

REPORT TO: HOUSING COMMITTEE 26 JUNE 2006

REPORT ON: CAPITAL CONTRACT SERVICES WORKING GROUP –  
INTERIM REPORT

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF HOUSING

REPORT NO.: 390-2006

1. **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

This report is to give members an update of the work of the Capital Contract Services Working Group, the progress made so far and the work still to do.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee is asked to:

- 2.1. Note the actions recommended by the Capital Contracts clean teams listed in Appendix 1.
- 2.2. Agree to continue the pilot changes to the Tenants' Allowance Scheme as detailed in Paragraph 6.5. A report on the success or otherwise of this initiative will be reported at the next review of the Tenants' Allowance Scheme.
- 2.3. Note that a further report will come forward when there has been more time to evaluate the experiments listed in Appendix 1 and the further work on clean team projects. It is hoped this report will be presented to Committee by the end of the year.

3. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Full efficiency savings will not be known until the experiments are complete and evaluated, these will be detailed in the final report.

4. **LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS**

Resources are used efficiently and waste is minimised.

5. **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

None.

6. **MAIN TEXT**

- 6.1. As part of the Housing Department Management Structure Review Report No.775/2004 a remit was given to the Director of Housing to establish, amongst other things, a Capital Contracts Services Working Group to review and improve the customer focus of the capital programme work including sales and recharging of owner occupiers.

- 6.2. The method that has been used is a system approach to identify waste within the system and to experiment with ways to improve the system to reduce or eliminate the waste and focus on the value work. A facilitator from Organisational Development, has helped inform the process and regular reports have been made to the working group, which includes representatives from the Trade Unions and Dundee Federation of Tenants Associations (DFTA). Updates have also been provided to the cross party Housing Customer Contact Centre Overview Group.

A number of clean teams each looking at different aspects of the Capital Programme have been established and have included representatives from Support Services (Architectural Services Division) and contractors involved in heating and rewire and roofing contracts.

Due to the nature of capital contracts lasting a period of months, if not longer, different projects have been chosen to try out different techniques. A key approach has been to involve those who are directly involved in the work in the plans to make the system better.

- 6.3. Four groups are still ongoing and the External Cyclical Maintenance Group and Right to Buy and Land Sales still have to be established.

This report, however, is to report the successes so far, to agree that measures that have proved successful should be implemented and to outline the next steps for the team as they focus on improving customer focus and service delivery.

- 6.4. During the Summer of 2005 a value demand exercise was carried out in the Housing Investment Unit. This involved staff logging all customer contact for a period of two weeks so that the varying demands on the Unit could be assessed and trends relating to the types of enquiries from the public could be identified. 1,115 pieces of demand were analysed over this period. From this exercise the main demands in the system were identified and these have been the focus for the operation of the Clean Teams. Examples of the main focus for improvement are:

- Improved information for owners/tenants at the start of the project process.
- Reduce the number of people and sections involved at each stage.
- Improve availability of staff at any given time.
- Reduce duplication, i.e. number of visits per property.
- Improve information in many areas, i.e. briefs for Architects, drawings for Contractors etc..
- Reduce delays at all stages of the process.
- Amount of inspections and snagging issues to be analysed.
- Improve customer contact.
- Improve and fine tune IT systems in certain areas.

- 6.5. During the various Clean Teams' deliberations as a wide range of experiments have been debated and as a result of this a number of new initiatives have been piloted in order to minimise future waste in the system and therefore improve customer service. These are listed at Appendix 1. Many of these experiments relate to tenants' allowances during contracts and are a departure from existing ways of dealing with disruption and damage to tenants' homes. The experiments at present underway which relate to tenants allowances are:

- Issue cheques for redecoration and floor-covering for tenants that qualify instead of vouchers issued at present.
- Minimise the need for redecoration and disruption to the tenant in heating only contracts by improved design.

- Strengthen the qualifying criteria for carrying out redecoration for tenants over 65 (over 60s at present) and tenants who are disabled and are in receipt of benefits related to this.
- Streamline this choice of papers for those having decoration carried out to make more manageable.
- Contractor carrying out works to carry out redecoration as well.

#### 6.6. **Customer Service Initiative**

A further focus of the Clean Team has been to improve customer service at the point of contact with the Housing Investment Unit. The aim is to improve the system to a point where a customer contacting the Unit can either have their query answered at the first point of contact, or have an arrangement made to speak to a staff member to discuss their concerns. A group is presently looking at improvements in access to information technology and improvements in IT systems that can assist in this process.

#### 6.7. **MEASURES**

As the Clean Team process is still underway, collection of information to measure the success of initiatives in Appendix I is still ongoing. The final report will include an analysis of these measures and comparisons with projects that did not benefit from Clean Teams. The main focus of measures will be around time, cost, and customer experience and will include the following:

- End to end measures (time taken on contract from start to finish).
- Early agreement of design, cost and programme.
- Accuracy of costings on projects.
- Reductions in contingencies
- Financial Information.
- Minimise disruption to tenants and owners.
- Improvement of customer experience at first point of contact.

#### 7. **CONSULTATION**

All Chief Officers and Housing Customer Contact Centres Overview Group have been consulted on the content of this Report.

#### 8. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.

EXPERIMENT	RESULT	IMPLEMENT
Streamline wallpaper choices to a reduced number without any complaint by tenants. It is more workable for the staff and the contractor.	Tenants still get 50 choices. Contractor is able to better guarantee delivery times by having more focused choice. Reduces delays through unavailability of wallpapers which also required repeat visits by Housing staff to get alternative choices.	Yes, but all tenants choose different papers so choice could not be any less than this.
Minimise damage to decoration through design. This was a success. A new fireplace was installed in heating only contract where only one wall had decoration damage. This proved a popular choice with tenants and cost effective for the Council.	Most tenants are happy with options. Allowed a focal point to be provided, which was popular with some tenants. A cost effective option in situations where damage is limited. Heating only contract. Taking time to design work to minimise damage saved on overall costs and disruption for tenants.	Yes more scope to implement now heating projects are replacement rather than installation. Fireplace option can be used as an alternative where damage is limited and circumstances allow.
Issue cheques for redecoration and floor coverings instead of decoration and carpet vouchers.	Tenants happy as it allows greater choice and flexibility. Reduces stigmatisation that can come from using voucher. Concern about proper use of allowance, overcome on other Council issues such as school uniforms. Reduces Housing Officer visits by 1. Replace Admin. work for Housing.	Only used on small contracts. 2 larger contracts/clean teams about to start using this option. Will have better chance to evaluate success once these contracts have proceeded. Will report back as part of Tenants' Allowances Review.
Wallpaper books being left at central point.	The sheltered lounge was used. Saved a lot of additional visits by Housing Officer and allowed tenants' families time to come and see the books without holding up the process for other tenants.	Not appropriate location in all areas but use where appropriate.
Contractor arrange to get decoration choices.	Not enough information to know yet if this is a success. Only one tenant took up option of redecoration. Rest chose cash or fireplace.	Need to try on larger contract to establish if success.
Strengthen qualifying criteria to require tenants to be 65 and/or need proof of disability before qualifying for redecoration.	Removes onus from GPs who in certain areas must get large volume of requests for letters. Allows resources to go to those who most need them. Tied in with option to use cheques instead of vouchers as tenants can now pay someone to decorate for them even if they do not meet redecoration criteria.	Implementation on contract that has just started on site. Will monitor and review and report back as part of Tenants' Allowance Review.
Contractor to amend drawings on site rather than return to Architects to re-issue.	Successful, saved time and reduces delays for tenants.	Yes, helped speed up process by days. Architects to redraw if major alteration.

Processes running in tandem.	Previously a linear process. Identified areas where processes could happen concurrently. Has increased speed of information flow and has allowed for improved project planning and better, clearer information to tenants.	Yes, utilised on contract where Clean Team focused on design and lead in time. Access 8 weeks prior to start on site for consultation/fine tuning.
Amend asbestos at work survey so that surveyor who first accesses property gathers all relevant information for others.	In the case of the experiment the asbestos at work inspection was carried out by a private company and we were able to amend the survey sheet to allow the surveyor to collect all the information required to produce the design and agreed maximum price.	Implemented on design and pre-site Clean Team. Following small adjustments can be judged a success. Recommend in future that scope for carrying out in house is investigated.
	This saved 2 other visits by Clerk of Works heating and Clerk of Works electrical and allowed the design team to have the information at a much earlier stage in the process. It also meant the tenant only having to arrange access once.	Less disruption for tenant.
Design meeting held from information on initial surveys.	All information needed was available.	As above.
Joint visits, walk-in surveys by Housing Department and the contractor.	One less disturbance for tenant. Happened informally in the past, but would help to formalise. Helps issues to be resolved at the time instead of later and with the tenant present. Better service to tenant.	Yes, better service to tenant and better for staff and contractor as things are resolved on the spot!
Change format of pre-start meeting – issue information in advance, cut meeting time by an hour.	Successful on all projects utilised on.	Yes.
Staggering start on site dates. Reduced frenzy for removal and decants from Fridays and cut hotel costs too.	Successful at on site Clean Team locations.	Yes, details will vary from project to project.
Snagging checklist developed. Everyone knows what is expected and makes Clerk of Works visit quicker.	Successful on all projects where utilised so far.	Yes, less checking for Clerk of Works. Frees up time for quality checks during progress of work.
Clerk of Works to sample 2 out of 6 houses to assess snagging requirements. If high failure then 100%.	Successful on all projects where utilised so far.	Yes, less checking for Clerk of Works. Frees up time for quality checks.
Increased time from AMP agreement to start on site. Goal is to make time for pre-planning this better and more certainty on site.	Pilot is underway on Clean Team design project. On target so far.	Yes, subject to review of success.

Trial house, one public consultation, drop-in surgery. More convenient for tenants than public meetings, one to one contact with project staff.	Pilot due on Design Clean Team.	Yes, subject to success at this project. .
Extension of partnering concept to design and costing of project.	Releases resources for value work in Architectural Services Department	Yes subject to review and monitor on limited projects each year.