

**Minutes**

**Community Service Scrutiny Panel**

**7<sup>th</sup> November, 2007**

**Present:** Councillors Howarth (in the Chair) Laverick, Lightley, Mavin, Moderate, Norman, Robinson, D Smith and Young.

**Also Present:** Councillors: Kellett and Marsden  
Councillor Thomson -- Portfolio Holder for Communities  
Mrs Marion Goodrick – Customer Services Manager  
Mr Angelo Moscardini – Head of Property Services  
Mr Harry Lee – Property Services Operations Manager  
Mr Stephen Brown – Property Services Maintenance Manager .

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors Crooks, Taylor and Walton.

**2. Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 2007 were confirmed as a correct record.

**3. Review of Scrutiny of Council House Repairs**

**3.1 Overview**

The Head of Property Services advised the Panel that the new computer system mentioned at recommendation 4.2 from 2006 Review of Scrutiny of Council House Repairs phase one of the installation had taken place and was currently in use. Phase two of the installation would take place in the New Year.

All tenants had been issued with a handbook which detailed how to report a repair to Customer Services. Customer Services staff had been highly trained to identify the type of repair and input the details into the system. The tenant is asked if there is a preference for an appointment time (a.m. or p.m./to avoid certain times) – the information is sent to tradesmen electronically to their hand held (PDA) units. The tradesman will receive the information on the reported repair and information on the property, this information can be monitored from the office by Managers. The system can give information on real time costings on the repair, the length of time taken on a job and the amount of travelling time.

**3.2 Training and Electronic Equipment on Northgate System**

Councillor Robinson asked about the amount of training tradesmen had received on the new system and about problems of poor signal reception in certain areas.

Head of Property Services informed Members that all tradesmen had received training on the new system and if there were any problems this should be reported to their managers who could arrange further training. Tradesman had received the information in stages to ensure that they were not overloaded with data. Members suggested that training needs should be continually assessed.

The Head of Property Services stated that problems had been experienced in certain areas and that this could often be remedied by the moving around to get a better signal.

The Customer Services Manager advised the Panel that this information should be fed back to officers so that the areas with the poor signal reception are known.

Members asked why tradesmen had not received the printers to go with the laptops and were informed that they were not required at this stage, documentation could be completed by hand or printed out at the office and sent out to the tenants.

The Head of Property Services circulated an email received from Northgate acknowledging the considerable achievement of mastering the new system in a short timescale while still carrying out their day to day jobs. Member reiterated the sentiments of the email.

### 3.3 Half Yearly Report

Members had been issued with half yearly information from the responsive repairs section which clearly indicates the improvements made, there was a slight dip in June 2007 this was due to implementation of the new Northgate system and has since recovered.

**Note:** 6.00 p.m. Councillor Moderate joined the meeting

Information provided on voids indicates that the repairs section have met the agreed target of 12 days and reduced this further to 10.14 days to date.

Using the new system Property Services are also able to monitor appointments. On average 98.9% of appointments made had been kept first time.

The Head of Property Services informed Members of a traffic light system that would be introduced at stage two of the new system to indicate target performance.

Members congratulated Property Services and asked that their congratulations be passed on to all repairs staff.

### 3.4 Emergency Call Outs

The Head of Property Services advised the Panel that some tenants maybe abusing the emergency call out system and that measures should be taken to discourage tenants from using this system when it was not required. Members discussed the possibility of charging tenants if the call out turned out not to be an emergency or issue a warning letter to tenants who persist in using the out of hours call out to advise that if the practice continues they will be charged.

### 3.5 Reporting of Repairs

The Head of Property Services reminded Members that if they are reporting repairs on behalf of tenants then they should use the reporting system in place and not telephone the officer direct. The Customer Services Manager advised that depending upon circumstances a record would be produced on the CRM system for the member to receive a follow up of the complaint. It was recommended that all Members be informed of this.

**Note:** 6.30 p.m. Councillor Moderate left the meeting

### 3.6 Further Questions

Members enquired whether they could see the new system at work and it was suggested that Democratic Support should liaise with Property Services to arrange this. The Customer Services Manager suggested that it would be beneficial if the Members could witness the front end of the reporting of repairs and not just the Northgate system.

Councillor Robinson asked how the replacement of CO detectors was progressing. The Operations Manager informed the Councillor that to date 2200 CO detectors had been replaced and there were 163 still to fit; 249 have had safety checks or annual service completed. Those tenants who have not received the new CO detectors because they were not available, arrangements had been made for them to be visited by an officer outside the usual business hours. The detectors installed by the Council are electric and not battery operated, however the detectors

are not a replacement for annual servicing of the appliance which the Council has done and continues to carry out.

The Chair and the Panel thanked the Head of Property Services, The Customer Services Manager, Operations Manager and Maintenance Manager for their attendance and congratulated them once more on their achievements. The Chair advised them that a report of the review would be forthcoming.

**Note:** 6.40 p.m. the Head of Property Services, The Customer Services Manager, Operations Manager and Maintenance Manager left the meeting.

#### **4. Scrutiny of Gypsy and Traveller Unauthorised Encampments**

The Chair advised that if Members wished to add to the scoping document for the scrutiny of the Gypsy Traveller Unauthorised Encampments they should advise Democratic Support before the next meeting.

#### **5. Any Other Business**

The Chair informed the Panel that at the last meeting of the Scrutiny Committee the Playing Pitch Strategy and the Scrutiny of Graveyards had been agreed to be sent to Cabinet for consideration. The Playing Pitch Strategy had been subject to several amendments to which the Panel Members agreed.

Meeting Terminated at 7:00 p.m.