

Minutes

Community Service Scrutiny Panel

7th 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 3rd 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.

Report of Community Services Scrutiny Committee

Review of the Scrutiny of Council House Repairs

1. Background

1.1 Following the original Scrutiny as part of the Building Services Best Value Improvement Plan in July 2003, this topic has been reviewed by the Panel on a number of occasions. The last review was carried out in November, 2006, when it was recommended to review Council House Repairs following the introduction of the new computer system, and the opportunity for staff to become accustomed to its use.

2. Actions

2.1 The Head of Property Services, Operations Manager, Maintenance Manager and Customer Services Manager attended the Panel's meeting on 7th November, 2007, together with the Portfolio Holder for Communities. Members were advised as to progress made towards meeting the recommendations contained in the last repairs review report.

3. Outcomes

Computer Management System

3.1 A new computerised system was installed in June, 2007, and workmen have been issued with PDA (Personal Digital Assistant). After the initial training the system was working well and it could be monitored at the office as to whether tradesmen are on the road, at a job or on a break. The second phase of the computer system is due for installation early 2008. This part of the system will keep records on types of repairs and use a traffic light system to indicate deviation from targets.

Reporting of Repairs

3.2 All staff using the new system have received training relevant to their field. It was important not to over load with information but to ensure that staff were confident and competent to carry out their jobs. The importance of on going training was stressed by Members. All tenants have been issued with a handbook which details how to report a repair to Customer Services. Customer Services' staff have been highly trained to identify the type of repair and input the details into the system.

3.3 An appointments system has been introduced which allows for tenants' preferences. It is working well.

3.4 Members were reminded that reporting of repairs to Council properties should be carried out through the laid down procedure, which is to report the repair to City Info by telephone. By doing this the City Info staff would record the call on the CRM system to enable Members to receive a follow up of the complaint.

Emergency Call Outs

3.5 Problems had been experienced with tenants using the emergency call out as a method of obtaining out of hours repairs for one reason or another. When repairs are reported the City Info staff ask a number of questions to determine if a repair is an emergency or not, however some tenants abuse the system. Initial discussions suggested that tenants who abuse the emergency call out system should be charged after receiving an initial warning letter. Members agreed that Cabinet and Officers should consider methods of dealing with this problem.

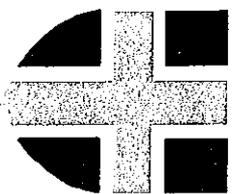
Response and Re-let Times

- 3.6 Half yearly figures for responsive repairs are very encouraging as shown at Appendix A. Northgate has acknowledged the considerable achievement of Property Services mastering the new system in a short time scale while still carrying out their day to day jobs. Members reiterated these congratulations.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1 That on going training be given to staff members as required and their commitment be commended.
- 4.2 That procedures be put in place to deter tenants who persist in using the emergency call out repairs service as an out of hours repairs service including the possibility of charging after a warning has been given..
- 4.3 That Members be reminded that whilst it may be appropriate for them to contact Officers directly to gain information, the reporting of customer repairs should go through the recommended City Info channels.
- 4.4 That the Head of Property Services and The Customer Services Manager and their staff be formally thanked for their efforts in bringing about the improvements noted.

Community Services Scrutiny Panel
November 2007



City of
Durham

**Property Services
(Responsive Repairs Section)**

**HALF YEAR REPORT
To End Of September - 2007/08**

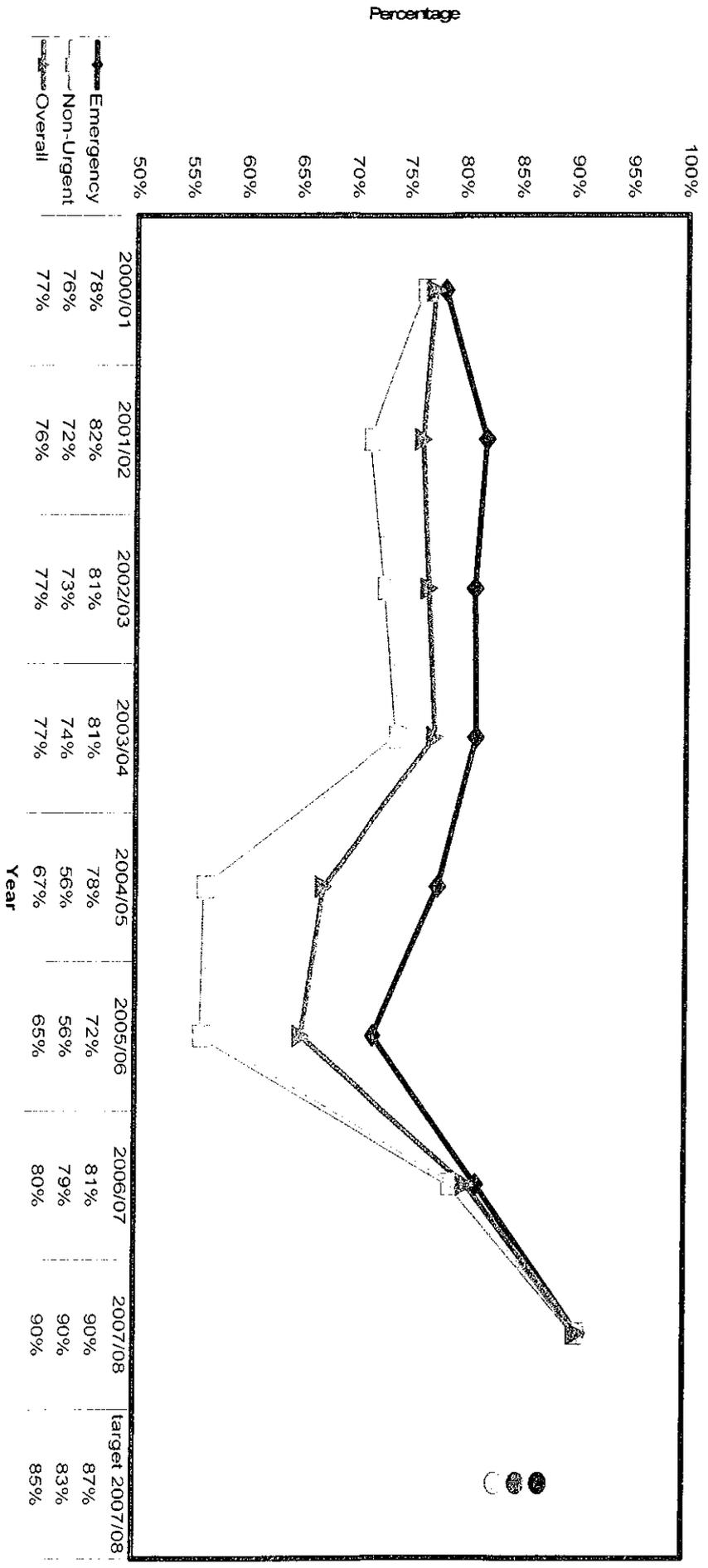
R e s p o n s i v e M a i n t e n a n c e - R e s p o n s i v e R e p a i r s

“Repair Requests Completed On Time” shows the percentage of jobs that are completed within Governmental and locally agreed timescales. Three factors have contributed to this dramatic increase in performance:-

- Restructuring of the Building Section,
- Implementation of new Northgate computer system (including “Repairs Finder” and handheld technology), and
- Introduction of Appointment System.

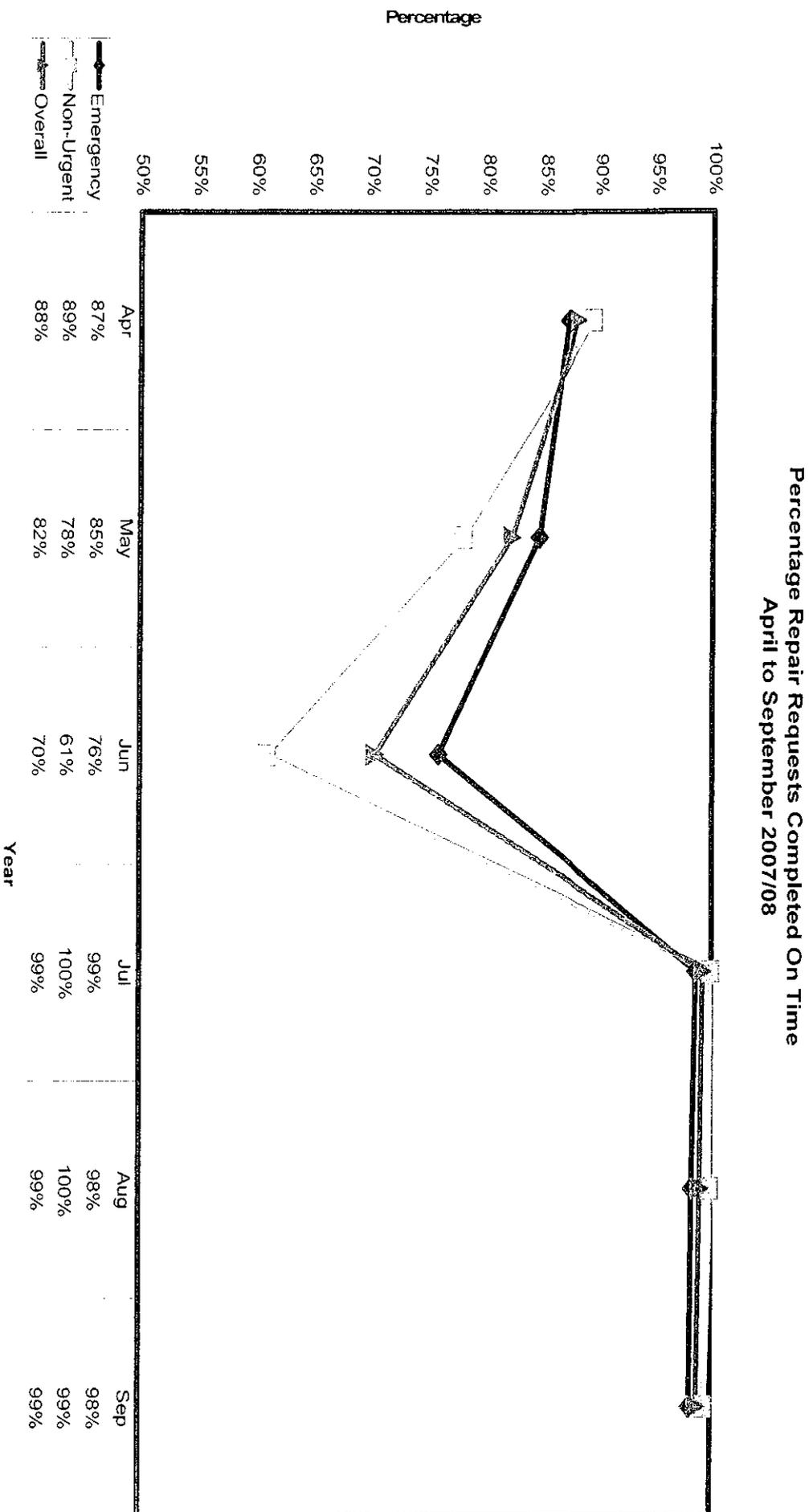
The graph below compares the annual performance from the year 2000 to September 2007.

**Percentage Repair Requests Completed On Time
End of 2nd Quarter 2007/08**



R e s p o n s i v e M a i n t e n a n c e - R e s p o n s i v e R e p a i r s (c o n t d .)

The graph below compares this year's performance and regard should be given to the performance in particular over the last three months - July to September 2007, after the new Northgate system has become embedded.



Responsive Maintenance - Responsive Repairs (contd.)

This statistical data below reflects the performance over the last three months - July to September 2007.

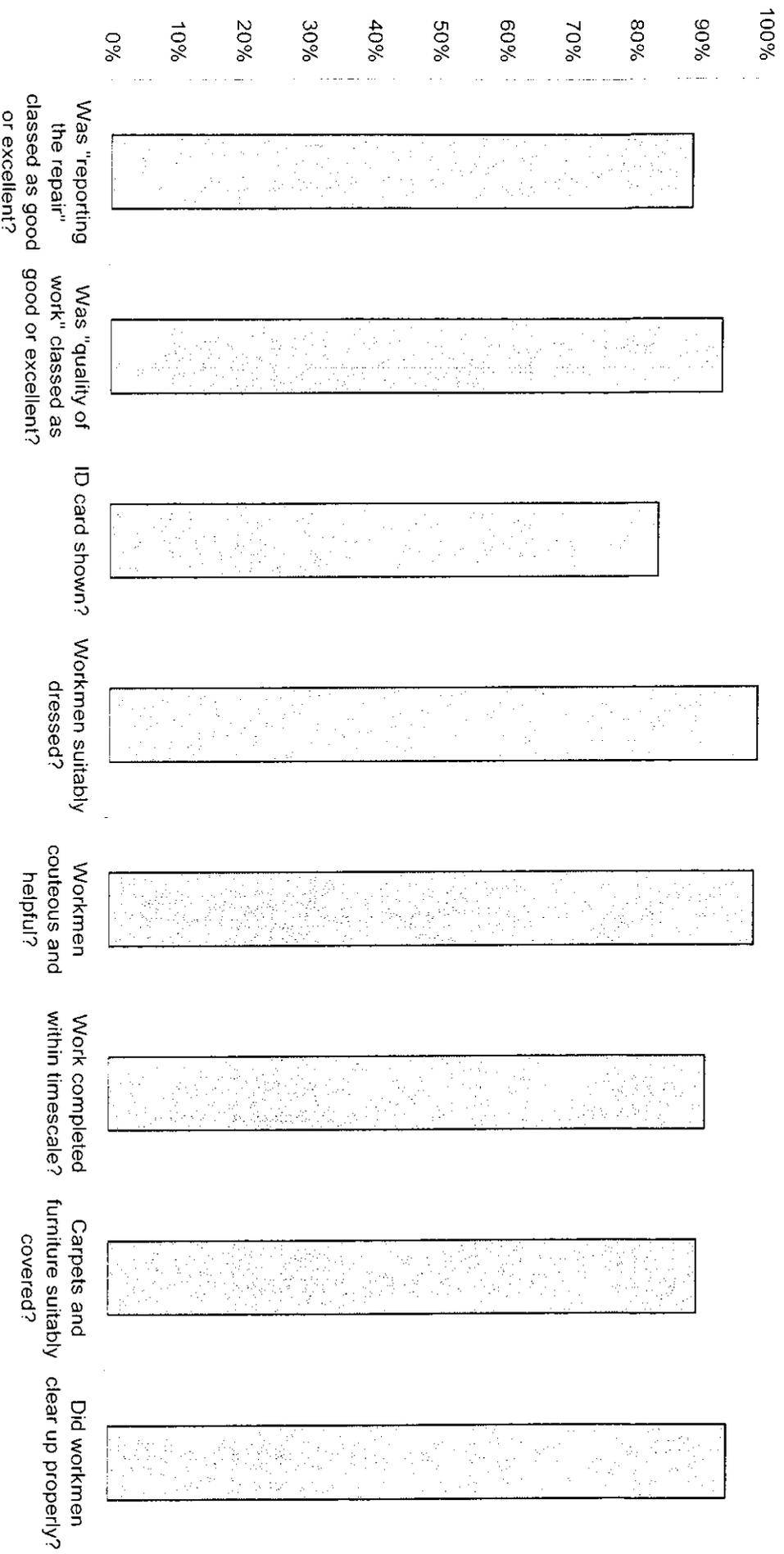
Breakdown of Repairs Completed On Time - By Month

	Jul-07					Aug-07					Sep-07					
	Total	Total	Total	Total	Not Completed	Total	Total	Total	Total	Not Completed	Total	Total	Total	Total	Not Completed	Percentage
	Received	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Received	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Received	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	
RIGHT TO REPAIR	1-day	84	78	6	92.86%	105	97	8	92.38%	137	130	7	94.89%			
	3-day	20	20	0	100.00%	23	23	0	100.00%	33	32	1	96.97%			
	7-day	17	17	0	100.00%	28	28	0	100.00%	29	29	0	100.00%			
	Totals	121	115	6	95.04%	156	148	8	94.87%	199	191	8	95.98%			
	EMERGENCY															
2-hour	126	125	1	99.21%	115	113	2	98.26%	122	115	7	94.26%				
24-hour	88	88	0	100.00%	150	150	0	100.00%	219	219	0	100.00%				
1-day	221	219	2	99.10%	292	288	4	98.63%	440	433	7	98.41%				
3-day	25	25	0	100.00%	59	58	1	98.31%	102	100	2	98.04%				
5-day	15	15	0	100.00%	26	26	0	100.00%	49	49	0	100.00%				
7-day	66	66	0	100.00%	98	98	0	100.00%	178	178	0	100.00%				
Totals	541	538	3	99.45%	740	733	7	99.05%	1110	1094	16	98.56%				
NON-URGENT	10-day	20	20	0	100.00%	40	40	0	100.00%	67	67	0	100.00%			
	15-day	9	9	0	100.00%	8	8	0	100.00%	17	17	0	100.00%			
	30-day	484	484	0	100.00%	591	591	0	100.00%	1026	1020	6	99.42%			
	75-day	5	5	0	100.00%	9	9	0	100.00%	18	18	0	100.00%			
	Totals	518	518	0	100.00%	648	648	0	100.00%	1128	1122	6	99.47%			
GRAND TOTAL	1180	1171	9	99.24%	1544	1529	15	99.03%	2437	2407	30	98.77%				

R e s p o n s i v e M a i n t e n a n c e - R e p a i r s S e r v i c e S a t i s f a c t i o n

"Responsive Repairs Survey Results" indicate the satisfaction levels of tenants with regard to various aspects of the responsive repairs service, from the initial report to the completed works. The satisfaction surveys results show very high satisfaction levels and these are to be maintained in future years.

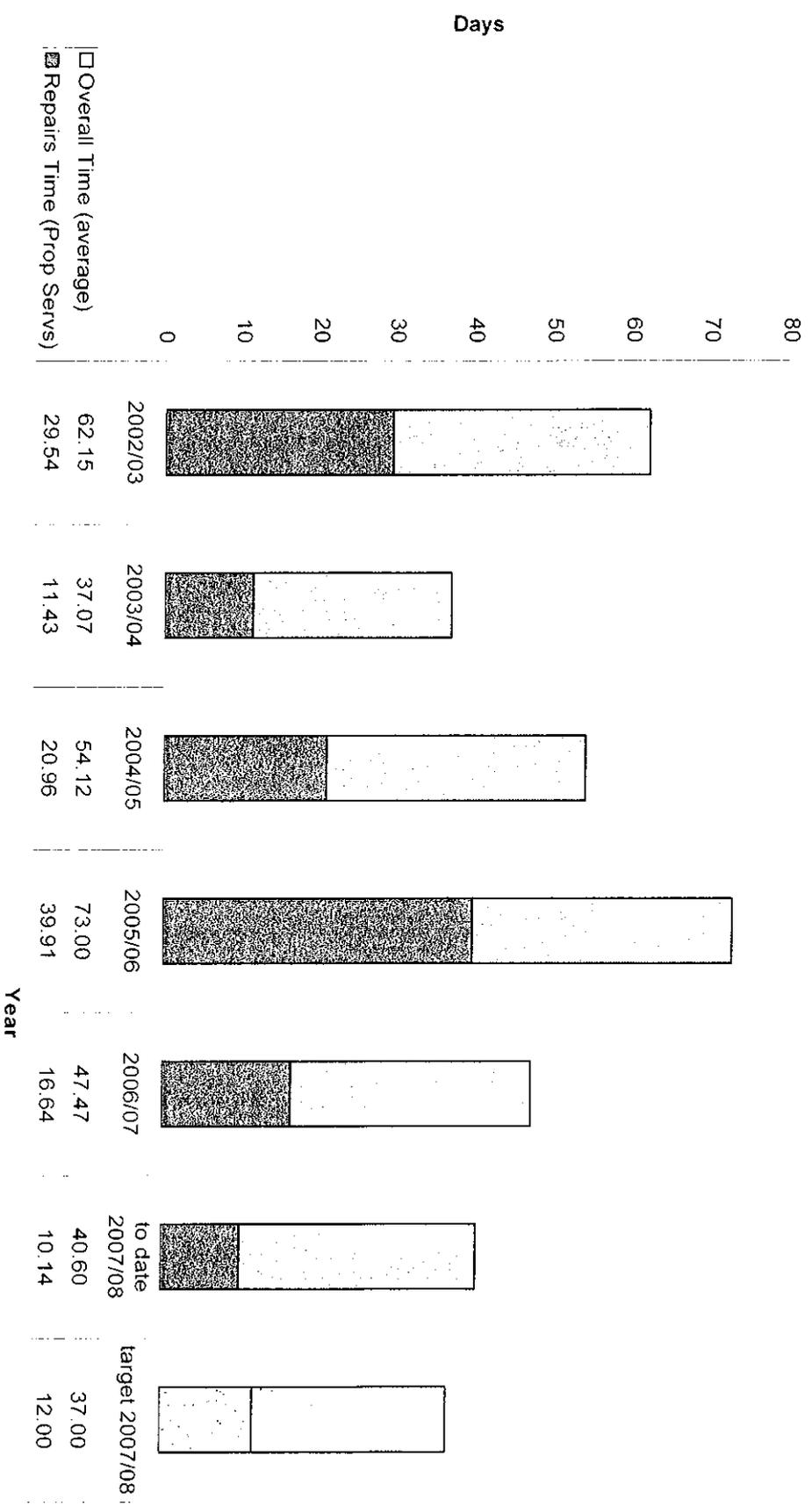
Repairs Satisfaction 2007/08



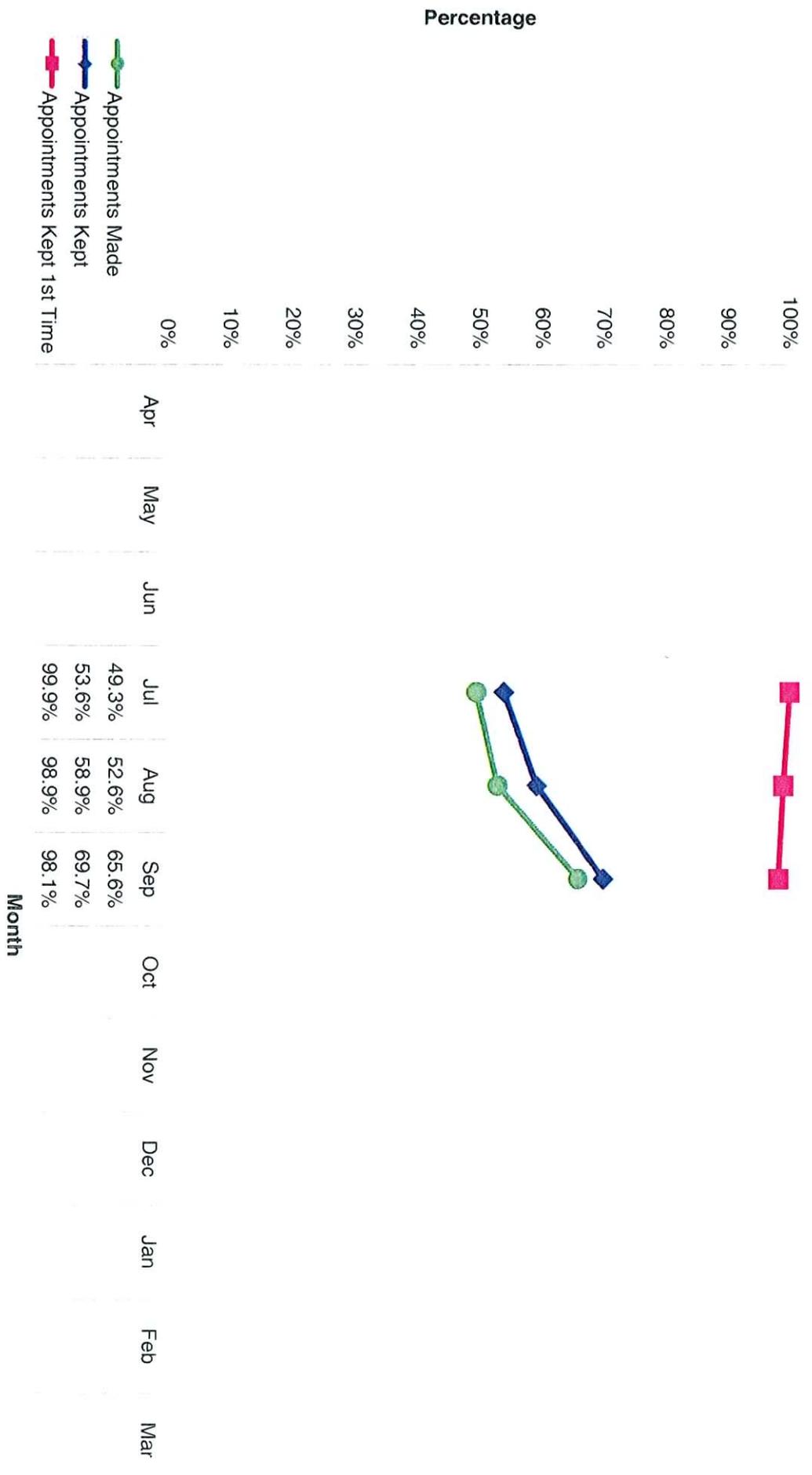
R e s p o n s i v e M a i n t e n a n c e - V o i d R e p a i r s

This is a BVPI for the overall void process and is calculated from the time, in calendar days, from the date the tenancy is terminated up to and including the date when the new tenancy agreement starts. However, it is possible to break this indicator down further to "Repairs Times" and "Overall Letting Times".

**Void Turnaround Times (average)
End of 2nd Quarter 2007/08**



Appointments 2007 - 08



	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Jobs Raised				3163	3446	3401						
Appointments Made				1559	1814	2230						
Appointments Kept				836	1068	1555						
Appointments Kept 1st Time				835	1056	1525						

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Jobs Raised				3163	3446	3401						
Appointments Made				49.3%	52.6%	65.6%						
Appointments Kept				53.6%	58.9%	69.7%						
Appointments Kept 1st Time				99.9%	98.9%	98.1%						

Moscardini Angelo

From: Black Ian [ian.black@northgate-is.com]
Sent: 19 October 2007 12:15
To: Spears Brian
Cc: Marrs David; Moscardini Angelo

Dear Brian

I am writing to thank Angelo and all of the City of Durham staff who were involved in the organisation and delivery of the extremely professional reference visit for Wolverhampton Homes at Dragonville yesterday. I have subsequently spoken to the Wolverhampton attendees and without exception they asked me to express their thanks to everyone involved and said that they had benefitted significantly from the visit.

On a related issue, I would personally, on behalf of Northgate management, plus all of our staff involved in the implementation, would like to acknowledge the not inconsiderable achievement of the members of the Council's project team in achieving the extremely tight timescales associated with the implementation of their systems to date. To achieve this and still carry out their 'day jobs' is nothing short of amazing and deserves to be acknowledged. From our viewpoint this has been one of the best run housing projects with both teams working as one towards a common goal.

I hope that you will pass Northgate's thanks on to all involved.

I look forward to meeting you again, possibly at the Mayor's Civic Dinner if not before.

Kind regards

Ian Black
Sales Executive
Northgate Information Solutions Limited

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**QUESTIONING PLAN
PLANNING SHEET**

TOPIC FOR SCRUTINY: Gypsy & Traveller Unauthorised Encampments
Purpose of Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To look at problems surrounding unauthorised encampments of Gypsies and Travellers
Specific issues to be looked at <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procedures and responsibilities involved.
Required Outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To recommend measures to improve relationships between the travelling and settled communities. Reduce past negative experiences.
Possible Risks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To do nothing and have continuing problems.

KEY TASKS	
<p>Documents/evidence/research</p> <p><i>What?</i> County Council Accommodation & Support Needs of Gypsies & Travellers Local Development Framework Scrutiny Report of Permanent Encampments</p> <p><i>Why?</i></p>	<p>When</p>
<p>Consultation</p> <p><i>Who/what?</i></p> <p>Durham County Council Traveller Liaison Officer Police Representative of Travellers Representative of Communities having had problems</p>	<p>When</p> <p>Beginning January 2008</p>

QUESTIONING PLAN

<p>Why?</p>	
<p>Witnesses</p> <p>Who?</p> <p>Why?</p>	<p>When</p>
<p>Project start date:</p> <p>January 2008</p>	<p>Draft report deadline:</p> <p>March 2008</p> <p>Project completion date:</p> <p>April 2008</p>