 6% between 2009/10 and 2010/11.

	2009/10	2010/11
No Accesses	5.1%	5.9%

- 7.15 To improve performance, a 'call ahead' system was introduced in December 2010. This involves craft operatives telephoning their next customer ahead of arrival in order to reduce the possibility of a "no access" call.

### End to End Times

- 7.16 The average End to End times of housing repairs have marginally decreased between 2008/09 and 2010/11, as per the table below.

	2009/10	2010/11
End to End Times	3.4 Days	3.0 Days

- 7.17 A number of improvements have been put in place in 2011/12 in order to further improve on this indicator. This includes the response repairs team carrying out daily scrutiny of jobs in the system to ensure that work is progressing and implementing new reporting methods and administration procedures.

## Post Inspections

- 7.18 Housing Asset Services utilises estimators within the performance and quality section to be responsible for the post inspection of works.
- 7.19 A new post inspection system which automatically selects a proportionate percentage of completed routine repairs for post inspection was developed for implementation from April 2011. These inspections measure the quality of workmanship, monitor recurring defects. The information generated from the system is analysed information which will be used to further improve the quality of service and workmanship provided.

## Benchmarking

- 7.20 Housing Asset Services are members of the APSE performance networks for Building Maintenance. The service participates in an APSE benchmarking sub-group for the purpose of sharing information in order to learn from best practice. Topics covered by the sub group include key maintenance activities, asbestos, asset management, fleet management, stores and procurement, waste disposal and recycling and schedule of rates.
- 7.21 Housing Asset Services is currently unable to meaningfully compare reported performance against other Scottish local authorities because it uses different measures and calculates its performance in a different way. As a result, it does not benchmark its reported responsive repairs performance or outline comparative performance in its performance reports to managers, elected members or to tenants.
- 7.22 Housing Asset Services will seek additional sources of benchmarking with UK wide social housing providers who use similar performance measures.

## Scottish Quality Housing Standard

- 7.23 Good progress has been made towards achieving the Scottish Housing Quality Standard with currently 71% of the Council Housing stock meeting the standard.
- 7.24 A breakdown of the progress across each indicator is provided in the following table:

2010/11 Summary @ 31 March 2011 Stock at 31 March 2011	Meeting Standard %
i Tolerable Standards	99.52
ii Free from serious disrepair	90.05
iii Energy Efficient	95.18
iv Modern facilities and services	89.47
v Healthy safe and secure	98.68
vi Total dwellings meeting SHQS	71.01

- 7.25 Progress continues to be made to identify and remove asbestos from the Council's housing stock to protect the occupants and any workers employed in repairs and improvements. Housing Asset Services are now undertaking location specific Refurbishment/Demolition Asbestos Surveys in addition to carrying out Asbestos Management Surveys in each property as required.
- 7.26 It is estimated that 1,712 doors and screens and 862 homes with single glazing will require replacement by 2015 to meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard. The replacement of doors and screens with UPVC double glazed units in recent years continues to reduce the need for demand repairs and improves the energy efficiency of our properties. The new units, as supplied, are largely maintenance free, are fitted with heat loss reducing "K" glazing units and have a whole lifespan of over 40 years.
- 7.27 Housing Asset Services are continuing to address problems with obsolete and inefficient heating systems and gradually standardising boiler type from a chosen manufacturer that can provide a high level of support and comprehensive spares provision.

## 8. HOUSING IMPROVEMENT PLAN PERFORMANCE

- 8.1 In terms of current work within the Housing Investment Programme, kitchen installations by the in-house provider have increased from 285 in 2008/09 to 520 in 2010/11. Similarly, gas installations by Housing Asset Services have increased from 469 installations in 2008/09 to 843 in 2010/11.
- 8.2 Following revised workforce planning, operatives were transferred from response repairs into gas central heating and kitchen installations in 2010. This increased productivity (kitchen installations increased from 6 to 15 per week) and enabled squads to work towards an early contract completion date; therefore making operatives available to deal with the increase in response repairs during the winter period.
- 8.3 The current Housing Investment Programme 5 year plan is published on the Council's website in order to give tenants and common owners an indication of any major destructive works being planned within their homes for kitchens, bathrooms, electrical rewiring, gas heating and door entry replacement. The plan also includes other works planned to be carried out within the current financial year such as re-roofing, door and window replacement, fascia, bargeboard, soffits, gutter renewal and timber preservation. Access to this information enables tenants to plan for any upcoming redecoration or gardening work etc that may be required following internal and external projects.

## 9. PRODUCTIVITY

- 9.1 Productivity in Housing Asset Services improved within the confines of the inherited bonus system, as per the table below:

	2009/10	2010/11
% of Craft operatives times charged directly to jobs	61.3%	69.19%

- 9.2 The recent cessation of the bonus scheme will provide savings and enable additional financial resources to be reinvested into housing repair and improvement works.
- 9.3 Following the termination of the bonus scheme, Housing Asset Services has checks in place to ensure that productivity levels are being met and overtime payments are subject to robust review and follow-up.
- 9.4 The accuracy of repair categorisation has been improved through the use of Repair IT and the recent appointment of the Response Repairs Coordinator has resulted in developing staff guidance to improve call handling and improve accuracy of repair timescales.
- 9.5 An exercise has been carried out to review all time slots that were loaded on to the system for response repairs. These 45 minute slots were reviewed and adjusted where required to reflect a more accurate and realistic average time for all trades. These amendments will increase productivity and produce more available time slots for call centre staff to appoint response repairs and reduce stand by call-outs.

## 10. CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

- 10.1 Customer satisfaction measures within Housing Improvement Programme are now monitored and benchmarked against the private sector.
- 10.2 Housing Asset Services meets regularly with the East Ayrshire Tenants and Residents Federation and has established a Housing Improvement Working Group to agree new methods to gauge and report tenant satisfaction with the repairs service, and develop new service standards.
- 10.3 A proposal for customer comments cards was examined and an agreement reached that this method would generate a very low response rate and would attract only the extreme positive and negative satisfaction levels. It was subsequently suggested that a 'customer pledge card' in conjunction with a

cold calling telephone satisfaction exercise would be a more effective approach. A draft 'Customer Pledge Card' has been developed to meet both tenant and business needs for introduction in September 2011.

- 10.4 Customer satisfaction telephone surveys will be carried out by Housing Asset Services staff as of September 2011 following their transfer to the Risk Management Centre.
- 10.5 A new in-house electronic customer satisfaction system is being developed to meet business requirements and to make further cost efficiencies.
- 10.6 Housing Asset Service utilises the Council website to provide information to tenants, such as the Council's 5 year Housing Improvement Programme plan and updates on winter response services were communicated via the site throughout the period of severe weather.

## **11. HEALTH & SAFETY**

- 11.1 A comprehensive Health and Safety Improvement Agenda is in place to ensure full compliance with the Council's Health and Safety Charter, and to ensure that safe working practices are being adhered to in line with legislation.
- 11.2 A Risk Assessment Protocol (RAP) Booklet was developed for issue in September 2011 to provide a source of reference for Manual and Craft employees. This booklet gives a broad overview of aspects of health and safety in a variety of systems and places of work and identifies specific work activities/tasks and the safeguard required for safety and health. The RAP cards are in support of the Corporate Risk Assessment.
- 11.3 A Point of Work Risk Assessment Booklet was developed for issue to all Manual and Craft employees in April 2011. The risk assessment (POWRA) requires to be completed prior to work commencing.

11.4 A programme of Manual and Craft block training was developed for delivery to 208 employees between November 2010 and June 2011. The training covered the following topics in order to meet both general and specific training needs:

- An Introduction to Health & Safety
- Corporate Master Safety File
- Manual Handling
- COSHH
- Risk Assessment
- PPE
- Work Equipment
- HAVS
- Asbestos
- Alcohol & Drugs
- Underground & Overhead Services
- Working at Height
- Equality & Diversity
- EAGER
- Effective Team Working
- Working in a changed Environment
- Understanding Conflict

11.5 IOSH Managing Safely training was delivered to help equip line Managers and Supervisors with the information and skills to effectively and efficiently manage the health and safety aspects of housing asset services activities. To date, 23 Managers, Supervisors and Trade Union Safety Representatives have achieved certification out of a total of 30.

11.6 Site Management Safety Training Scheme course is delivered and covers all relevant legislation and other aspects which affect safe working in the building, construction and civil engineering industries. To date, 13 Managers and Supervisors have achieved certification from a total of 23 that have been identified to participate in this training.

- 11.7 160 Craft Operatives have participated in the Construction Skills Certification Scheme (SCSC) course and examination with 108 having successfully passed. In addition, 21 Apprentices have undertaken this examination as part of their college training towards their apprenticeship.
- 11.8 To date a total of 20 Managers and Supervisors have attended Stress Awareness training with an additional 5 still to undertake the training.
- 11.9 8 Supervisors and Co-ordinators who have an operational responsibility for scaffolding have attended a CITB Scaffold Inspectors course.
- 11.10 A Departmental Safety Action Plan was developed for Neighbourhood Services in line with the Health and Safety Roadmap to ensure that a positive Safety Culture is developed to meet the needs of the Council.

## **12. TRAINING**

- 12.1 EAGER reviews for all Housing Asset Services employees have been progressed fully from July 2009. A new EAGER process based on a competency framework was introduced throughout the Council on 1 April 2011 and is currently being rolled out in Housing Asset Services during 2011/12.
- 12.2 The EAGER process outputs feed in to the Housing Asset Services training plan, which is developed with the support of the Organisational Development Section. A range of training has been provided to Housing Asset Service staff and includes;
- Customer Care training (258 employees trained)
  - Dealing with Hostile Telephone Calls have received training on. (14 staff trained)
  - Repair IT training was carried out for call centre staff, gas call handlers and risk management centre staff between April and November 2009. New call centre staff are trained in Repair IT as required. (35 staff

trained across Housing Asset Services and Risk Management Centre)

- All Multi-trade Supervisors were trained internally on the Masternaut vehicle tracking system in February 2009 In addition, a Masternaut demo was delivered to all operatives in April 2009 to highlight the system aims of improving efficiencies and increasing productivity of workforce
- A 3 day training for all craft operatives was introduced in 2010-11 covering annual Health and Safety training and corporate competencies.

**Elizabeth Morton**  
**Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of**  
**Neighbourhood Services**  
**12 September 2011**

# HOUSING ASSET SERVICES STRUCTURE

