

## **Plan for Scrutiny of Performance Management of the Housing Repairs Service in Southwark**

### **Context**

The quality of the Housing repairs service in Southwark has been the subject of controversy for some time. Anecdotal evidence from councillors' casework suggests serious problems with the quality of the service. In 2009/10 there were 2405 official complaints registered to the housing repairs service of which 1700 cases were upheld. A June 2010 review of the housing repairs service, commissioned by the council and carried out by HQN consultancy, identified performance issues within the service.

Despite this strong evidence of poor performance, the council's own key performance indicators (KPIs) appear to show a housing repairs service which is in extremely good health. Resident satisfaction with the service stands at 90.32%, the percentage of appointments made and kept is said to be 99.60% and the average number of days to complete all repairs is stated as 7.37 days (beating a target of 7.5 days). There appears to be a huge gap between these two pictures of what is a vital service for Southwark's tenants and leaseholders. More importantly it is possible that the way in which the repairs management team is measuring performance is fundamentally flawed, preventing them from identifying poor performance and putting in place measures to remedy this. For this reason the Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Sub Committee wishes to investigate performance management in the Housing Repairs service and to make recommendations which may improve it.

### **Questions the Sub Committee is seeking to answer**

The Sub Committee realises the importance of focusing time and effort in answering key questions if it is to be successful in scrutinising this issue. The key questions we will seek to answer are:

1. Is there a gap between *real* performance (the actual tenant and leaseholder experience) in housing repairs and the performance presented by existing KPIs?
2. Is the Housing Repairs Service accurately measuring existing KPIs?
3. Is the Housing Repairs Service measuring the correct areas of performance in order to gain an accurate picture of real performance?
4. How much officer time and resource is invested in measuring performance and could this be done more efficiently?

### **How will the Sub Committee gather evidence in order to answer these questions?**

The Sub Committee has already made a number of suggestions as to how we will seek to gather evidence to answer these questions. Methods under consideration are:

1. Gather statistics on the number of cases councillors are having to deal with relating to Housing Repairs.
2. A fact finding visit to the Repairs Call Centre. Including interviews with call centre staff.
3. "Mystery shopper" calls to the Repairs Call Centre
4. Case tracking. Take 10 examples of complaints of poor performance from the previous year and track how these complaints were recorded in KPIs
5. Interviews with tenant and leaseholder representatives
6. A scrutiny commissioned survey of tenants and leaseholders on satisfaction with the repairs service
7. Interviews with officers carrying out customer satisfaction surveys and measuring KPIs
8. Interview individuals from HQN consultancy responsible for the June 2010 report

9. Gather comparative examples of performance management from other local authorities (both good and bad)
10. Invite the new Cabinet Member for Housing to the Sub Committee to get his views on this issue
11. Invite the newly appointed Director of Housing to the Sub Committee to get their views on performance management (when they are appointed)

**Outcomes**

1. A clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses of performance management in the housing repairs service.
2. Recommendations for accurate indicators of performance measurement in Housing Repairs.