

Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Monday 4 October 2010

7.00 pm

Room G02A,(Ground Floor) 160, Tooley Street

Membership

Councillor Gavin Edwards (Chair)
Councillor Poddy Clark
Councillor Stephen Govier
Councillor Claire Hickson
Councillor Linda Manchester
Councillor Wilma Nelson
Councillor Michael Situ
John Nosworthy
Mariam Facey

Reserves

Councillor Michael Bukola
Councillor Paul Kyriacou
Councillor Darren Merrill
Councillor Martin Seaton
Councillor Cleo Soanes
Jane Salmon
Lesley Wertheimer

INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Access to information

You have the right to request to inspect copies of minutes and reports on this agenda as well as the background documents used in the preparation of these reports.

Babysitting/Carers allowances

If you are a resident of the borough and have paid someone to look after your children, an elderly dependant or a dependant with disabilities so that you could attend this meeting, you may claim an allowance from the council. Please collect a claim form at the meeting.

Access

The council is committed to making its meetings accessible. Further details on building access, translation, provision of signers etc for this meeting are on the council's web site: www.southwark.gov.uk or please contact the person below.

Contact

Karen Harris on 020 7525 0324 or email: karen.harris@southwark.gov.uk

Members of the committee are summoned to attend this meeting

Annie Shepperd

Chief Executive

Date: 24 September 2010



Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Monday 4 October 2010
7.00 pm
Room G02A, Ground Floor, 160 Tooley Street

Order of Business

Item No.	Title	Page No.
	PART A - OPEN BUSINESS	
1.	APOLOGIES	
2.	NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT	
	In special circumstances, an item of business may be added to an agenda within five clear working days of the meeting.	
3.	DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS	
	Members to declare any personal interests and dispensation in respect of any item of business to be considered at this meeting.	
4.	MINUTES	1 - 21
	To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2010.	
5.	FEEDBACK FROM CALL LISTEN-IN EXERCISE	
6.	TENANTS' COUNCIL CALL CENTRE WORKING PARTY	22 - 24
	Discussion with representative from the Tenants' Council call centre working party	
7.	HOUSING REPAIRS SURVEY 2010	
8.	LOCAL HOUSING OFFERS	25

Item No.

Title

Page No.

Briefing note on Tenant Service Authority Local Offers

9. HOUSING BENEFIT REFORM

Update from Councillor Stephen Govier

DISCUSSION OF ANY OTHER OPEN ITEMS AS NOTIFIED AT THE START OF THE MEETING.

PART B - CLOSED BUSINESS

DISCUSSION OF ANY CLOSED ITEMS AS NOTIFIED AT THE START OF THE MEETING AND ACCEPTED BY THE CHAIR AS URGENT.



HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Sub-Committee held on Tuesday 7 September 2010 at 7.00 pm at Town Hall, Peckham Road, London SE5 8UB

PRESENT: Councillor Gavin Edwards (Chair)
Councillor Poddy Clark
Councillor Stephen Govier
Councillor Claire Hickson
Councillor Linda Manchester
Councillor Wilma Nelson
Councillor Michael Situ

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT: Jane Salmon, Homeowners' Council

OFFICER SUPPORT: Christian O'Mahoney, Housing Repairs and Maintenance Manager
Catherine Spence, Housing Client Officer
Karen Harris, Scrutiny Project Manager

1. APOLOGIES

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from John Nosworthy, Homeowners' Council. Jane Salmon attended in his place.

2. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT

- 2.1 There were none.

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

- 3.1 Councillor Stephen Govier declared an interest as a council housing tenant. Councillor Linda Manchester and Councillor Wilma Nelson both declared an

interest as council leaseholders.

4. MINUTES FROM JULY MEETING

RESOLVED

- 1) The minutes from the meeting of the Housing and Community Safety sub-committee held on 6 July be agreed as an accurate record.
- 2) That in future the minutes will provide a consistent level of detail for all agenda items.

5. PLAN FOR HOUSING REPAIRS SCRUTINY REVIEW

- 5.1 The chair referred to the draft document outlining the planned approach to be taken to the scrutiny review. He reminded members that the first draft of this report had been circulated following the last meeting, and comments incorporated.

RESOLVED

That the plan for Scrutiny of Performance Management of the Housing Repairs Service in Southwark be agreed as the terms of reference for the review.

6. PRESENTATION ON KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR HOUSING REPAIRS

- 6.1 The Chair introduced his presentation on Key Performance Indicators, explaining that it was important that the sub-committee had discussions based upon facts rather than on anecdotal information.
- 6.2 He thanked staff from the Environment and Housing Department for the information they had provided to make the presentation possible.
- 6.3 The Chair referred to the handout on key performance indicators (attached to the minutes for ease of reference), and explained that the indicators selected are those where there is a discrepancy between the performance indicated by the information received by councillors and the data. He explained each indicator in turn and what the data shown on the graphs is telling the Council about performance.
- 6.4 According to the indicators the council was performing well or excellently against each performance indicator selected.
- 6.5 The Chair reminded the sub-committee of a previous scrutiny which was done last year on housing performance. This scrutiny had a clear draft recommendation that the performance indicators should be looked at in more detail, which forms an important part of the rationale for the current scrutiny project.

- 6.6 The sub-committee discussed the significant proportion of members' complaints and enquiries that are related to housing repairs, and the percentage of all repairs that this formed. They also the discussed the need to retain balance between the issues raised in casework, which usually are predominantly focused on the complainant, and the facts around the repairs themselves and how the information on these is recorded.
- 6.7 The Chair informed the sub-committee of some work done on behalf of the Environment and Housing Department by consultants to give an idea of what the outcome of a formal assessment of housing repairs would be if one were done now. The results were not favourable, again highlighting that there are improvements needed that the scrutiny process can help to identify.
- 6.8 The sub-committee discussed the methodology of the collection of the statistics for Key Performance Indicators and noted
- The huge problems that could arise with the reliability of the KPIs because so many are "self-reported" by the contractors. It was suggested by the chair that there is currently little or no way of knowing if and when a repair has been completed other than when the contractor tells the council that it has been completed. This may be a key reason why there is such a disparity between KPIs showing excellent performance in repairs and other strong evidence of poor performance
 - Length of time within which a repair is expected to be completed is variable according to priority. In addition, if communal repairs are recorded in the same system as individual repairs this can skew the statistics.
 - Satisfaction call-backs are done by the call-centre but there is a need for greater clarity over the scripts used – for example the experience of the Tenant's call centre working party listening to example calls was quite different to what was recorded in the satisfaction survey.
 - Coverage- whether the indicators are capturing the whole of the experience which is emerging through the casework.
 - There is a lack of clarity around the recording processes for queries and repairs that are re-raised numerous times because they are unresolved.
 - The fact that not all repairs and regeneration work goes through the call centre and this may be adding to the sense in the community of repairs remaining uncompleted because they are being handled within a different system.
- 6.9 It was agreed that there is a need for verification of the satisfaction statistics, and the sub-committee recognised work has begun on a separate satisfaction survey, not run by the call-centre or contractors to look into this issue further. The sub-committee agreed that it would be helpful for them assist this by giving some thought to a more pro-active approach to test the hypotheses around the performance indicators. Any survey work done by the sub-committee would need to have a rigorous methodology which meets market research society standards.
- 6.10 The sub-committee discussed equalities issues around the call centre, in particular language, especially in the context of the call-back surveys. It was confirmed by the chair that this issue was one of the concerns highlighted in the consultants report.

RESOLVED

- 1) That the sub-committee should spend some time listening to a selection of calls to the customer call centre to establish how the call handling process works
- 2) The scripts which the call centre is using to inform their responses to customers should be made available to the sub-committee to aid this process.
- 3) The sub-committee should meet with the Tenant's Council call centre working party to share information and intelligence about the issues around KPIs

7. METHODOLOGY FOR TRACKING HOUSING REPAIRS CASES

- 7.1 The sub-committee agreed that casework tracking would be a good way to gather facts about some of the underlying issues on repairs and the discrepancies between experience and indicators.
- 7.2 There was a discussion on the issues that should be covered in casework tracking, including:
 - Divergence of opinion between the contractor and the customer over whether a repair has been completed
 - The need to track individual complaints to individual contractors
 - The length of time/number of calls needed overall for a single issue to be resolved to the satisfaction of the customer
 - The use of existing customer information and repair diagnosis by the call-centre and contractors
 - The value of including examples and information from the Homeowners Council and Tenants Council to inform the process.
 - Whether things go wrong because they are "not normal" requests, or if they go wrong more generally
 - The identification of issues which should be reflected in the performance indicators which are currently not
- 7.3 The focus of the casework exercise will be on looking at how to make the customer experience as good as it can be rather than focusing on what has gone wrong in the past.

RESOLVED

- 1) That each sub-committee member, including co-optees should submit casework examples to the chair. From these submissions the chair will select a number which can be followed through and end to end process.
- 2) Following this exercise the sub-committee will discuss constructive proposals of changes to case handling for the future.

8. HOUSING REPAIRS SURVEY 2010

- 8.1 The sub-committee discussed the draft survey proposed by the chair as a way of comparing actual customer experience with the data collected through the performance indicators.
- 8.2 The focus of the survey will be to capture information which can be directly related to the performance indicators.
- 8.3 A number of changes were discussed to the wording of the questions in the survey and it was agreed that the sub-committee will take further advice on the formulation of the survey in order to
- Ensure that it meets market research standards
 - Does not duplicate/confuse other survey work being done by the council
 - Is clear about which elements of housing repairs are included as some matters e.g. door entries and lift repairs do not form part of this particular scrutiny exercise.
- 8.4 Housing Officers informed the sub-committee of some survey work being done by MORI. This will be circulated to the sub-committee for information.

RESOLVED

That the chair would take forward work on the survey so that it would be carried out at the earliest opportunity and the results reported back to the sub-committee.

9. VISIT TO THE CALL CENTRE

- 9.1 The sub-committee agreed that it would be useful to visit the customer call centre to find out how the centre operates and meet Adrian Jones.
- 9.2 The sub-committee were advised by the Housing Repairs and maintenance manager that a new team is now in place within the council- the Commercial Team, and it would also be useful to meet with this team in advance of the next meeting.

RESOLVED

- 1) A visit to the call centre will take place on the day of the next meeting of the sub-committee before the main meeting.
- 2) The visit to the call centre will be followed by a short meeting with the Commercial team.

10. HOUSING BENEFIT

- 10.1 The chair relayed to the sub-committee the discussion which took place at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in relation to the proposed changes to housing benefit, and whether this would be an appropriate topic for scrutiny.

- 10.2 It was agreed that this is a national/London-wide issue and as such Southwark would need to feed information and intelligence into a broader case rather than undertaking a scrutiny on our own.
- 10.3 Following a suggestion from the Homeowners' Council representative, it was agreed that it would be useful for a member of the Housing and Community Safety Sub-Committee to act as a rapporteur to build a strong Southwark opinion on this issue.

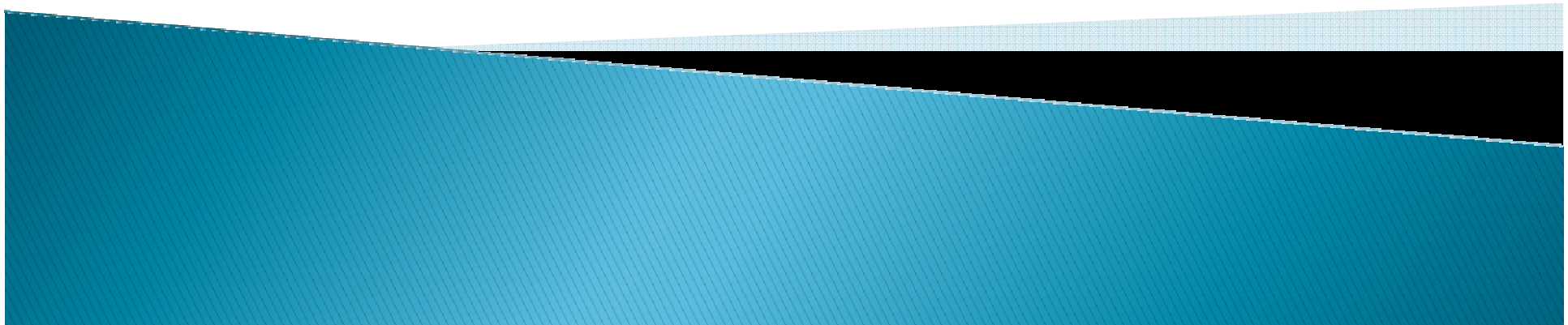
RESOLVED

Councillor Govier will act as rapporteur for the sub-committee to build the case on the housing benefits issue.

Key Performance Indicators in Housing Repairs

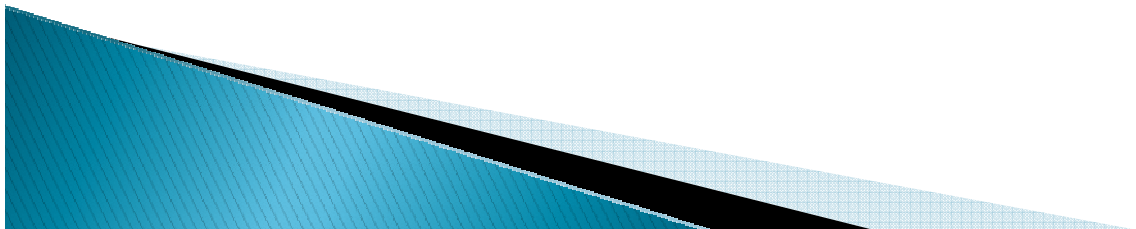
Councillor Gavin Edwards
Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee meeting

7th September 2010

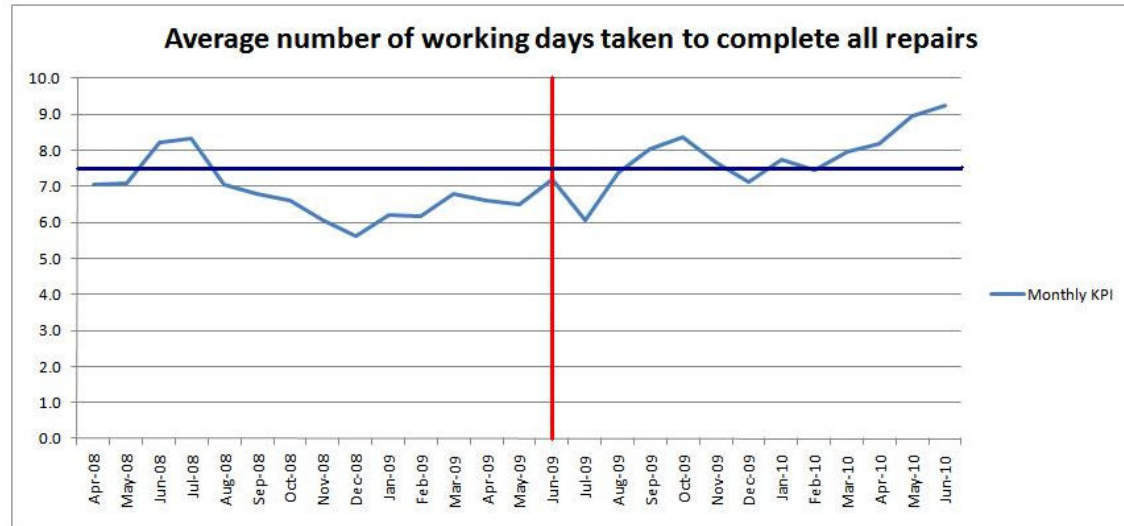
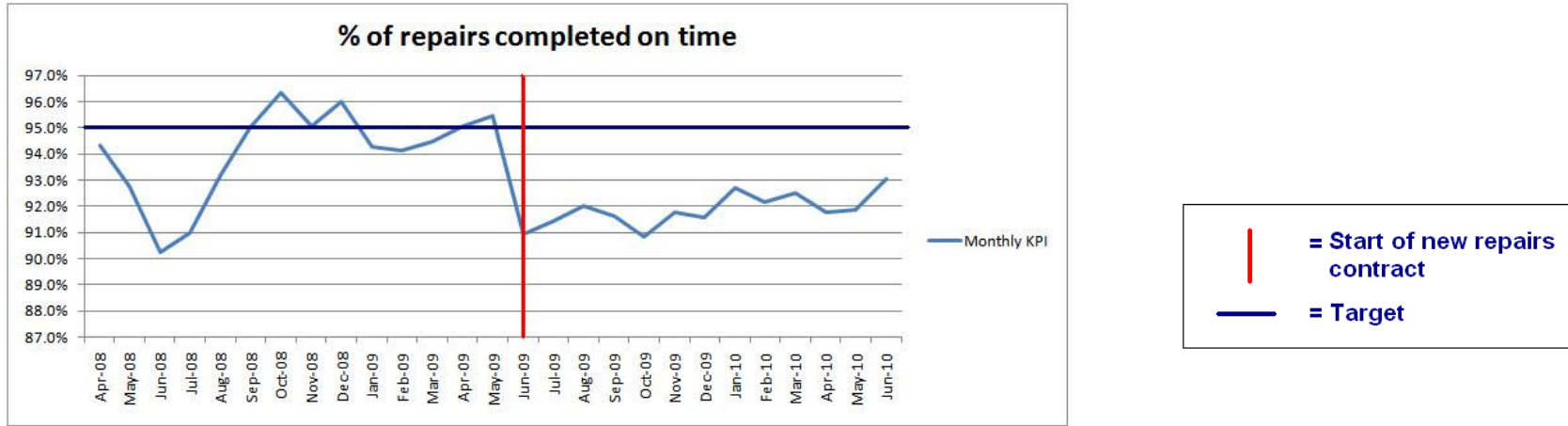


Which KPIs are we looking at?

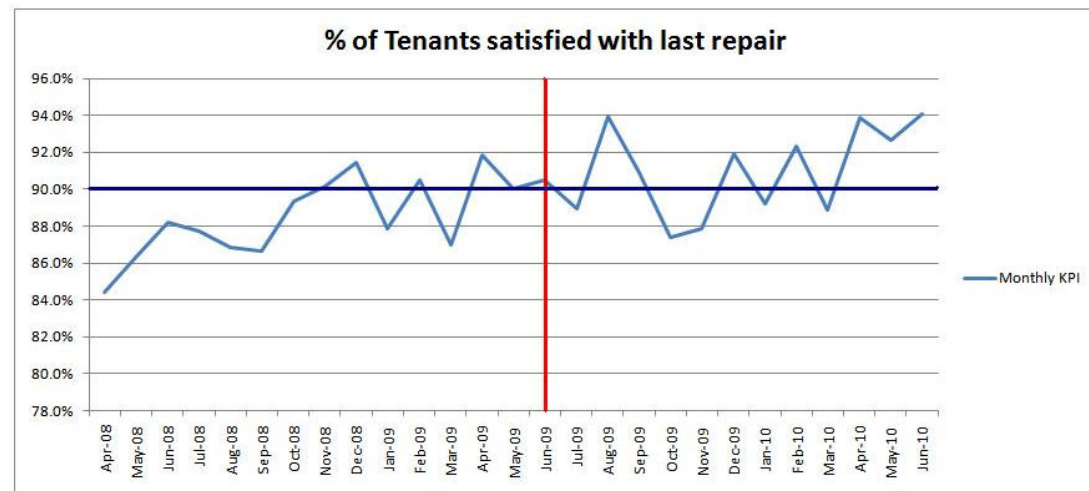
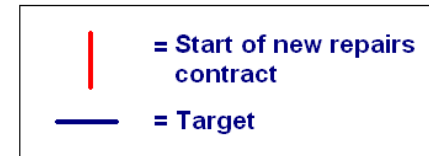
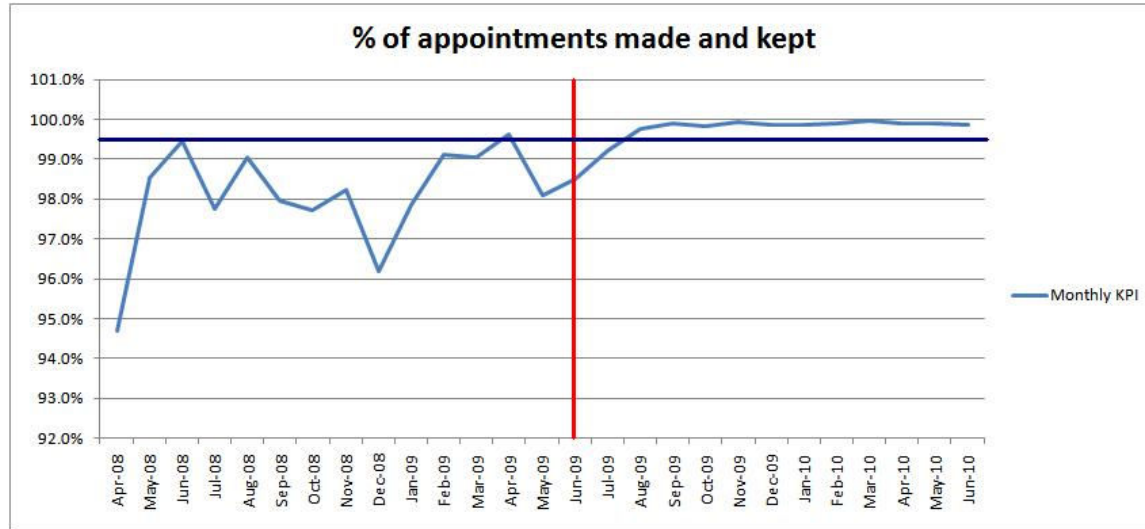
- ▶ Repairs completed on time
- ▶ Time taken to complete repairs
- ▶ Appointments made and kept
- ▶ Satisfaction with last repair
- ▶ Repairs completed on first visit
- ▶ Overall satisfaction



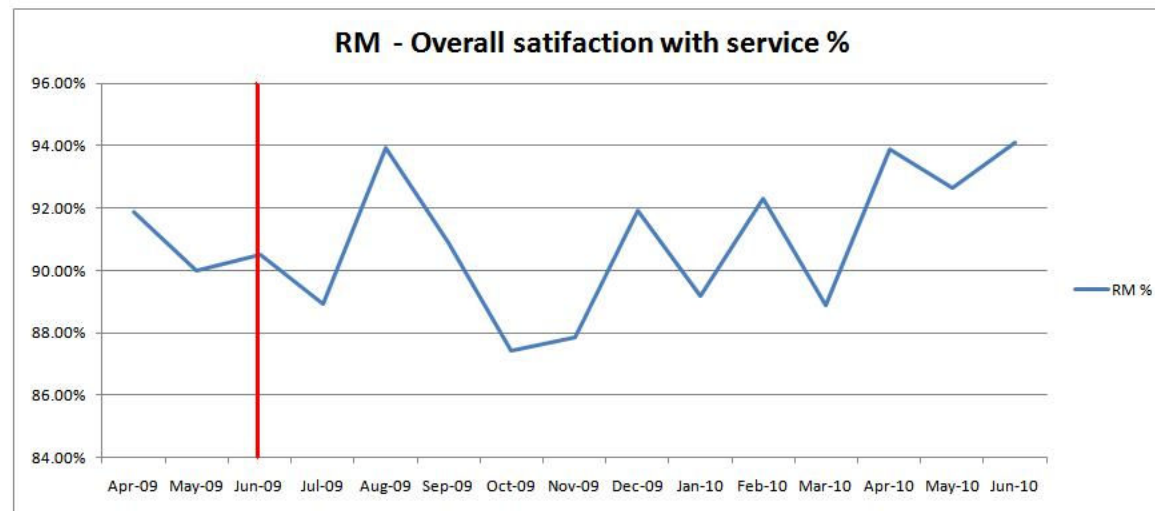
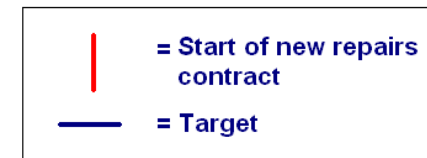
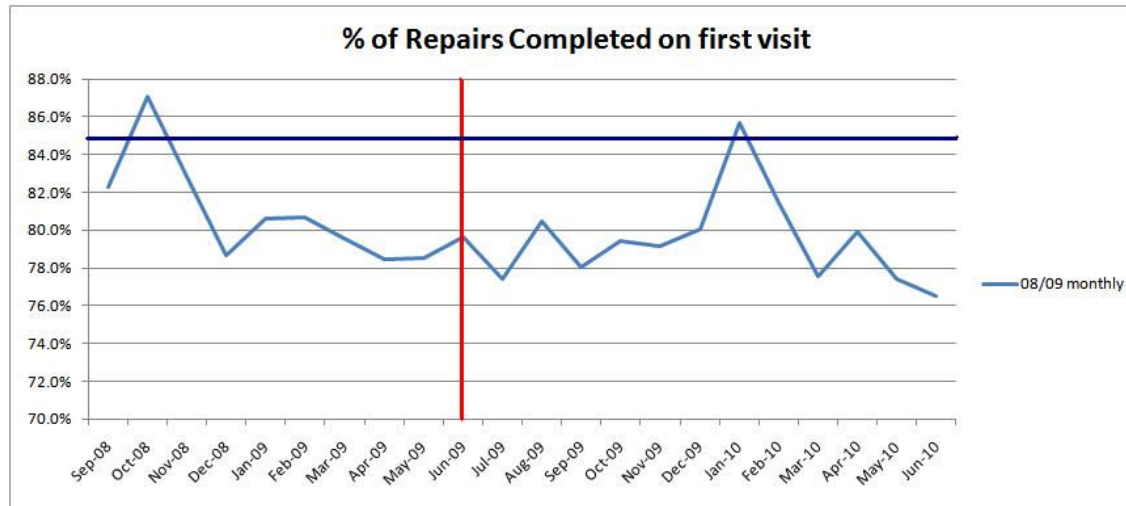
What do the KPIs say?



What do the KPIs say?



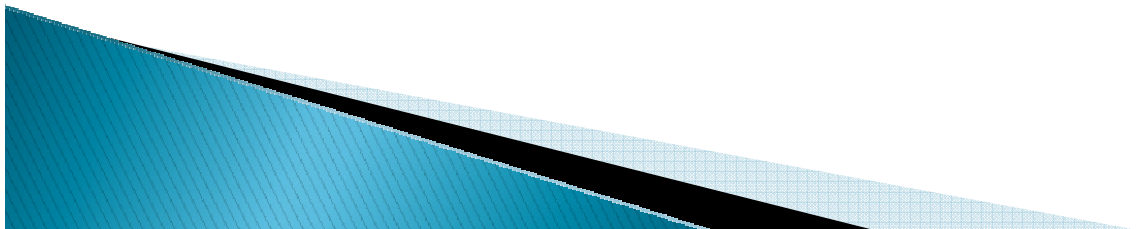
What do the KPIs say?



Is there a problem with KPIs?

Housing Repairs Review, Draft Report of Scrutiny Sub-Committee A, March 2010

Recommendation 4: “There are concerns regarding the figures for customer satisfaction. A clear analysis is required, along with a knowledge of the end to end process, to provide better use of information which would inspire tenants’ and member confidence.



Is there a problem with KPIs?

Members' enquiries and complaints*

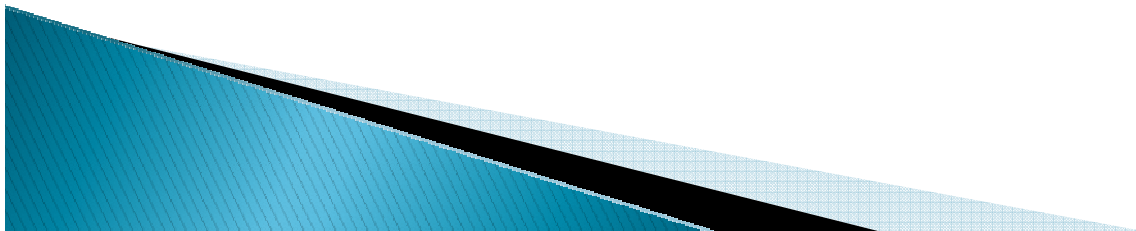
	Total complaints	Total member enquiries	Total
2007	2291	943	3234
2008	1623	724	2347
2009	1754	746	2500
2010 (up to 30th Jul 2010)	1686	727	2413

*These figures do not include any complaints and members enquiries which are not reported through the icasework system.

An example of casework...

“...basically there has been a leak in the roof of the property. It was reported in March this year. Southwark council were surprised to hear that the work had not been carried out as the sub-contractor had stated they had completed the work.

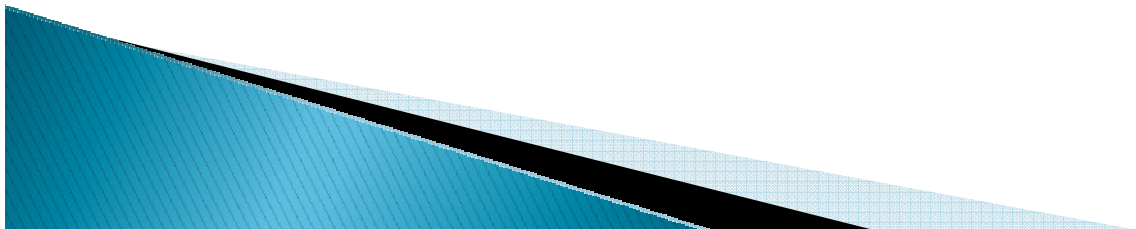
Upon investigation of the property from both a representative from Southwark council and the sub-contractor it was agreed that no work had been undertaken. This has only been recently recognised, so why was there a huge delay in this matter either being acknowledged or acted upon?”



Is there a problem with KPIs?

The HQN Report – June 2010

2.15 **Quality of repairs** – during the time we were in the call centre, we observed that a number of telephone calls were from customers who were concerned with the quality of their repair. During a two-hour period we listened to a total of 16 calls, 13 of which specifically relating to a repair. Out of those 13, five were concerning dissatisfaction with the work undertaken. This is 38.4%.



- Levels of pre- and post-inspections not robustly monitored. Staff interviewed did not know the levels generally and there is a lack of data in the performance monitoring information

. . . A KPI working party has been set up

How are the stats collected?

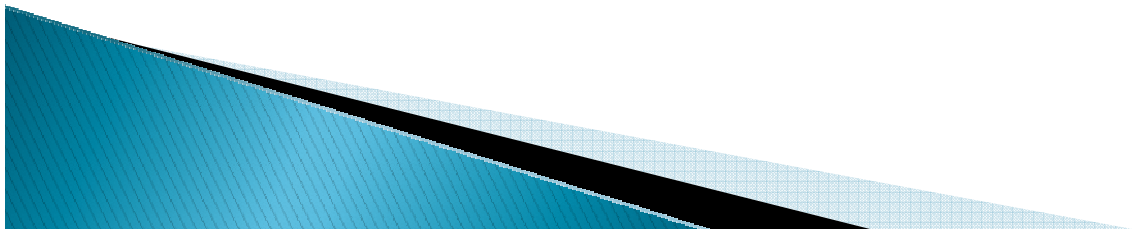
1. % of Repairs completed on time

On time means within the priority period set (i.e. 2 hours, 24 hours etc.)

Recorded on “iworld” by the contractors themselves.

2. Average number of working days taken to complete a repair

Recorded on “iworld” by the contractors themselves.



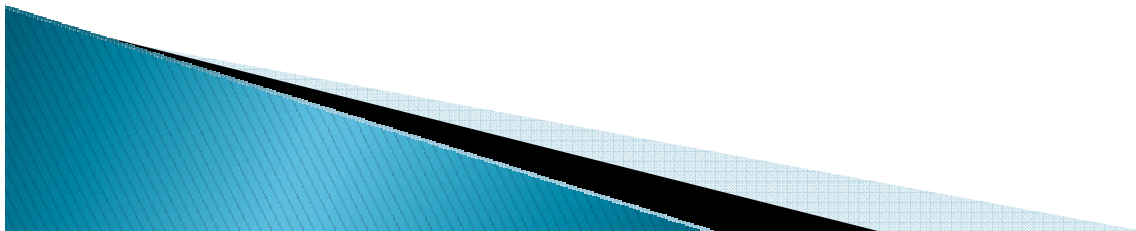
How are the stats collected?

3. % of appointments made and kept

Figures come from the appointment system used by the contractors and they record their own missed appointments

4. % of tenants satisfied with last repair

Tenants are called back by the CSC after a repair is completed. The % is the number of people who scored the service 3, 4, or 5 out of 5.



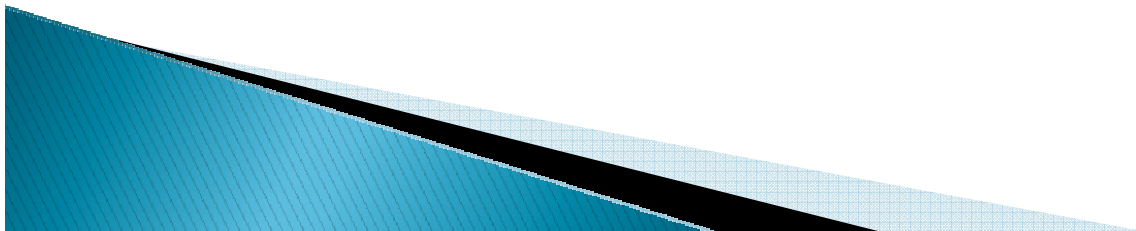
How are the stats collected?

5. % of repairs completed on first visit

Again, reported through contractors on
“iworld”

6. Overall satisfaction rate with repairs service

Customer call back.

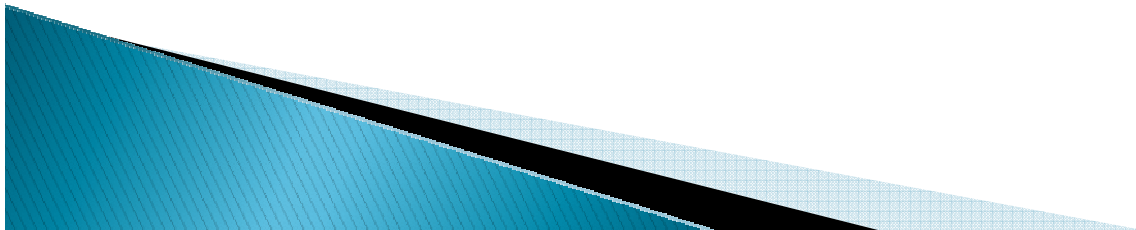


Possible weaknesses in the system...

- ▶ Self-reporting by the contractor
- ▶ Incentives in the contract?
- ▶ Bonus payments to senior managers?
- ▶ Numbering system used for satisfaction survey
- ▶ Do the contract workers know what counts as “on time” or as an “appointment kept”? (HQN report)
- ▶ Coverage. Doesn't seem to capture the residents experience.

How can we investigate further?

- ▶ Visit the call centre
- ▶ Case tracking
- ▶ Mystery shopper
- ▶ Cabinet member interview
- ▶ Our own survey
- ▶ What else?



Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: 4 October 2010	Meeting Name: Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Panel
Report title:		Housing Management CSC Working Party	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
Cabinet Member:			

INTRODUCTION

1. The CSC working party meets bi-monthly to consider concerns raised by residents and evaluate the performance of the CSC and housing management services in responding to tenants and homeowners' queries and repairs.
2. The working party have agreed an action plan for quarter 3 and 4 (2010/11) and will be focussing on:
 - Reviewing the messages/IVR and telephony systems, testing the automated messages heard by residents.
 - Evaluating outcomes of the surgeries being held at local TRA forums to test real experiences and consider views expressed by residents.
 - Continuing to monitor calls and suggest improvements and training.
 - Examining complaints to suggest improvements and training.
 - Reviewing and evaluating the performance statistics submitted.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3. That the working party is supported in its objective to improve the customer experience when contacting the CSC, particularly for reporting or progressing repairs.
5. That the scrutiny panel's proposed action plan is integrated into the objectives of the working party.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

6. In June 2008, SGTO expressed concerns about the delivery of the repairs and housing management services through the CSC and questioned a number of key performance statistics. A presentation by the Borough Repairs Manager responding to the SGTO agreed to set up a working group of Council staff, tenant representatives and CSC staff as a way of reviewing performance and concerns and making further recommendations for change.
7. The first meeting of the working group was held on 3rd March 2010 with the CSC, housing management and residents agreeing to meet every two months, to drive through improvements to the service and improve understanding of residents' needs.

8. The initial meeting focussed on the following recommendations made by the SGTO:
- Improve communication
 - Improve staff training
 - Improve CSC management (more staff, weekend opening)
 - Quality control of completed repairs
 - Extend priority line to T & RA
 - Speed up time from reporting to undertaking repairs
 - Improve CSR performance
 - Publish easy-to-read repair manual
 - Go back to face-to-face reporting.
9. The group has met 3 times to date with council staff meeting additionally to ensure actions are progressed and liaise with other staff as necessary for further comment or support.

SUCCESSSES TO DATE

10. The freephone number for many of our residents using mobile telephones, is very expensive. In May we established that an 0207 525 2600 number could also be used. This is being regularly advertised through SHN and has been added to the 'reporting housing repairs' website.
11. Vangent (CSC) have agreed to hold regular workshops at TRA meetings to capture key concerns and explain how to get the best out of the service. This is ongoing and needs to be measured.
12. The working group regularly listens to phone calls (inbound and outbound). This has really helped us to understand residents' frustrations and set some clear recommendations for CSC. E.g. improvements in training and scripts.
13. The working group is reviewing scripts used to test satisfaction to ensure CSC officers ask the right questions.
14. The time taken for contractors to update the RCC with difficulties in completing repairs has been reduced to 48 hours following concerns that information was often not available for 5 working days even when the repair was classed as an emergency repair. This often meant residents were not able to progress outstanding repairs for up to a week and resulted in repeat and unresolved phone-calls to the CSC.
15. One layer of automated messages has been removed from the voice systems residents hear when they contact through the CSC
16. The CSC are to be invited to training about homeownership and how the service is delivered. This is due to clear indications that call handlers respond negatively to council homeowners and leaseholders calling regarding communal repairs.
17. Improvements have been made in online reporting and a detailed repairs manual is near completion.
18. The group has been able to establish clear links with other staff to assist in improvements that go beyond the CSC management of repairs. E.g. concerns

raised about communal repair has resulted in area teams now developing processes to assist in informing residents about communal repairs on their estates.

KEY CHALLENGES

19. Despite some successes since March, it has still proved difficult to resolve a number of problems experienced by residents. The following are particular areas of concern noted by residents.
20. Ensuring appropriate responses to vulnerable residents.
This is a key concern expressed by the group, particular during those times when the CSC is busy or there are IT failures. As a group we have not yet established how to resolve this matter.
21. Progressing calls that cannot be resolved.
Having listened to a number of calls, it is evident that there are calls that CSC cannot progress or occasions where the wrong information is offered. CSC use a CRM ticket to liaise with the right department but cannot advise the caller who will respond and when to expect a response. In the event that no-one responds, the caller has to contact again and invariably repeats the process.
22. Some disagreement still exists regarding the validity of the statistics being produced, particularly statistics recording satisfaction.
23. The group has discussed in detail the need to provide an updating service to residents so callers are kept informed about the progress of their repairs (or other matters), but have yet to establish an appropriate process.
24. Managing communal repairs has been a key challenge for the group.
Homeowners and leaseholders face difficulties in reporting repairs and the only person notified of the repair is the initial caller and not other affected parties.

CONSULTATION

25. The group will have met for 6 months by October and intends to draft a joint report for Home Ownership Council and Tenants Council. This will highlight the key issues, challenges and successes of the group and ensure the opportunity to raise issues is made widely available.

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	
Lead Officer	Gill Davies, Strategic Director of Environment and Housing
Report Author	Tracey Downie, Acting Housing Management Borough Co-ordinator (South)
Version	Final
Dated	22 September 2010
Key Decision?	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional/Community Council/Scrutiny Team	2010

BREIFING NOTE ON LOCAL HOUSING OFFERS

Local offers represent a new way of tailoring the services of social housing providers based on what tenants want. Southwark must ask tenants if they want local offers against three of the six Tenant Service Authority's (TSA) national standards for housing.

Southwark will be broadly outlining in their annual report, that will be available on the website on the 1 October 2010, how they will put offers in place. Those offers must come into force by 1 April 2011.

Local offers could cover a number of different areas. For example, how you consult tenants, manage your neighbourhoods or estates, or run your repairs service could each become the basis for a local offer. Providers must talk to their tenants about setting local offers against the national standards for:

- tenant involvement and empowerment
- home standards (including Decent Homes and Repairs)
- neighbourhood and community

The most relevant parts to our current scrutiny of the TSA standards are those that relate to Housing Repairs – including how a repair is reported and dealt with and the complaints process. The local offer could contain a Southwark standard/promise around these issues.

The TSA worked with a group of providers that tested local offers, and has published how these went. At some, tenants wanted local offers amongst all the providers based in an estate, town or county. Elsewhere the local offer was just for the tenants of one provider or even just with a particular group of residents and the provider. It is down to the landlords, with their tenants to decide what the local offer should look like.

Southwark are still developing the method of preparing the offer, and are currently planning to consult with residents through

- Questionnaires
- Focus Groups
- Existing resident structures

More detailed information can be found in the local offers toolkit from the TSA.
http://www.tenantservicesauthority.org/upload/pdf/Local_offers_toolkit_20100618100432.pdf

Southwark Council
September 2010

This page is intentionally blank.

DISTRIBUTION LIST**MUNICIPAL YEAR 2010/11****COMMITTEE:** HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE**NOTE:** Please notify amendments to Scrutiny Team (0207 525 0324)

<u>OPEN</u>	<u>COPIES</u>	<u>OPEN</u>	<u>COPIES</u>
<u>MEMBERS/RESERVES</u>		Libraries	3
Councillor Gavin Edwards (Chair)	1	Local Studies Library	1
Councillor Poddy Clark	1	Press	2
Councillor Stephen Govier	1	Scrutiny Team SPARES	10
Councillor Claire Hickson	1	Nicki Fashola/Debbi Gooch, Legal Services	1
Councillor Linda Manchester	1	Shelley Burke, Head of Overview & Scrutiny	1
Councillor Wilma Nelson	1	Dan Falchikov, Liberal Democrat Political Assistant1	
Councillor Michael Situ	1	John Bibby, Labour Political Assistant	1
Councillor Michael Bukola (Reserve)	1	<u>EXTERNAL</u>	
Councillor Paul Kyriacou (Reserve)	1		
Councillor Darren Merril (Reserve)	1		
Councillor Martin Seaton (Reserve)	1		
Councillor Cleo Soanes (Reserve)	1		
<u>CO-OPTED MEMBERS</u>			
John Nosworthy (Homeowners Council)		TOTAL HARD COPY DISTRIBUTION	34
Jane Salmon (Homeowners Council – Reserve)			
Mariam Facey c/o The Secretary, Bells Garden Community Centre, 19 Buller Close Peckham, London SE15 6UJ			
Lesley Wertheimer 45 Northfield House, Peckham London SE15 6TL. wertheimerlesley@yahoo.co.uk			
<u>OTHER MEMBERS</u>			
Councillor Lisa Rajan	1		
<u>DEPARTMENTAL OFFICERS</u>			
HARD COPIES OF THIS AGENDA ARE AVAILABLE ON REQUEST FROM THE SCRUTINY TEAM Tel: 0207 525 0324			