

**REPORT TO: HOUSING, DUNDEE CONTRACT SERVICES AND ENVIRONMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE - 26 APRIL 2010**

**REPORT ON: HOUSING DEPARTMENT IMPROVEMENT PLAN PROGRESS**

**REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF HOUSING**

**REPORT NO: 231-2010**

1. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To report on progress on the Improvement Plan agreed with the Scottish Housing Regulator.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Committee:

- 2.1. Note the progress on the implementation of the Improvement Plan up to March 2010.
- 2.2. Agree that, as part of the commitment to Public Performance Reporting, this report be added to the plans and performance section of the Council's web-site.

3. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct financial implications of this report.

4. **MAIN TEXT**

The Scottish Housing Regulator agreed the Council's Improvement Plan in September 2009. This report identifies progress for those items which are due for completion on or prior to March 2010.

101 of the total 149 actions are due to be completed by March 2010.

Of those which are due for completion:

76% of the actions are now completed.

15% of the actions due for completions are 75% complete or greater.

8% of actions due for completions are 50% complete or greater.

1% of actions due for completions are less than 50%.

Details of the items completed since November 2009, the previous date of reporting to Committee are listed below. The key recommendations along with the summary of action within the Improvement plan have been summarised in bold text. Those remaining actions with future completion dates are on target to be completed by September 2011.

**Item 1:**

**Recommendation: Develop the Council's approach to collecting and using tenant feedback to improve service delivery.**

**Action: Improvements identified from postal surveys, telephone surveys, focus groups, forums, and tenant led inspections will be discussed by HDMT and Service Managers and reported in Key Results as information is gathered per the Revised Survey Timetable and Consultation Programme.**

Surveys reviewed in conjunction with Managers and staff and redrafted with comments incorporated. A new template has been created to gather required information. An Improvement Service Question Bank is being adopted where available to allow benchmarking of survey results with other landlords. A generic tenant survey has been drafted for issuing to tenants.

**Item 7:**

**Recommendation: Performance for processing housing applications not monitored.**

**Action: Additional indicators to be included within performance management framework (i.e. in Service plan, Key Results, Repairs Partnership or other allied arrangements).**

A manual system for monitoring has been in place since 2008. Indicators for performance are included in monthly performance monitor to City Housing Manager and are included in Unit Action Plan (November 2009) and to be included in Personal action plans from March/April.

**Item 8:**

**Recommendation: The Council does not proactively identify and advise applicants who may be homeless or threatened with homeless, who come through the general application process.**

**Action: Ensure checking process is built into new IT system to carry out 10% checks for accuracy and quality of assessment. Ensure the system provided a full audit trail of decisions taken for offers bypassing established rules for the checking process.**

Homeless applicants or potentially homeless applicants are now identified and given appropriate advice or referral. The new Letting system went live 1 March 2010. This system provides a full audit trail of decisions taken for offers and by pass reasons.

**Item 10:**

**Recommendation: No prospects contained within the information on the housing application acknowledgement letter. Information and advice for prospects callers is inconsistent.**

**Actions: Prospects information will be designed into new Letting IT system which will be accessible to housing and RSL staff and be included on the acknowledgment letter. Use of GIS technology to provide enhanced information on stock.**

The new Letting system went live 1 March 2010. The system produces an acknowledgement letter with accurate and consistent prospects information. Staff have been trained to provide accurate and consistent prospects information.

**Item 11:**

**Recommendation: Waiting List review letters do not ask for update of circumstances, therefore no picture of need and preferences.**

**Action: Devise a review process that ensures applicants circumstances and preferences are updated. Waiting list review process reintroduced gathers needs and preferences. New IT system will include telephone, face to face, and written reviews. All circumstances and choices will be reviewed. Annual programme will be introduced so all applications given full review.**

New IT system went live 1 March 2010 and includes telephone, face to face, and written reviews. All circumstances and choices will be reviewed. An annual programme of reviews has been introduced from March 2010 for all applications to ensure applicants circumstances and preferences are updated.

**Item 12:**

**Recommendation: Approach to cancellations of housing applications is inconsistent and fails to take account of individual circumstances.**

**Action: Devise a review process that ensures applicants circumstances and preferences are updated. Waiting list review process reintroduced gathers needs and preferences. New Lettings IT system will include telephone, face to face, and written reviews. All circumstances and choices will be reviewed. Annual programme will be introduced so all applications given full review.**

A manual system of checking cancellations has been in operation since December 2008. New IT system provides a full audit trail of decisions taken for cancellations. A 10% quality check is now operational from March 2010 to ensure consistency of approach.

**Item 15:**

**Recommendation: Applicants being suspended inappropriately and poor management of the process.**

**Action: Team Leader checks suspensions monthly - 10% sample.**

A manual system of checking suspensions has been in operation since December 2008. New IT system provides an open and transparent audit trail of decisions taken for suspensions. Also a weekly 10% quality assurance check is now operational from March 2010 to ensure applicants are not suspended inappropriately.

**Item 16:**

**Recommendation: The Council does not know the ethnic origin of 24% of the people it lets its houses to. It does not include Gypsies/Travellers or disability information in its equality monitor information for either applications or lets.**

**Action: Equalities monitoring information will be improved by; improving diversity monitoring information through application form; reporting framework will be designed into the new lettings system.**

Equalities information has been improved since the introduction of the new common housing application form. New IT system will provide new diversity monitoring reports, and improved information a diversity groups.

**Item 17:**

**Recommendation: The Council is aware that the allocation policy does not give sufficient priority to applicants in the statutorily defined needs categories. Its waiting points have a disproportionate impact on lettings outcomes and result in it placing a large number of applicants with low level or indeed no need at the top of its housing lists.**

**Action: The new Letting I.T system will support the new allocation policy to ensure we meet housing need effectively. Waiting time points to be removed when letting I.T. system and the new policy are implemented.**

The new IT system supports the revised Allocation Policy (1March 2010 - waiting points removed) and ensure that the Council meets housing need effectively.

**Item 18:**

**Recommendation: The letting process is not transparent because of lets out-with points system.**

**Action: The following groups will be incorporated into the points based assessment system; homeless; redevelopment; special needs; medicals; overcrowded; substandard housing condition.**

The new Letting Policy has been implemented through IT system which went live in March 2010.

**Item 19:**

**Recommendation: An audit trail for management transfers is required.**

**Action: Register of Management transfers which records history. Design of the new IT system will incorporate an audit trail for management transfers.**

The new Letting system went live on the 1st March 2010. This system provides a full audit trail of decisions taken for awarding management transfer points. The new system also produces a monthly report on number and reasons for management transfer.

**Item 20:**

**Recommendation: Comprehensive monitoring of letting targets required.**

**Action: Design of new IT system will provide comprehensive monitoring of letting targets. Additional indicators to be included within performance management framework (i.e. in Service plan, Key Results, Repairs Partnership or other allied arrangements).**

A manual system for monitoring has been in place since December 2009. Indicators for performance are included in monthly monitor to the City Housing Manager, are included in Unit Action Plan (November 2009) and to be included in Personal Action Plans from March/April 2010. New IT system has been designed to produce performance reports on lettings targets.

**Item 21:**

**Recommendation: Transparency and lack of balance in quality of offers to Homeless applicants.**

**Action: IT system will dictate rota for allocations to groups of applicants. Any overrides will require supervisor's authorisation. System will produce reports demonstrating transparency and fairness. The quality of Homeless lets compared with other lets will be analysed annually and be scrutinised by the Homelessness co-ordinating Group and HDMT.**

The new Letting system went live 1 March 2010. This system dictates allocations to groups, any override requires authorisation by a supervisor, there are full audit trails of decisions taken for any override. The new system also produces a monthly report on number of lets by area, by size and type to all groups of applicants.

**Item 22:**

**Recommendation: Offers not checked or authorised - lack of audit trails.**

**Action: Full audit trail will be held in new IT system;**

- **History of applicant and property.**
- **Offers where applicant is top will be automated and will be checked by Supervisor.**
- **100% of all applicants bypassed will be checked by a Supervisor.**
- **10% Quality checks of all offers made.**

The new Letting system went live 1 March 2010. This system provides a full audit trail for all applicants. Ten percent (10%) quality assurance checks by supervisors are now in place and recorded.

**Item 23:**

**Recommendation: The Council does not recognise that bypassing of applicants (current or former tenants) who have arrears and are not maintaining a repayment agreement is a suspension as a result Council does not inform these applicants that it has suspended them. It suspends applicants of debts of less than 1/12 of annual rent.**

**Action: Bypasses will be recorded on Letting system and advice can be given to tenants on this. New IT system will contain bypass letters as standard. Devise letter for bypassing.**

**Develop criteria for bypassing and list reason when bypassing will be appropriate.**

Details of Progress. The new Letting system went live 1 March 2010. This system provides a full audit trail of decisions taken for offers and by pass reasons based on current or former arrears. The new system also produces a 10% quality assurance check on the quality and accuracy of assessment made. System generated letters are issued to advise applicants the reasons for by-passing.

**Item 25: Recommendation: The Council does not have a target for what proportion of lets should go to each group (nominations/section 5 (homeless referrals) and it does not effectively monitor the performance of Registered Social Landlords against nomination agreements.**

**Action: Monitoring framework for nominations will be established.**

Procedures have been agreed with the housing associations in September 2009 and monitoring reports submitted from September 2009. The target for nominations and section 5 referrals combined is 50% of new lets. In 2008/2009 the target was 225 and housing associations let 198 houses through section 5 referral and 218 houses to people nominated by the Council. The total net lets by housing associations in 2008/2009 was 794 lets. Therefore the percentage of net lets by housing associations going to nominations and section 5 referrals was 52%.

**Item 28:**

**Recommendation : Reasons for termination of tenancy not monitored, the Council does not know why abandonment's increased last year.**

**Action: Terminations to be monitored through performance management framework.**

Reasons for terminations is monitored weekly, and reported monthly to City Housing Manager through performance management framework. The monitoring of terminations and analysis of information is a key action in the Unit Action Plan.

**Item 32:**

**Recommendation: Satisfaction levels for the anti social behaviour service for 2007/08 were 73%, which was above the target but a drop from the previous year. The Council should look at the way it collects satisfaction information to better understand the reasons and further develop its framework for monitoring anti social behaviour performance and the outcomes of its actions and achievements.**

**Action:**

**In addition to quarterly postal surveys additional monthly telephone surveys to be introduced to increase number of surveys completed. Contact all dissatisfied customers willing to be contacted. If required, look at the need for a focus group to discuss specific issues Use information gathered to inform future service.**

Monthly telephone surveys for help with neighbourhood problems commenced in November 2009. Of the service users in the sample to be surveyed 50% will be issued with a customer satisfaction form to complete and return and 50% will receive a phone call and asked to complete the survey by phone. Initial results show increases in response rates to 26% and an increase in satisfaction levels to 84%. A focus group has been held in March 2010 and the results are being analysed.

**Item 33:**

**Recommendation: The Council aims to do regular estate walkabouts with tenant representatives but we saw that it only arranges these when tenants request them.**

**Action:**

**Annual estate supervision plans are set and reviewed monthly by Housing Officer for footpaths, the built environment and external environment. Formal schedule of dates have been issued to registered tenants organisations (RTOs) and the Dundee Association of Council House Owners to attend.**

The estates supervision strategy reviewed by Best Value Review Group in November 2009. Monthly reports submitted to City Housing Manager. Formal schedules have been agreed by RTO's for regular estate walkabouts.

**Item 35:**

**Recommendation:**

**Tenants in serious arrears continue to be well above the national figure, the Council is still some way from achieving its rent arrears targets.**

**Action:**

**A benchmarking analysis with The Scottish Rent Forum/Scottish Housing Best Value Network (SHBVN) for the most improved authorities to produce an improved performance plan.**

The benchmarking exercises have been completed. Performance of the best performing landlords reported by the SHBVN have been investigated i.e. Glasgow Housing Association, Midlothian Council and Aberdeen City Council to establish if there was any different approach to arrears management and recovery which can be adopted. These organisations reported similar early intervention and proactive approaches implemented at the Rent Recovery Centre. The Council continues to benchmark performance and use best practice in continuous improvement.

**Item 40:**

**Recommendation:**

**Lost rents; It took the Council the average on 71 days to let its empty houses and it let only 13.7% in 4 weeks. This represents a significant deterioration in its performance in 2005/2006, over the same period the national figure improved.**

**Action:**

**A Lean service review of void process will be completed.**

A report has been made to the Best Value Review Group on the Lean Service Review in February 2010. Significant improvements in performance are anticipated as the new systems bed. Stock categorisations for low demand and non low demand properties will have a major impact on our SPI performance compared to National and other benchmark figures.

**Item 41:**

**Recommendation:**

**Pre-allocation of houses and start letting process sooner.**

**Action:**

**Void management process is being reviewed in a lean service review.**

**Development of letting IT system will allow;**

- **The property attributes will be used to identify the top 10 applicants on the waiting list.**

- **The top 10 will be reviewed prior to the termination date.**
- **Pre-terminations visits will gather property attributes information and house condition information.**
- **IT system will monitor refusal reasons, and will identify possible "available now" houses.**
- **Formal offer will be made once keys are available.**

Void Management processes have been reviewed through the Lean Service Review. The New letting system allows the property attributes to be used to identify the top 10 applicants on the waiting list. The top 10 applicants are to be reviewed prior to the termination date. Pre-termination visits have been re-introduced from November 2009, these visits gather property attributes information and house condition information. The Lettings IT system monitors refusal reasons, and will identify possible 'available now' houses. Formal offers will be made when keys are available.

**Item 42:**

**Recommendation:**

**We should visit terminating tenants to ensure house is left in good order.**

**Action:**

**Void management process is being reviewed in a lean service review and as a result of the review the following action is being taken: Housing Officers will visit terminating tenants to ensure properties are left in good condition. Pre-termination visits will also ensure applicants are given advice about leaving their home.**

A new automated printed pre termination system has been in place for Housing Officers since November 2009. A method of measuring and monitoring of terminations has been established and will be monitored on a monthly basis.

**Item 45:**

**Recommendation:**

**The Council does not effectively monitor the reasons for refusals or use this information to identify potential improvement to its management of empty houses.**

**Action:**

**Refusal reasons to be monitored and reported in the Departments' Performance Management Framework**

- **Develop set of refusal reasons and set up monitoring system for property based refusals.**
- **Analyse reason for refusals**
- **Use reasons for refusals to inform repairs decisions about individual properties.**

Manual monitors have been completed for specific months. The new Letting IT system has been designed to produce performance reports on refusal reasons. This information will be collected and analysed to identify potential improvements to the management of empty properties.



**Item 60:****Recommendation:**

**The Council does not have accurate information on the numbers of properties where it is taking legal action (for access to complete gas safety checks).**

**Action:**

**Terms of Tenancy agreement are being used to enable officers to gain entry to properties within 14 days of the service date to carry out safety check if access is not possible. A report on new processes and procedures was made to Committee in..... The Council is exploring the possibility of recharging tenants for forced entry; an option paper is being prepared for the Repairs Management Board. A process for audit of the IT system will be developed to ensure accuracy.**

A report was presented to Repairs Management Board on 16 November 2009. The report recommended that the cost of gaining entry to carry out the gas safety check could be legitimately be recharged to the tenant. The cost would be a flat rate of £32.19. The Repairs Management Board approved the recommendation. Also, a process for auditing the IT system has been developed. An internal audit has been carried out and a report detailing the findings was issued in January 2010.

**Item 78:****Recommendation:**

**The Council is not making use of inspections of its repairs. It has not set a target for the proportion it will pre inspect. The Council is not meeting its target for pre-inspections.**

**Action:**

**Pre inspections have been reviewed as part of Partnership Review of process being undertaken and a working group has been set up to look at options. This will meet on a 6 weekly basis. Options on how to take this forward to go to Repairs Management Board. Dundee Contract Services will also record the outcomes of their pre inspection.**

Following a review of benchmark jobs as part of the Repairs Partnership Review, the number of routine benchmark jobs automatically pre inspected reduced from 26 to 5. The jobs that are now to be pre inspected are non-standard work which requires to be checked before work is instructed. A further reduction in manually generated pre inspections was also agreed as part of the process review carried out by the Repairs Liaison Group. A report was presented to the Repairs Management Board on pre and post inspections on 14 December 2009. The Repairs Performance Group would continue to monitor pre inspections performance.

**Item 79:****Recommendation:**

**The Council does not post inspect in a targeted way to check the quality of its completed repairs. The Council does not set a target for the completion of post inspections. It does not use information gained from inspections to identify potential improvement to its repairs service.**

**Action:**

**Post inspect all non-routine benchmark jobs. Repairs Liaison Group will review the inspection process. This group will meet every 6 weeks. Report on outcomes of group will be provided for the Repairs Management Board.**

Following consideration by the Repairs Liaison Group, a report was presented to the Repairs Management Board on 14 December 2009. The report outlines how post inspections would be better targeted, what level of post inspections would be carried out; and a target timescale for completing post inspection. Following discussion, the Repairs Management Board asked for further work to be done on this and remitted the Repairs Performance Group to progress this. A report has been provided to the Repairs Management Board in March 2010.

**Item 84:****Recommendation:**

**The Council does not monitor and report on total billed repairs, spending against commitment or benchmark repair costs.**

**Action:**

**The Performance Sub Group will report to the Repairs Management Board on the variance between committed and billed cost of repairs and other agreed indicators. This Group will also look at the tying in with post inspections with variances in costs. The Performance Sub Group will look at control limits and will look at the repairs which fall either above or below these limits. The control limits will be set by the Performance Sub Group.**

Comparison between committed and billed costs is included in Performance Report presented to Repairs Management Board since December 2009 by the Repairs Performance Group. It was agreed that this comparison between billed costs and committed costs would be reported quarterly. For the next report the Performance Group will establish control limits and will present and analysis of these repairs falling wither above or below the limit.

**Item 123:**

**Recommendation: We found confusion over roles and responsibilities, in part due to its recent restructuring of services.**

**Action: Review the Department's training budget and resources to deliver all elements of the improvement plan.**

The training budget has been approved for 2010/11. Training plans will be included as part of the Performance and Development Review being implemented from April 2010.

**Item 126:****Recommendation:**

**We saw serious gaps in management responsibility for recognising and responding to poor performance, particularly around letting and gas safety.**

**Action:**

**A Letting Project Team has been established to implement a new IT system that will ensure that any performance management information can be provided.**

**Monthly reports on performance are sent to City Housing Manager, these are discussed with Lettings Project Manager and East District Manager.**

Manual systems for monitoring have been in place since December 2009. Indicators for performance included in monthly performance monitors to the City Housing Manager and are included in Unit Action Plan (November 2009) and to be included in Personal action plans from March/April 2010. New IT system has been designed to produce performance reports on various lettings targets. Gas safety procedures have been comprehensively reviewed and new processes have been implemented.

**Item 130:****Recommendation:**

**The Regulator found it difficult to obtain accurate information (from the stock information database).**

**Action:**

**Service managers to bring forward proposals for a review of accuracy and continuous checking of information systems for: Stock Information Database.**

Proposals and Procedures for the administration of the Stock Information database have been agreed with the Council's Internal Auditors. The stock information database was initially populated from a sample stock conditions survey. Further input of real data to previously cloned addresses will continue to improve the overall accuracy of the database.

**Item 131:****Recommendation:**

**The Regulator found it difficult to obtain accurate information (from the waiting list).**

**Action:**

**Service managers to bring forward proposals for a review of accuracy and continuous checking of information systems for: Housing Waiting List.**

The new lettings IT system includes new system processes for reviewing the accuracy and checking of information for Housing Waiting List. The new lettings IT system is now live. Phases 2 and 3 of the Lettings IT development will comprise developing the common housing register with the housing associations and developing the performance monitoring framework reports (including refusals analysis and need/demand information), target completion date is June 2010.

**Item 142:**

**Recommendation: Poor signposting between sections.**

**Action:**

**This will be tackled by a combination of the implementation of a new performance management system, induction training, customer service training and ongoing training and awareness sessions.**

The Department now has now developed a departmental service plan and unit action plans for all teams. A performance appraisal and development scheme has been developed and is being implemented. A programme of Customer care training and Chartered Institute of Housing of Housing SVQ level 2 training has commenced.

**Item 145:****Recommendation:**

**The Council has the highest supervision and management cost of all.**

**Action:**

**This is inaccurate.**

The comment from the Regulator was that Dundee City Council Housing Department had highest supervision and management cost of all Scottish Councils at 19% above the average. The comments are inaccurate as the calculation completed included sheltered warden costs which are funded through service charge and income is matched to expenditure.

Details on the progress of items not complete are listed below:

**Item 4:****Recommendation:**

**No freephone service for the Lettings Service.**

**Action:**

**Consider a free phone number for the letting service. Option appraisal to be carried out as part of the Council's corporate strategy for Customer Care.**

Will be reviewed in the context of decisions about Dundee House phone contact. An option appraisal is currently being completed on costs and lead times.

**Item 5:****Recommendation:**

**Not all front line staff given housing options and advice training.**

**Action:**

**Raise standards of advice and information by developing a training programme for front line staff:**

A programme of training including team building and customer care has been completed. Level 2 CIH Training completed with 14 staff, second session scheduled for April 2010. Management Development Training for Unit Managers completed.

This will be rolled out to Team Leaders in April and May 2010. The training budget has been set and approved for 2010/11.

**Item 6:**

**Recommendation:**

**Common Housing Register to be operational in 2009/10.**

**Action:**

**Implementation of a Common Housing Register (CHR) linked with the development of the Letting IT system to enable implementation of the Council's lettings policy. CHR module is Phase 2 of the IT project.**

The Common application form has been developed and is in use. Access to the waiting list for housing associations has been included in the new Letting IT system. Training on the system has been provided for housing associations. Discussions are being held with housing associations towards implementing the CHR.

**Item 26:**

**Recommendation:**

**The Council does not make appointments with tenants to carry out new tenant visits, nor does it consistently monitor its performance in completing new tenant visits.**

**Action:**

**New tenant visits have been built into new Letting system. At sign up, an appointment will be made with tenant, and a letter will be sent out to remind tenant. This will generate a reminder for the Housing Officer to visit. A new tenant visit will be carried out for new tenancies within 4-6 weeks of signing tenancy.**

Appointment set for new tenants who do not respond to initial NTV. Performance monitored manually at present and reported monthly to City Housing Manager. Appointments are made after one cold call. Phase 2 (due to start March 2010) of new letting system will generate and appointment at sign up process.

**Item 40:**

**Recommendation:**

**It took the Council on average 71 days to let its empty houses and it let only 13.7% in 4 weeks.**

**Action:**

**A Lean service review of void process will be completed.**

The Lean Service Review will be completed by August 2010.

**Item 43:****Recommendation:**

**Void processes are not closely managed and monitored.**

**Action:**

**Void management process have been reviewed in a lean service review and several new processes have been implemented. A new standard of re-let decoration is being piloted. Further experiments on cleaning against a specification drawn up by the review team are underway. Results of this exercise will inform possible new cleaning specification for DCS. A new process agreed with DCS where properties are awaiting materials.**

The cleaning specification has been revised - this is currently being piloted before going out to formal tendering process in March/April 2010.

**Item 44:**

**Recommendation: No relet standard / review relet expenditure. Standard of relet poor/houses dirty.**

**Action:**

**A working group is to be set up to develop and implement a relet standard.**

- **Set Standards**
- **Develop practice across the service to ensure void properties are dealt with efficiently and effectively**
- **Consult with tenants groups and staff on relet standards**
- **Develop staff training programme**
- **Produce Information on leaflet/internet of set standards.**

A working group has been set up to develop and implement a relet standard. Consultation is underway with tenants groups and staff on relet standards. Information leaflets/internet information will be provided on revised standards. A staff training programme will be developed.

**Item 45:**

**Recommendation: The Council does not effectively monitor the reasons for refusal or use this information to identify possible management improvements.**

**Action:**

**Refusal reasons to be monitored and reported in the Departments' Performance Management Framework.**

Manual monitors completed for specific months, to be computerised under new IT system. Further IT system development is underway from April 2010.

**Item 52:**

**Recommendation:** Its reliance on information cloned across similar house types to cover the remaining 70% is a risk. Has no other firm plans to increase the coverage of its stock condition information.

**Action:** Stock condition data is updated on completion of contracts on stock info database. In excess on 1500 properties will be updated per annum. IT brief completed on links to corporate systems. Carry out further stock condition surveys on cloned stocks.

*Updating from roof roughcast surveys, ECM work, heating, kitchen, bathroom programme surveys and work completed. No committee approval required. Change in target date in line with resubmission to March 2011.*

**Item 54:**

**Recommendation:** Not effective in projecting spend to meet programme targets in each of the last 3 years.

**Action:** Monitored on monthly basis by Housing Capital Management Team (HCMT). Partnering framework moving towards more predictable cost by the use of unit rates.

**SHQS project board monitor quarterly. Reported to committee monthly.**

Monthly monitoring is in place by the HCMT and monthly committee reports are provided. Analysis of pilot unit rate contract costs is progressing. Market testing for 2010/11 programme is underway. Further benchmarking and performance review is ongoing.

**Item 56:**

**Recommendation:** Cyclical maintenance programme does not focus on areas where work most needed - review of approach being undertaken.

**Action:** Cyclical maintenance review group set up -

- **Look at priorities**
- **Stock info database**
- **Review the operation of cyclical maintenance to highlight critical maintenance items on a shorter cycle**
- **Re-evaluate developments in the City to provide larger contracts and hence improved value for money.**

Process mapping will feed options into review group recommendations. New target date for completion will be September 2010.

**Item 67:**

**Recommendation:**

**Asbestos - The Council has not surveyed all common areas of its housing, but plans to ensure it has this done by 2010.**

**Action:**

**Common areas survey programme underway. Linked with ongoing ECM, controlled entry etc programmes as well as stand alone. Proactive surveys in areas where it is suspected that asbestos.**

Surveys carried out as part of ECM and Controlled Entry Programme. Common area surveys are underway in targeted areas.

**Item 68:**

**Recommendation:**

**The Council is considering extending ways to report repairs to include email and text messaging.**

**Action:**

**Repairs can be reported through the website by email direct to the HRC. Report to Management Board with options for reporting repairs, text messaging to be included. Options paper to Repairs Management Board.**

A report for the Repairs Management Board will go to the meeting in May 2010.

**Item 80:**

**Recommendation:**

**We found no evidence that the Council had formally considered alternative contractor options for the procurement of its maintenance service or tested if it represents value for money.**

**Action:**

**Comparison with private sector providers and with other benchmarks (APSE).**

**Comparisons with other benchmarks (APSE).**

**Revise procurement policy for capital projects.**

**Annual market testing across range of contracts by tender.**

**Establish method to benchmark costs against peers.**

**Develop unit rates.**

**Further develop supply chain partnering (cheaper prices preferred suppliers etc) - kitchen selection process.**

**We will review the service level arrangements and fees with Architectural Services - review SLA and fees, benchmarking.**

Comparison with private sector providers has been made and benchmarking carried out. Procurement policy for capital projects has been approved by committee. Annual market testing for capital programme is in place. Unit rate pilot contracts are nearing completion and results are being analysed. Justifications for contract acceptances are now in place.



Kitchen supply chain process has now been completed. Service Level Agreement benchmarking spreadsheets have been produced and enquiries made to SHBVN network.

**Item 82:**

**Recommendation:**

**Increasing proportions of response repairs as emergencies - It has not analysed the reasons for this nor does it have clear plans in place to address this.**

**Action:**

**The following options will be investigated to look at the reason for the number of emergency repairs: Training and induction for staff will be investigated to ensure staff are correctly informed on what is an emergency. Repeat repairs are also being investigated and work carried out to ensure repair is repaired at the first visit where possible. Repairs Development Group is also looking at what the Department currently classes as an emergency and reviewing this list. The Group also has involvement from tenants.**

The Repairs Development Group has reviewed the list of repairs classified as emergencies and no changes were proposed. However, following further concerns about the level of emergencies a new examination of this is to be conducted by the Repairs Service Improvement Team. A report on their findings is due by June 2010. Also, a Repairs Induction Training Scheme is to be established. A report outlining the details is to go to the Repairs Management Board in May 2010.

**Item 83:**

**Recommendation:**

**No firm plans to reduce number of repairs cancelled due to no access. The Council does not monitor on the number of repairs it varies.**

**Action:**

**The option of contacting tenants by telephone or letter will be investigated before repair is cancelled to establish whether repair is still required.**

A pilot exercise involving contacting tenants prior to cancelling a repair due to no access will be concluded by end March 2010. A report on the outcome will be presented to the Repairs Management Board in May 2010.

**Item 95:**

**Recommendation: The Council has been slower to develop discharge protocols with prisons.**

**Action:**

**Discharge protocol with HMP Perth in partnership with Shelter. Surgeries will operate fortnightly and will go live August 2009.**

Weekly surgeries are now being held in Perth prison. No longer progressing Tayside Prison Discharge Protocol, the Council is now developing a Dundee Prison Discharge Protocol in partnership with Shelter. Revised completion date end of May 2010.

**Item 99:**

**Recommendation:**

**The Council's housing management teams do not refer tenants it intends to evict to the homelessness service.**

**Action:**

**Referral processes are to be reviewed and training delivered to area office staff and housing association partners.**

Manual referral system in place with Rent Recovery Centre (RRC) from July 2009. Weekly lists of tenants enrolled in court being sent to Prevention Team Leader by RRC Supervisor. System to be computerised as part of RRC ongoing IT development.

**Item 117:**

**Recommendation:**

**The Council had identified weaknesses in service delivery but has failed to drive improvements. The Regulator saw a disconnect between strategic and operational work.**

**Action:**

**A Programme of Lean Service Reviews will be implemented and informed by the Service Assessment Programme.**

**Examples:**

Supply chain process on kitchens finalised. Void Lean Service Review nearing completion. Lean Service Reviews on ECM underway. Service Improvement Teams being established.

**Item 122:**

**Recommendation: The Regulator found confusion in roles and responsibilities.**

**Action:**

**Conduct a Training and Development Review of all staff together with skills audit.**

Review of training database has been completed, update information on training needs and planned training will be taken from performance and development system being implemented in April 2010. CIH Level 2 successfully completed with 14 members of staff.

**Item 123:**

**Recommendation: The Regulator found confusion in roles and responsibilities.**

**Action:**

**Review the Department's training budget and resources to deliver all elements of the improvement plan.**

Training budget has been reviewed and an increased budget has been approved for financial year 2010/11. Training Plan will be developed in conjunction with the Performance and Development schemes which will align training to competencies and development needs. This will commence in April 2010.

**Item 132:**

**Recommendation: The Regulator found it difficult to get accurate performance information (on homelessness).**

**Action:**

**Service managers to bring forward proposals for a review of accuracy and continuous checking of information systems for: Homeless System.**

This will be progressed through IT development. Proposal is to ensure that Homeless Service Unit Strategy Team have the ability to obtain and analyse HL1 figures prior to submission to Scottish Government. This will ensure that performance information is accurate and will avoid contradictory information being supplied. IT development to commence April 2010.

**Item 133:**

**Recommendation: The Regulator found it difficult to get accurate performance information (on repairs).**

**Action:**

**Service managers to bring forward proposals for a review of accuracy and continuous checking of information systems for the Repairs System.**

The report to the Repairs Management Board has had to be amended and will be presented to the next Repairs Management Board in May 2010.

**Item 137:****Recommendation:**

**Tenant groups generally unhappy with council's approach to consultation and participation - too much reliance on DFTA.**

**Action:**

**A revised Tenant Participation Strategy which addresses issues raised in the Peer Review and Inspection has been agreed by the Council. Implementation of this will be overseen by a group of key housing staff and tenants' representatives. The strategy includes:**

**A consultation Strategy which timetables major consultation events.**

**An annual survey of tenants groups to gauge satisfaction with our approach to tenant participation.**

**The Council will promote at least one tenant led inspection per year.**

**The Council will promote a minimum of two Area forum meetings per year.**

**Annual consultation on Rent and Service Charges.**

**Produce Code of Practice on Communication with umbrella groups, tenant organisations, individual tenants.**

**Joint assessment of resources required for Registered Tenants Organisations and training plan for tenants and RTOs.**

**Tenant Open Day and Forum and minimum of 2 Tenant Bulletins published per year.**

**Quarterly meetings between Director, Management Team and DFTA.**

**Set up of Senior Staff/ Tenants' Reps monitoring Group.**

**Review of Strategy.**

Consultation strategy completed and to be reviewed in June 2010. Survey results 2008/2009 - 90% satisfaction. Tenant led inspection in Relets in progress and one in estate management commenced in March 2010. Tenant Fayre held in July 2009 and a tenants meeting on rent consultation held December 2009. Code of practice completed in 2009. Assessment of resources for RTO's completed as part of rent consultation. Training plan to be completed by May 2010.

**Item 141:**

**Recommendation:**

**Staff were reluctant to provide information or help to get info in areas that were not related to their own immediate responsibility.**

**Action:**

**This will be tackled by a combination of the implementation of a new performance management system, induction training, customer service training and ongoing training and awareness sessions.**

Competency framework is being implemented as part of the staff appraisal system from April 2010. CIH Level 2 was completed by 14, second session due to start April 2010. Support and coaching skills have been delivered to Unit Managers, and will be delivered to Team Leaders in April/May 2010, through Management Development Training which will enhance support for all staff.

**Item 144:**

**Recommendation:**

**There are weaknesses within the SHQS standard delivery plan and investment programmes do not demonstrate value for money.**

**Action:**

**Review our SHQS Delivery Plan. Review will - Demonstrate value for money and include a risk assessment /option appraisal to plan for contingencies.**

Establish benchmarking through - Scottish Housing Best Value Network, neighbouring authorities, registered social landlords and local authorities.

**Item 147:**

**Recommendation:**

**The Council does not have a clearly articulated contingency position if risks in its planned funding strategy for SHQS emerge.**

**Action:**

**Review our SHQS Delivery Plan. Review will - Demonstrate value Risk assessment/option appraisal to plan for contingencies.**

The Scottish Regulator has deferred the mid point review until Summer 2011 with a limited update September 2010. Target for completion of the SHQS review is now summer 2010.

It is recommended that Committee note the revised timescales for completion and the remedial actions proposed.

**5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

This Report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environment Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Assessment.

There are no major issues.

**6. CONSULTATIONS**

The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Director of Finance, Assistant Chief Executive, all other Chief Officers and the Housing Best Value Review Group have been consulted in the preparation of this report. No concerns were raised.

**7. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

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**DIRECTOR OF HOUSING**

**APRIL 2010**