

**C1444 BUILDING SERVICES – A PLAN FOR CHANGE  
(HBMCS) (SCRUTINY – HOUSING AND PUBLIC PROTECTION) –**

Members were apprised of the Head of Housing and Building Services' operational response to the Building Services Audit Report presented to Audit Committee on the 8th of July 2013.

On 15th March 2013, it was brought to the attention of the Head of Accountancy & Resource Management, that a budget monitoring process had uncovered potentially serious issues within Building Services.

Areas of concern identified were:

- Idle time being charged to jobs
- Operatives not being where they should be or claiming to be therefore clients being over charged on jobs
- Large gaps on the Opti time calendar which were unaccounted for resulting in staff not knowing where staff were
- Extended lunch breaks which were not honestly recorded on timesheets
- Operatives visiting the Alps depot without need
- Operatives using vans for non-work related activities
- Building Services staff operate private businesses possibly within Council time

Following the allegations, a robust audit investigation was carried out, the results of which were detailed within a report presented to Audit Committee on the 8th of July 2013 (attached as Appendix A to the report).

In a response to the findings of the investigation and in accord with the range of business improvement streams already in place, such as the Mobile Working Steering Group, the Head of Housing and Building Services proposed the following:

**A Plan for Change Governance Structure**

To provide Members, Corporate Management Team and Internal Audit comfort that the Head of Housing and Building Services had a vision and a plan for change it was proposed that a fit for purpose governance structure be developed. Attached at Appendix B was a proposed structure. It was proposed that the change process was overseen by a Cabinet Working Group supported by the Managing Director, the Director of Visible Services and Housing and the Head of Housing and Building Services along with other relevant officers.

**A Plan for Change**

The Audit report recommended a number of actions to be undertaken by the Head of Housing and Building Services.

In a response to the above and as a result of the work that had been carried out by the Head of Housing and Building Services and the team, the following actions were proposed to be included within a time bound change plan. NB this list was not exhaustive and would develop further as a result of the on-going audit and investigatory work being undertaken by the Internal Audit Team and the management team of Housing and Building Services.

- Ensure managers understood their current role and responsibilities
- Carry out a wholesale restructure of the Building Services team to firmly establish management responsibilities removing any ambiguity in respect to job roles
- Review the approach to asset management and the role of the technical client
- Undertake an initial value for money exercise to ensure that idle time is kept to a minimum and is correctly accounted for
- Review the current schedule of rates and establish new rates if necessary
- Evaluate the feasibility of splitting the responsive repairs service into 'Housing Services' and 'Public Buildings'
- Evaluate the accuracy of estimation on a trade by trade basis
- Review pre inspection accuracy and frequency
- Review current pre inspection/post inspection levels with the industry standard
- Review financial management processes throughout the division.
- Undertake a wholesale review of the implementation of Opti Time. Carry out best practice visits
- Evaluate the current staffing levels for each trade and the appropriateness for current working patterns.
- Review the use of sub contractors and associated tendering/procurement arrangements
- Team meetings had been introduced for all. Review the effectiveness of these
- Ensure a robust approach be taken to flexi time management/ sickness absence
- Establish a robust set of KPI's that focused on cost, tenant satisfaction and productivity
- Establish fortnightly responsive repairs meetings with Maintenance Officers to consider operational performance
- Formulate a mobile working task and finish team and appoint a project manager (with an existing planner and Business Support Officer ) to report directly to the Head of Housing and Building Services for a six month period on this particular work element
- Introduce a fit for purpose training regime for all involved in utilising the Opti Time System

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- Roll out the appropriate parts of the mobile working solution to other areas of the Building Services business
- Introduce electronic timesheets
- Undertake a weekly 5% audit of all jobs / alerts
- Ensure disciplinary procedures are appropriately used when breaches in the system occur
- Review the role of the stores in supporting business improvement activities
- Introduce an effective way to capture tenant satisfaction with responsive repairs
- Review the repairs finder diagnostic tool with C1V
- Invest in a cultural change / leadership programme for Building Services Managers focusing on capability, competence, leadership, excellent customer service, business processes and innovation.
- Keep a full list of Building Services vehicles and introduce measures to ensure that they are used in the most efficient way
- Work with the BPR team on activity audits for key roles
- Review the current methods of performance management and the robustness of supporting data
- Review the declarations of interest file with HR.

This was a matter for Executive decision.

RESOLVED –

- (1) T H A T the details of the actions to be included within a time-bound Change Plan (the list is not exhaustive at this stage) be noted.
- (2) T H A T a Working Group, led by the Cabinet Member for Housing, Building Maintenance and Community Safety and that the proposed governance structure attached at Appendix B to the report be agreed.
- (3) T H A T a time-bound Change Plan incorporating all the actions detailed within this report be presented to the first meeting of the Working Group in September 2013.
- (4) T H A T Cabinet receive quarterly update reports on progress with the Change Plan, with the first report scheduled for December 2013.
- (5) T H A T this report and all future reports on the Change Plan be referred to Scrutiny Committee (Corporate Resources) for information.

Reasons for decisions

## **APPENDIX A**

- (1) To advise Cabinet of the initial actions aimed at addressing all the recommendations of the recent audit report.
- (2) To seek Cabinet agreement to the governance arrangements for the Change Plan.
- (3) To agree the presentation of more detailed action plan to the first meeting of the Working Group and for this first meeting to be in September 2013.
- (4) To ensure the continued input of Cabinet in respect to the Change Plan progress.
- (5) To ensure that the lead Scrutiny Committee is kept sufficiently informed on this matter.