ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL - REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Housing and Environmental Services
2.	Date:	4th October 2004
3.	Title:	Performance Management Models and Improvement Tools (All Wards)
4.	Programme Area:	Housing and Environmental Services

5. Summary

This report identifies the performance improvement models available to improve customer satisfaction and efficiency of the Housing Service, now and throughout the development of the ALMO.

6. Recommendations

That Cabinet Member agrees that Housing Services applies for external quality accreditation in (subject to a more detailed financial breakdown):

- ISO 9001 for the Repairs and Maintenance Service by September 2005.
- Charter Mark for the Landlord Service by April 2006.

7. Proposals and Details

Many local authorities and ALMOs have chosen to adopt performance improvement tools to help them manage strategically and deliver against the national modernisation agenda. The Government's 'modernisation agenda' encourages all public sector organisations to make use of one of four main quality models (EFQM Excellence Model, Charter Mark, Investors in People and ISO 9001).

The Council achieved the Investors in People award in June 2003 recognising significant improvements that we put in place to develop people, skills and learning. The Council and the Programme Area has successfully implemented continuous improvement programmes recently through the use of the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) business excellence model.

However, a performance management approach that recognises people and improvement measures alone are not sufficient, and we need a more holistic, balanced set of measures (customer relationships and internal processes) that reflect the different drivers that contribute to superior performance.

An analysis of the IdeA paper (report attached) and best practice benchmarks has identified that the service considers applying for external accreditation using Charter Mark (customers) and ISO9001 (processes) to be able to quantify and evidence performance improvement, quality and customer care. These 'quality marks' have been selected because they fit best with our business and they are currently held by the 'excellent' housing organisations.

Private sector construction companies often have "ISO9001 series" quality assurance systems. The Housing Service currently holds the accreditation at our uPVC window manufacturing plant but there is a business need to expand this to the remaining parts of the repairs and maintenance service. With a recognised quality accreditation, for customer interface and quality assurance mechanisms, will place the service in a better position to explore new business ventures under the ALMO.

8. Finance

The costs involved will be broken down when we submit our applications to both assessment centres during the next two years. It is not clear at this stage how much this will be but it is expected to be in the region of £21k for ISO9001 plus £2k annual audits and £2k for a Charter Mark assessment. Because of these financial uncertainties a more detailed breakdown of costs will be submitted during 2005-06.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

The implementation of Charter Mark and ISO9001 requires additional resources (primarily people) and may have an impact on other improvements within the ALMO Excellence Plan and Repairs and Maintenance Service Improvement Plan. These improvements have already been agreed and prioritised by the Housing Futures Group. The impact of this risk is potentially damaging to the set up of the ALMO (1 April 2005 'Going Live' date) and subsequently impacting on service delivery, reputation and our legal position (Section 27 application). This risk is being managed through our 'SMART' performance management framework ensuring improvements are achievable. The projects will be timed to commence following the successful

completion of the 'quick win' tasks within the improvement plans. The quality projects will be project managed by two project teams supported by the Strategic Services Team (currently the Performance and Quality Unit) and reporting to the Housing Futures Group (ALMO Board post April 2005).

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The development of the proposed quality systems within Housing Services has a potential positive impact on regeneration, equality, sustainability and performance. Our approach to quality has strong connections with Housing and Environmental Services mission of 'building sustainable neighbourhoods'. These quality models provide a framework to deliver high quality neighbourhoods.

We have developed a culture of continuous improvement and are redesigning services to provide a customer focus and modern means of access. These quality systems will help with this process by improving our practices and service delivery to our customers now and in the future. Our four pronged approach to quality ensures that policies and practices are sustainable, and that the needs and participation of customers remain at the heart of decision making.

CharterMark will make a positive contribution to the Council's general duty under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act to promoting equality. The CharterMark accreditation will mean that we have improved both the quality and equality of Council policy and practice (improving customer access, satisfaction and complaint handling for example).

The quality models will also make a positive contribution to the Council's performance management framework and the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA). By improving service delivery for our customers we will be improving the 'housing service block' and 'corporate assessment' scores within the new CPA framework for 2005.

There are potential benefits for both 'Corporate Health' Best Value Performance Indicators (accessibility, diversity, complaints, e-government) and service owned key performance indicators (customer satisfaction, relet times, repairs).

The successful implementation of both Charter Mark and ISO9001 will make a positive contribution to the ALMO 'Proper' Inspection in November 2005.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Performance Management Models for Improvement, IdeA February 2004

Best Value Performance Plan 2004-05

Housing and Environmental Services' Performance Plan 2004-07

ALMO Excellence Plan August 2004

Repairs and Maintenance Service Improvement Plan August 2004

Consultation internally with Chief Executive's, Economic and Development Services Performance and Quality Teams.

Consultation externally with Ashfield Homes, Derby Homes, Leicester City Council and Carrick Housing.

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