

REPORT TO: HOUSING COMMITTEE – 26 JUNE 2006

REPORT ON: HOUSING DEPARTMENT EFQM SELF ASSESSMENT

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF HOUSING

REPORT NO: 368-2006

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1. This report outlines the process and outcomes of a self-assessed audit using the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Business Excellence Model which the Housing Department has completed.

1.2. The report recommends an improvement action plan which the Department should implement over the next 2 years.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1. It is recommended that:

2.1.1. The action plan at Appendix 1 is agreed.

2.1.2. Progress on the Action Plan is reported through Housing Department's Annual Service Plan.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1. Implementing the recommendations of this report will have no implications for the Housing Revenue Account or the Council Tax.

4. LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

4.1. As a result of implementation of the recommendations of this report, sustainability will be enhanced in the following ways:

4.1.1. Resources will be used effectively and waste minimised.

4.1.2. Access to facilities, goods, services and people is not achieved at the expense of the environment and is accessible to all.

5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1. The Council recognises the need to attain equality for all citizens and employees. By taking forward the priorities identified in this report, the Housing Department will continue to eliminate discrimination and promote equality through its policies and procedures. It will also ensure that action is taken to improve access to information, goods and services for target groups.

6. BACKGROUND

- 6.1. The reform of public services through the implementation of Best Value is a Government priority. Improvements to services are being delivered by Local Government through Best Value Reviews, self assessments and increased customer involvement.
- 6.2. The quality of service delivery, efficiency and effectiveness are assessed through Audit Scotland, the Accounts Commission and Communities Scotland through a range of different statistical monitoring exercises and direct audits.
- 6.3. The approach which the Housing Department has taken to Best Value has met with some success. In its 2005 Audit of Best Value and Community Planning, Audit Scotland commented that *“the Housing Department has developed a strong system for measuring and managing performance based on SPIs and other locally developed indicators There is evidence that the service is committed to improvement and open to change”*.
- 6.4. Guidance from Central Government recommends adoption of the European Foundation for Quality Management’s Business Excellence Model for public services to self assess their performance and service delivery. The Housing Department’s self assessment commenced in December 2005, using the Dolphin assessment tool which is recommended by the British Quality Foundation and issued by the Cabinet Office. This tool has previously been successfully used by other Council Departments.
- 6.5. The outcome of the self assessment exercise was an action plan of 18 items which the Department hopes to have implemented by April 2008. Through this self assessment exercise the Housing Department has identified a range of specific and achievable actions which will build on previous successes in delivering efficient and innovative housing services.
- 6.6. The Housing Department’s EFQM Action Plan can be seen at Appendix 1. The Housing Committee is asked to approve this action plan. The Housing Department will report progress against the Action Plan through the annual Housing Services Plan.
- 6.7. It is also recommended that:
- 6.7.1. The Quality and Performance Unit make arrangements for briefing all Housing Department staff on the EFQM Action Plan.
- 6.7.2. The DFTA are briefed on the EFQM action plan and asked for their input to its implementation.

7. CONSULTATIONS

- 7.1. The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Finance), Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Assistant Chief Executive (Community Planning), Director of Economic Development, Director of Planning and Transportation, Head of Communities and Dundee Federation of Tenants Associations have been consulted on this report.

8. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

8.1. None.

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SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

The Housing Department's EFQM self assessment exercise was carried out in December 2005. Training on use of the EFQM excellence model had been provided to staff in the Department. Preliminary work for the self assessment exercise was carried out by members of the Housing Planning Group. A cross section of staff who work at different grades were invited to participate in order that a variety of views were put forward.

In addition to the City Housing Manager and the Housing Strategy Manager the sections represented were:

- Housing Services Unit
- Housing Investment Unit
- Quality and Performance Unit
- Supporting People Team

During the self assessment process, staff were split into groups to consider the criteria outlined in the EFQM Excellence Model. Each group was asked to identify strengths, providing evidence of recent service improvements and good practice. They also identified weaknesses in service delivery and put forward solutions to address these issues. The group as a whole then discussed and reached consensus on short term goals (*quick wins*) and longer term issues to be addressed. This formed the basis of the Improvement Plan.

Improvement Plan

The group identified 19 items for improvement, ranging across the 9 criteria of the Excellence model. The items were prioritised at the consensus meeting, resulting in issues being raised under the following broad headings:

1. **Planning Work and Setting Priorities** (*leadership*)
 - a. Review housing objectives to make them "SMART".
 - b. Identify main priorities and ensure staff and tenants are aware of them.
 - c. Revise section action planning process (*ensure sections consult with each other, plans are joined up and investigate whether plans can be taken to individual level for all staff*).

2. **Policy Development and Review** (*policy/strategy and processes*)
 - a. Revise method of policy development to ensure policies are outcome focused and staff preparing policies have guidance. Tie in with development of procedures and training, evaluate and review on a regular basis.
 - b. Implement Policy Register to ensure up to date and accurate policy information is available to staff.
 - c. Carry out audits to ensure policies are being applied consistently.
 - d. Use feedback from tenants and other stakeholders (*including complaints*) to inform policy reviews.

3. **Performance Management** (*key performance*)
 - a. Further develop the Department's performance management framework to make better use of IT, be more outcome focused.
 - b. Improve links between performance and training.

4. **Staffing/Training Issues** (*people*)
 - a. Achieve Investors in People by 2008.
 - b. Revise training strategy and improve methods of evaluating training.
 - c. Have more structured supervision to ensure staff get recognition, give feedback and have consistency of approach.
 - d. Re-write job descriptions to reflect new roles.

5. **Information and Advice/Communications** (*people and customers*)
 - a. Develop Advice and Information Strategy to fit in with service delivery within the Department.
 - b. Develop a staff communication strategy.
 - c. Develop set of service standards to cover all aspects of service delivery.

6. **ICT** (*partnerships and resources*)
 - a. Through e-government, make more use of the internet for customers.
 - b. Develop intranet site for staff to access up to date housing information (*policies, procedures, best practice, leaflets, application forms, guidance notes*).
 - c. Make more efficient use of IT for delivering service and managing performance.

Appendix 1

	Item for Improvement	Lead Responsibility	Timescale
1a	Review HD objectives to make SMART.	Housing Planning Group.	by March 2007.
1b	Ensure staff and tenants aware of main priorities.	Quality and Performance.	DFTA/tenants – February Staff Conference – Sept Service Plan – June Annual Report – October
1c	Revise SAP process.	Quality and Performance.	October 2006.
2a	Review method of policy development.	Quality and Performance.	August 2006.
2b	Implement policy register.	Quality and Performance.	August 2006.
2c	Develop process to carry out audits for policies.	Quality and Performance.	August 2006
2d	Use feedback to inform policy reviews.	Quality and Performance.	According to each policy reviewed.
3a	Develop Performance Management to be outcome focused and ICT enabled.	Quality and Performance.	by March 2007 and annually.
3b	Improve links between performance and training through review of strategy.	Planning Group.	Review previous year performance in May, approve training strategy June annually.
4a	Achieve Investors in People.	Quality and Performance.	December 2008.
4b	Review methods of evaluating training.	Quality and Performance.	June 2006.
4c	Improve formal, structured supervision process within Department.	Quality and Performance.	October 2006.
4d	Produce new job descriptions to reflect new roles/structure.	Finance and Corporate Services.	June 2006 (restructure). Further reviews to be confirmed.
5a	Develop Advice and Information Strategy.	Quality and Performance.	March 2007.
5b	Develop staff communication strategy.	Quality and Performance.	March 2007.
5c	Devise set of service standards.	Quality and Performance.	March 2007.
6a	Improve IT services for customers through internet.	Housing Services Unit/ Finance and Corporate Services.	Contact Centres Implementation Dates. Other initiatives to be confirmed.
6b	Introduce staff intranet site.	Quality and Performance.	August 2006.
6c	Devise IT monitors for managing new services.	Housing Services Unit (linked to Contact Centres) Homeless Service (HL1 system).	October 2006. March 2007. Others to be confirmed.