

Wear Valley DC – progress with time bound recommendations of R & M re-inspection

RECOMMENDATION	PROGRESS	ASSESSMENT
<p><u>September 2003</u></p> <p>13.9 Introduce a robust system of post inspection to monitor the cost and quality of repairs in three months</p>	<p>We have introduced a basic post inspection system</p> <p>Sample of maintenance and repair work undertaken is complete and continues to be produced by the repairs system; An officer then visits customers to examine quality of service and satisfaction.</p> <p><i>We are undertaking an examination of the post-inspection process to develop customer satisfaction, quality controls, efficiency and value for money.</i></p>	<p>Recommendation partly complied with.</p> <p>Further work is needed on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Linking together the Vision Management System and Post Inspection Reviews. ▪ Developing surveys to identify further repair or maintenance work needed to the property.
<p>13.13 Devise challenging longer term targets for all aspects of the repairs service for the next five years using both national and local performance indicators to achieve top 25% performance within three months</p>	<p>We have developed a set of challenging targets to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the housing service for the next five years</p> <p>We annually review these targets as part of the development of the Best Value Performance Plan.</p>	<p>Recommendation partly complied with.</p> <p>Further work is needed on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We have engaged in benchmarking, but need to link the data to our internal measurements.

	<i>We have reviewed our local performance indicators to be more reflective of local need and aspirations.</i>	
13.15 Identify an improvement plan that can be used as a live document to map out short, medium and long term improvements that are based on outcomes for customers within three months	We have developed a Service Improvement Plan complete with short, medium and long term targets with was agreed by the HSC, Customer Panel and other stakeholders.	Recommendation complied with.

<p>13.26 Devise a Plan to address all other weaknesses identified in this report. This should include SMART targets to measure improvement within three months</p>	<p>We have developed a Service Plan, complete with SMART targets and fully reflective of the Council's wider strategic objectives, to tackle the other weaknesses identified by the report</p>	<p>Recommendation complied with.</p>
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<p><u>December 2003</u></p> <p>13.4 Fully implement the Commission for Racial Equality Code of Practice for Rented Housing within the next six months</p>	<p>We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Developed and implemented an “Harassment Policy” ▪ Introduced a First Impressions visit to assess the Council from an ethnic minority point of view ▪ Reviewed and revamped all Council literature and posters to reflect diversity and equality and begun to use a recognised translation organisation ▪ Introduced a departmental equalities statement ▪ Introduced a new tenants’ newsletter and undertaken a publicity campaign in accordance with equalities legislation the Council’s Race Equality Scheme and the department’s own service aims ▪ Provided diversity training to all staff ▪ Started Neighbourhood Service Directories ▪ Introduced an ethnic classification system in the new housing registration form ▪ <i>Worked with DDREC and Race Action Net to produce a gateway to services via the Internet</i> 	<p>Recommendation complied with.</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Implemented relevant systems to enable the monitoring of allocations and lettings to ensure quality of access is achieved</i> ▪ <i>Established equality targets for the department and reporting on these on a quarterly basis</i> ▪ <i>Established links with minority communities through consultation with identified groups</i> ▪ <i>Consulted with the local community to explain why monitoring is being introduced</i> 	
13.21 Develop a set of service standards with tenants which sets out what tenants can expect from the repairs service and publish this widely amongst tenants within six months	We have developed a set of service standards with local tenants following extensive consultation. The standards have been published on the Internet and in Wear Valley Housing Matters	Recommendation complied with.

<p><u>March 2004</u></p> <p>13.7 Ensure that the repairs service provides demonstrable value for money that is procured through an open and transparent process within nine months</p>	<p>We have undertaken the repairs and maintenance service procurement corporately using advice from internal and external audit. The process was consulted on with customers, who assisted in the evaluation of the service. Staff have also been actively involved in the development of the service and implementing service changes</p> <p>The process was agreed by the Housing Inspectorate and GONE</p>	<p>Recommendation complied with.</p> <p>Further work is needed on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introducing benchmarking to monitor the average cost/benefits per repair ▪ Involving customers in evaluating the service during review/tendering ▪ Identifying potential markets and procurement options
<p>13.8 Introduce multi skilling and extended working hours for the repairs service within nine months</p>	<p>We have introduced extended working hours and training programmes to enable the multi-skilling of our staff.</p> <p><i>The PDP process has been refined to identify workforce training needs and skills gaps in service plans.</i></p> <p><i>We have developed a partnership approach to the Unions which will help us undertake a skills analysis.</i></p>	<p>Recommendation complied with.</p>

Wear Valley DC – Progress with non time bound recommendations of R & M re-inspection

RECOMMENDATION	PROGRESS	ASSESSMENT
<p><u>Capital Programme</u></p> <p>13.1 Consult and actively involve the wider body of tenants on options and priorities for determining a long term (at least five years) capital programme to include setting targets and publicising the future programme to tenants</p>	<p>We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consulted and actively involved the wider body of tenants to determine a 7 year Capital Programme ▪ Undertaken customer satisfaction surveys and improved levels of customer satisfaction ▪ Developed a “fit for purpose” Housing Business Plan ▪ Begun the delivery of a programme of long term improvements to Council properties and linked these to long term (3 years plus) partnering arrangements with contractors ▪ Identified resources for improving the communication of our long term priorities ▪ Linked property development and maintenance programmes to sustainability programmes and consultation exercises ▪ Continued to develop a reliable stock condition database 	<p>Recommendation complied with</p> <p>Further work is needed on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Developing a Decent Homes Strategy

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Made all staff and customers aware of the long term programme via internet and newsletters ▪ Identified finances required to meet customers' aspirations as part of the stock options process. 	
<u>Planned Maintenance</u> 13.2 Review the cyclical decorations programme to bring it back into line with good practice and ensure that homes do not deteriorate further	<p>We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reintroduced a cyclical decorations improvement programme, in line with our window replacement programme ▪ Made finance available for decorations and improvements to properties in most need of development ▪ Customers are informed and actively involved in developing the Council's Programme of Works 	Recommendation complied with
13.3 Move the balance of expenditure away from responsive to planned maintenance based on good practice levels	<p>We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introduced geographical appointment planning to the dales ▪ Consulted and informed customers and the local community of the planned cyclical painting programme and encouraged their input to improve the service 	<p>Recommendation partly complied with</p> <p>Further work is needed on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Publicising the Planned Maintenance Programme to customers

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Began work on identifying the most common items of maintenance work to 'batch-up' repairs</i> ▪ <i>Introduced a regulated system of appointments for the majority of repairs</i> ▪ <i>We have produced regular performance reports so users can be more aware of service delivery, and use customer feedback to improve</i> 	
<p><u>Response Repairs</u></p> <p>13.5 Monitor local repair times and report performance on these and other relevant performance indicators to tenants</p>	<p>We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monitored the Council's average repair times and performance and reported these to the Customer Panel ▪ Introduced an IT system to measure the performance of the service ▪ Produced monthly reports for managers and customers 	<p>Recommendation complied with</p>

13.6 Review and rationalise repair priority times. Ensure they are challenging and clearly publicised to customers	<p>We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regularly reported our performance to customers in a variety of ways including publications, focus groups and the internet ▪ <i>We have held focus groups with customers and examined the data to drive service improvements</i> 	<p>Recommendation partly complied with</p>
13.10 Reduce the level of emergency repairs ordered to good practice levels	<p>We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduced the levels of emergency repairs to good practice levels ▪ Undertaken intensive staff training to identify and classify emergency works 	<p>Recommendation complied with</p> <p>Further work is needed on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Undertaking more performance Improvement Team meetings to ensure the repairs service demonstrates good practice ▪ Eliminating non emergency jobs from the category and collating more information on good practice

<p><u>Empty Homes</u></p> <p>13.11 Ensure that a strategic approach is adopted to the management of empty homes ensuring that sustainability of estates is mapped, a marketing strategy is adopted and implemented and effected tenants are consulted on the strategy prior to decisions being taken</p>	<p>We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Produced a “map” of housing needs, void rates, DHS index, and reasons for evictions ▪ Undertaken varied consultation exercises with the residents group and Customer Panel ▪ <i>We have worked with the Performance Improvement Team to tackle empty homes, communications issues and the sustainability of empty properties</i> 	<p>Recommendation partly complied with</p> <p>Further work is needed on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We are developing a ‘Marketing Plan’ for void and empty properties, and have started by developing our customer profile
<p>13.12 Ensure that void management procedures are reviewed to ensure they address the weaknesses identified in the report</p>	<p>We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reviewed our lettings and void management procedures ▪ Undertaken benchmarking exercises against the recommendations of the Performance Improvement Team and other Authorities ▪ Restructured the workforce, we have also reallocated resources for labour, plant and transport 	<p>Recommendation partly complied with</p> <p>We have involved the staff and customers in seeking to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Achieving top quartile performance in relet times ▪ Implementing the Empty Homes Strategy and developing a Marketing Strategy

<p><u>Performance Management</u></p> <p>13.14 Set targets for individual members of staff. These must be SMART and directly linked to the overall aims and objectives of the Council</p>	<p>We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introduced Performance Development Plans (PDPs) for staff in line with the Council Plan ▪ Developed individual action plans complete with performance measures, linked to PDPs, departmental service plans and the Council Plan 	<p>Recommendation complied with</p>
<p>13.16 Report performance to all customers on a regular basis</p>	<p>We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reported our performance on the Internet, in Council publications and in Council offices and premises. Results were also included in the Council's annual Performance Plan ▪ Worked with the Customer Panel to develop performance measures 	<p>Recommendation complied with</p>

<p><u>Value for Money</u></p> <p>13.17 Undertake a thorough analysis of future procurement options across the service and ensure value for money is achieved and demonstrated</p>	<p>We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Undertaken a Best Value Review of Procurement using advice from IDeA and the Audit Commission ▪ Demonstrated value for money is being achieved through the effective procurement of major works using a price to quality ratio to ensure the best tenders are accepted not just the cheapest ▪ Successfully obtained financial and technical support from the North East Centre for Excellence to establish review procurement and value for money 	<p>Recommendation partly complied with</p> <p>Further work is needed on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Undertaking a thorough analysis of procurement across the department ▪ Developing a Procurement Strategy ▪ Developing the corporate management of the tendering process
<p>13.18 Ensure that Egan principles are applied to procurement to achieve improved quality and value for money in all maintenance programmes</p>	<p>We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Completed the repairs tendering exercise and MRA projects using Egan and the Rethinking Construction Agenda as part of the tendering exercise ▪ Involved External Audit in assessing the transparency of procurement processes ▪ Involved the Customer Panel in assessing tenders and undertaking appropriate training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recommendation complied with

<p>13.19 Introduce a budgetary management framework to ensure that expenditure is controlled and managed effectively</p>	<p>We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Revised the financial system and enabled monitoring of the system against the assessment of service provision against budgets ▪ AGRESSO Financial management system training has been delivered to all relevant staff ▪ Consolidated cost centres to simplify and improve financial management practices ▪ Allocated responsibility for budgets to managers ▪ Monthly budget reports are prepared for Housing Budget holders ▪ Financial protocols are developed and implemented 	<p>Recommendation partly complied with</p>
<p>13.20 Identify all areas of the service to ensure that financial efficiency is achieved both in expenditure and income e.g. unsustainable voids and recharges</p>	<p>We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improved financial monitoring ▪ Channelling resources into the services local people have identified as a priority ▪ Introduced a new rechargeable repairs policy and procedure to reduce inappropriate expenditure ▪ Worked closely with District Audit in introducing an HRA Recovery Plan 	<p>Recommendation partly complied with</p> <p>Further work is needed on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lowering expenditure on void properties ▪ Improving financial monitoring of problem voids

<p><u>General</u></p> <p>13.22 Ensure tenants including the wider body of tenants are effectively involved in all service changes and plans</p>	<p>We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Developed a consultation database ▪ Developed a customer training programme in partnership with the Customer Panel, AYCC, Education in the Community and Bishop Auckland College ▪ Introduced a twice yearly customer newsletter ▪ Agreed a Communications Strategy, Customer Empowerment Strategy and Change Management Strategy ▪ <i>Agreed the outcome of the Stock Options Appraisal process</i> ▪ <i>Established a Corporate Consultation Team</i> 	<p>Recommendation complied with</p>
<p>13.23 Ensure that performance information is gathered and monitored regularly on all aspects of the service including customer access, recharges, gas servicing within statutory time limits and lettings refusals</p>	<p>We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Submitted performance management information to the Housing Services Committee twice a year ▪ Undertaken customer satisfaction surveys across a range of services ▪ Reported the findings of consultation to DMT, CMT, Housing Committee and the Customer Panel ▪ Information is published in Wear Valley Matters, Wear Valley Housing Matters, 	<p>Recommendation complied with</p> <p>Further work is needed on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Using benchmarks to measure our performance against the best performing authorities

	<p>reception areas and on the internet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Delivered performance reports to the Housing Services Committee on a quarterly basis</i> ▪ <i>Used the Vision Management System to enable the collation of performance information</i> 	
13.24 Improve the capacity to deliver improved performance at both political and middle management level	<p>We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Delivered training for Elected Members ▪ Introduced equality and diversity training for all staff ▪ Introduced PDP training for all managers and regularly monitor the Housing Services Training Plan 	Recommendation complied with
13.25 Report the findings and recommendations of this report immediately to the Council and Customer Panel, setting out proposals for addressing the issues and improving the service	<p>We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reported to various bodies as appropriate ▪ Ensured the Service Improvement Plan has been approved by the HSC and Customer Panel 	Recommendation complied with
13.26 Devise a plan to address all other weaknesses identified in this report. This should include SMART targets to measure improvement in three months	<p>We have:</p> <p>Developed a Housing Service Improvement Plan, improving customer satisfaction, achieving better value for money and compliance with the Inspectors report</p>	Recommendation complied with