

<p>To: Policy & Resources (Establishment Monitoring Committee)</p>	<p>Subject: Housing and Property Repairs - Pilot of services in the customer contact centre.</p>
<p>From: Director of Housing and Property Services</p>	
<p>Date: 16th November 2006</p>	<p>Ref: TMcK/</p>

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Committee with feedback on the current pilot of the Housing and Property repairs service in the customer contact centre and to seek approval for a rollout programme for other housing area offices.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 From a report dated 28th October 2005 by the Director of Housing and Property Services approval was given to pilot the housing and property repairs service for a 6-month period in the customer contact centre. This exercise was then extended for a further 3-month period to allow completion of the review process.
- 2.2 The telephone housing repairs demand from the Airdrie and Motherwell area offices and the property repairs telephone service were transferred to the customer contact centre with effect from Monday 3rd April 2006.
- 2.3 This report examines the impact and relative benefits of the pilot over the six-month period and makes recommendations for the rollout and development of the service.

3.0 Current Performance

- 3.1 The pilot has been operating well and statistics from 3rd April to 30th September 2006 show that the service has taken 44,186 calls with an average abandoned rate of 6.9%. The average queue time was 32 seconds and the average call handling and wrap-up time was around 4 minutes. It should be noted that this period covers a spring/summer period and any overall annual estimates on customer demand may require to take season adjustments into account. A more detailed analysis is shown in Appendix 1.
- 3.2 There were no issues relating to the monitoring of repairs budgets during the first 6 months of the pilot with good co-operation between the Repairs Service Manager and the local area offices and Property repair teams.

4.0 Customer Feedback

- 4.1 During a 15-week period staff carried out same-day call-back surveys to customers on emergency repairs with good feedback on the service provided and a very high score (98%) on the ease of reporting the repair.
- 4.2 The surveys also showed that 94% of customers rated the emergency repairs service as good or very good.
- 4.3 93% of the customers surveyed reported that their emergency repair was started within the specified time. A summary report on customer response for the period is shown in Appendix 2.

5.0 Service Improvements

- 5.1 Although there are no accurate statistics on the previous telephone repairs service within the selected area offices, the high satisfaction levels reported from surveys, coupled with general feedback from customers by telephone, repairs mailers and from events like the Tenant's Conference would indicate that the pilot is offering an improved front-line contact facility for customers.
- 5.2 A dedicated team for repairs, with specialised training and technical support coupled with the technology infrastructure in the contact centre for call handling, call recording and measuring performance has also led to a more consistent service as confirmed from feedback from repairs mailers.
- 5.3 Feedback from the main contractor, MPC, has also been positive, reporting a high accuracy in the quality of job lines initially raised from the repairs service in the contact centre. An increase in jobs directly issued to the Contractor has also contributed to a better service. The level of pre-inspect repairs lines however has remained constant for area offices.

6.0 Staffing / Structure

- 6.1 During the pilot, staffing numbers of 6 x Customer Services Assistants and 1 x Repairs Service Manager were sufficient for normal periods of demand but during peak times, staffing levels were not sufficient to guarantee a high level of service and current performance figures reported in section 3.1 of this report are not at the same level of other services within the contact centre.
- 6.2 In order to supplement the pilot during busy periods and when staffing levels were lower than normal, staff from the customer contact centre and mobile clerks from Housing and Property Services were initially utilised to provide cover. Using call statistics and data generated during the pilot, the staffing levels have been extrapolated to reflect the phased development of the Contact Centre Repairs Service.
- 6.3 Taking into account previous demand for the remaining Housing area offices it is anticipated that the following additional staffing levels will be required to provide the required level of service : 2 FTE x Team Leaders (NLC 6 grade) and 5 FTE x Customer Services Assistants (NLC 4 grade).
- 6.4 The increase in the size of the team would require the introduction of the team leader posts to have responsibility for staffing matters, escalation of calls and general administration of the service and the staff. This would also provide cover for the Repairs Service Manager post, which is lacking at present and the team leader post would also require to take repairs calls during periods of high demand for the service.
- 6.5 Information gained from the pilot on predictable demand from customers using the repairs service, show that there are periods when staff cannot meet the demand for service and equally there are periods when the demand for service is lower. The current working week of 8.45 to 16.45 for staff means there is very little flexibility to change staff working patterns to meet peaks in demand from our customers. To cope with periods of higher demand it is proposed that consideration is given to the employment of part-time staff to allow greater flexibility of cover. The part-time staff, taken from the 5 x FTE Customer Service Assistants posts listed in 6.3 would be employed on contracts that would match the customer demand for the service. Current figures have already identified busy periods early in the working week and after public holidays.

- 6.6 The increased size of the team will also allow greater flexibility to cover lunch-breaks and periods of staff absence due to holidays etc, which were identified as problem areas during the pilot.
- 6.7 Funding for the additional posts will be provided by Housing and Property Services who will absorb the loss of equivalent posts from within the current staffing structure.
- 6.8 In order to provide a greater technical support to the repairs team and to assist in the control and management of variation of job lines and the level of emergency repairs it is proposed that two Maintenance Officer posts are re-located to the contact centre with a control and monitoring role.

7.0 Proposals

- 7.1 The assessment of the pilot has shown that significant gains for both the customer and the operation have been made through the centralisation of this service with a dedicated team supported by an excellent technical infrastructure. It is therefore proposed that the current model is extended to all other Housing area offices in a phased approach.
- 7.2 The telephone repairs service for the Wishaw, Shotts, Coatbridge Cumbernauld, Kilsyth, Moodiesburn, Bellshill and Viewpark should be incrementally transferred to the contact centre between April and September 2007.
- 7.3 It is proposed that the required posts will be subject to a restricted recruitment process and provide permanent opportunities for existing staff within remaining area offices. The impact of this on the remaining service in these offices has been examined and a reduction in service for the affected offices is not anticipated but will be subject to an on-going review.
- 7.4 Staffing levels for each area office to transfer across will be discussed and agreed with Housing and Property Services and will be determined by anticipated call volumes matched against the required level of service.
- 7.5 It is recommended that posts are transferred from existing area offices to the repairs service, with staff ring-fenced and invited for interview where possible. Where we are unable to transfer staff from particular offices, current vacancies within Housing and Property Services may be utilised as a means of filling the posts.
- 7.6 Contracts for staff currently working on the Repairs pilot will be made permanent and any new staff employed will be on a permanent basis.
- 7.7 The operational management responsibility for the service will remain within Housing and Property Services during this time to minimise risk and ensure continuity. An assessment of the long-term operational arrangements will be made towards the end of the transitional period in September 2007. A further report will be made to a future meeting of this Committee making recommendations on this service.
- 7.8 Following the transfer of the remaining housing offices a new single dedicated telephone number will be issued and publicised for the Housing and Property Repairs service.

8.0 Corporate Considerations

- 8.1 The Head of Personnel Services has been consulted regarding the content of this report.
- 8.2 Consultation has taken place with the appropriate Trade Union representatives.

9.0 Recommendations

It is recommended that this Committee:

- a) note the progress made in the housing and property repairs pilot;
- b) approve the proposals outlined in sections 7.1 and 7.2 of this report to extend the rollout of the repairs service in the contact centre to the remaining Housing area offices;
- c) approve the proposals outlined in section 7.3, 7.4 and 7.5 to transfer staff from area offices to suit the demand for the service and the relocation of two Maintenance Officer posts to the contact centre as outlined in section 6.8;
- d) remit this report to the Policy and Resources (Personnel) Sub-committee for consideration.


PP | **Director of Housing and Property Services**
16th November, 2006

For further information, please contact Arthur Crossley on 01236 812589

HOUSING AND PROPERTY REPAIRS PILOT - CALL ANALYSIS

APRIL - SEPTEMBER 2006

Day	Total Incoming Calls	Incoming Calls Answered	%	Incoming Calls Abandoned	%	Average / Day (Incoming Calls)	%
Monday	10,362	9,536	92.0	826	8.0	400	21.9%
Tuesday	10,766	9,865	91.6	901	8.4	347	22.7%
Wednesday	9,991	9,371	93.8	620	6.2	322	21.1%
Thursday	9,249	8,751	94.6	498	5.4	298	19.5%
Friday	7,004	6,663	95.1	341	4.9	250	14.8%
Totals	47,372	44,186	93.2%	3,186	7.0%	323	100%

CUSTOMER SURVEY – SAME DAY EMERGENCY REPAIRS

Week	No. of Customers contacted	Did you find it easy to report your repair ?	Was the repair started within time ? (3 hours)	Was the repair completed on-site at first visit ?	Was the Contractor polite and efficient ?	Service Rating (1-lowest and 5-highest)				
						1 - poor	2 - fair	3 - average	4 - good	5 - v. good
1	37	97%	97%	78%	97%			5%	38%	57%
2	23	100%	83%	91%	100%			13%	26%	61%
3	42	98%	88%	79%	95%	2%	2%	2%	38%	52%
4	49	98%	92%	73%	100%				31%	69%
5	35	97%	94%	89%	100%			3%	19%	78%
6	40	100%	98%	93%	100%			12%	33%	55%
7	26	96%	96%	73%	100%				35%	65%
8	34	100%	91%	71%	100%			6%	38%	56%
9	32	94%	94%	84%	100%		3%	3%	25%	69%
10	35	100%	97%	89%	100%				37%	63%
11	29	100%	97%	90%	97%				31%	69%
12	29	100%	90%	97%	100%		3%	14%	24%	59%
13	40	100%	90%	73%	98%			2%	33%	65%
14	40	95%	93%	95%	100%		2%	7%	38%	53%
15	17	100%	100%	88%	100%			6%	18%	76%
Average		98%	93%	84%	99%	2%	3%	7%	31%	63%
		% answering 'Yes'	% answering 'Yes'	% answering 'Yes'	% answering 'Yes'					