

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

HOUSING COMMITTEE – 29 JANUARY 2003

PROPERTY REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE SERVICE (REVIEW UPDATE)

Report by the Director of Homes and Technical Services

1. PURPOSE

To inform members of progress in the implementation of the agreed improvement plan arising from the Best Value Service Review and PMP audit.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 During 2000 a Best Value Review of the Repairs Service to both the Housing and Property portfolios was carried out, with the goal of securing service improvements across the Divisions responsible for repairs and maintenance.
- 2.2 At the meeting held on 7 November 2001, the Housing Committee approved the introduction of the new repairs service for East Ayrshire on the basis of the action plan set out in the report submitted to members at that time. It was also agreed that the Director of Homes and Technical Services would continue to monitor the implementation of the new service with reports on progress on performance to be submitted to the Policy and Resources Committee on a regular basis.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

- 3.1 Almost all of the items listed in the approved action plan have been fully implemented, although due to the requirement to have a seamless transition some of the improvements were introduced in a phased manner.
- 3.2 The revised Repairs Service was launched in April 2002 with press articles advising tenants of the changes to the service.
- 3.3 The following items were included in the action plan and accompanying report and there follows a brief summary of developments to date; with the implementation dates shown in brackets:
- 3.3.1 **Response Category Rationalisation** (January 2002): The original 6 response categories were reduced to three, with the view to having a simplified and clarified customer focus.
- 3.3.2 **Multi-Trade Protocols** (January 2002 and ongoing): A variety of formal protocols have been established with both multi-trade contractors addressing such issues as dispute resolution, variations, rogue item generation, access issues, progress reporting, complaints handling utilising **Respond 3**, with other protocols currently under development.

3.3.3 **Improved Communications** (April 2001 and ongoing): “LG Repair Finder” booklet has been distributed to all tenants. This assists tenants to pictorially report repairs by reference to the booklet and enables both client and contractors to identify and respond to repairs in a more efficient and cost effective manner. Homes officers now have target times to respond to requests for repairs and inform tenants of possible delays and give reasons for same. The two main contractors now receive Orders and recharge electronically speeding up the processes, thus bringing improvements to service delivery.

3.3.4 **Improved Contract Monitoring** (April 2001 and ongoing): A system has been put in place to monitor the performance of contractors engaged in formal building contracts administered by Technical Services, whereby monthly scored monitoring sheets are submitted per contract, with the data fed into a database and results monitored on an ongoing basis.

The performance of the MTC contractors is also systematically monitored by Homes. As well as monitoring the Key Performance Indicators for formal reporting purposes, Homes also monitor performance of repairs being completed against target timescales on an ongoing basis and this is reported to Homes Senior Management Team on a monthly basis. Contractors’ returns are also checked on a regular basis for accuracy.

3.3.5 **Improved Information** (March 2001 and ongoing): The fully operational IT systems held by the three Divisions now facilitates the accurate submission of KPI figures.

The house condition survey carried out by external consultants previously, is now being updated and refreshed to assist future works planning. This has been augmented by a survey of all secondary schools on behalf of Education with a database produced that includes pictorial images along with a room by room condition records. This is currently being extended to include Primary Schools.

3.3.6 **Improved Help Desk Arrangements** (June 2001 and ongoing): A formal protocol has been established with the Help Desk resulting in a more clearly defined set of circumstances of what repairs are carried out “out-of-hours” and which ones will be responded to the following day. This has resulted in a reduction in the number of repairs ordered by the Help Desk.

3.3.7 **Introduction of Dedicated Customer Care Tracking System** (April 2002 and ongoing): The **Respond3** IT System is now in operation throughout the three Divisions giving managers the tools to monitor all queries and complaints received from tenants. It is intended that this system will be further developed as a customer care monitoring tool throughout the three Divisions.

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are no immediate policy implications for the authority, however it is anticipated that policy implications will emerge from the forthcoming review and that these will be brought to the attention of the committee at the appropriate time.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 All aspects are accounted for within existing budgetary provision.
- 5.2 Separate developments are in place regarding both short and long-term contractual arrangements and will be reported to committee at the appropriate time.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil.

7. CONCLUSION

Although the new service has only been in operation for less than a year the following key improvements in performance have been noted:-

- Key Performance Indicators have improved as shown in the table below:-

Percentage of Repairs Completed on Time			
	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03 (to date)
All Orders	57%	76%	87%
B&W Orders	48%	74%	86%
B&W Emergency	55%	84%	92%

A separate report will be made to committee on the KPIs for the last 6-month monitoring period.

- Higher proportion of planned work (e.g. gutter clearance, door replacements etc)
- Respond 3 is being extended across all three Divisions enabling improved and systematic tracking of customer complaints and queries across the department
- Market research ongoing to gain tenant satisfaction
- Performance of the service as a whole being monitored against action plan with specific targets for key objectives

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the committee;

- (i) Notes the content of the report.

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Director of Homes and Technical Services

JC/

13th January 2003

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

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