SERVICE IMPROVEMENT

'IMPROVING A FAILING SERVICE'
APSE REGION CENTRAL MEETING
24TH MAY 2007

PAUL BARKER
HOUSING REPAIRS SERVICE MANAGER

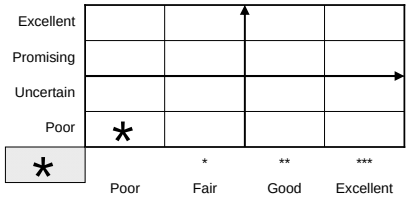
ABOUT MANSFIELD

- Located in North Nottinghamshire
- Population of 98,000
- Mining and textile heritage
- Elected Mayor
- Main political party - Independent Forum

FIRST INSPECTION OF THE REPAIR & MAINTENANCE SERVICE THE OUTCOME

- Inspection undertaken in December 2004
  - report published by the Audit Commission in March 2005

FIRST INSPECTION OF THE REPAIR & MAINTENANCE SERVICE THE OUTCOME



FIRST INSPECTION OF THE REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE SERVICE - THE OUTCOME

- 25 recommendations - strategic and operational with primary focus on improving the service for the user
- Re-inspection in 12 months time

FIRST INSPECTION OF THE REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE SERVICE - THE IMPACT

Negative impact on:

- Service user perceptions
- Staff morale
- The Council
- The media

FIRST INSPECTION OF THE REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE SERVICE - THE IMPACT

Council rapped for poor repairs

RESPONDING TO A ROTTEN RATING

- Inspection findings fully acknowledged - no denial by managers or Members
- Recognition that major surgery was required
- Determination to improve the service and prove inspectors wrong on second judgement

THE ROAD TO IMPROVEMENT - KEY COMPONENTS

1. Corporate commitment/leadership
2. Culture change
3. Engaging service users in the improvement process
4. Action planning/monitoring
5. Getting staff on board/lifting morale
6. Building capacity

THE ROAD TO IMPROVEMENT - KEY COMPONENTS 1. CORPORATE COMMITMENT/LEADERSHIP

- Mayor/Portfolio Holder championed plans for change with both staff and service users
- Cabinet/Council endorsement of improvement action plan

THE ROAD TO IMPROVEMENT - KEY COMPONENTS 2. CULTURE CHANGE

- As part of wider corporate approach
- Improved communication
- Increased performance focus
- Putting the service user to the forefront
- More open management

THE ROAD TO IMPROVEMENT - KEY COMPONENTS 3. ENGAGING SERVICE USERS IN THE IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

- Service Champions established
- Working groups formed
- User satisfaction assessment

THE ROAD TO IMPROVEMENT - KEY COMPONENTS 4. ACTION PLANNING/MONITORING

- Detailed action plan covering all Audit Commission recommendations drawn up immediately post inspection and endorsed by the Cabinet/Council
- Responsible officers identified
- Monitoring of delivery by cross organisation officer group and Select Commission (scrutiny committee)

THE ROAD TO IMPROVEMENT - KEY COMPONENTS 5. GETTING STAFF ON BOARD/LIFTING MORALE

- Presentations on inspection findings to all staff post inspection
- Commitment to engage workforce via joint Trade Union representation
- Improvement Plan signed up to

THE ROAD TO IMPROVEMENT - KEY COMPONENTS 5. GETTING STAFF ON BOARD/LIFTING MORALE

- Updates via specific staff newsletter
- Engagement in developments

THE ROAD TO IMPROVEMENT - KEY COMPONENTS 6. BUILDING CAPACITY

- External Change Agent appointed to work behind the scenes on systems and processes
- Support from other Council departments - Audit/Organisational Development/Business Support

THE ROAD TO IMPROVEMENT - FOCUS

- Massive improvement/development required in short timescale - Audit Commission recommendations (25) carrying immediate/3/6/12month deadlines
- Particular focus on quick wins and actions to improve the service for the user

THE ROAD TO IMPROVEMENT - FOCUS

Improving the service for the user:

- Clearance of backlog of responsive repairs
- Increased work undertaken by appointment
- Repairs undertaken within target timescales
- Using complaints to drive improvements

THE ROAD TO IMPROVEMENT - FOCUS

- Service users updated on progress via a special newsletter

THE ROAD TO IMPROVEMENT - FOCUS

- Service user feedback gained via post repair satisfaction survey - highlighted areas of progress + those still requiring improvement and development
- Interim STATUS survey undertaken - good barometer of progress

STATUS SURVEY RESULTS

Indicator	January 2004	January 2007	% Change +/-
Overall Satisfaction with R&M service	62%	82%	+20%
Respondents stating repairs service very/fairly good at informing when a worker would call	64%	82%	+18%
Time taken before work was completed was very/fairly good	62%	80%	+18%
Speed at which work was completed was very/fairly good	81%	87%	+6%
Overall quality of repair completed was very/fairly good	82%	86%	+4%
Satisfaction with opportunities for participation in management and decision making	46%	60%	+14%

'CHALLENGE EVENT'

- Away day – attended by all key players:
  - Managers and office staff from the service
  - Front line operatives
  - Members
  - Tenants
  - Critical friends (internal & external)

DELIVERY OF IMPROVEMENTS

- Phase 1 Improvement Action Plan completed in advance of re-inspection
- Phase 2 plan approved by Cabinet in February 2006 (before re-inspection)
  - included actions recognised as necessary to further improve and develop the service

RE - INSPECTION

- Supporting evidence had been collated since improvement programme commenced
- Self assessment highlighted progress both within the service and corporately since the first inspection
- Better prepared all round having learnt from previous inspection
- Staff/workforce representatives attended pre-inspection briefing from the Audit Commission

RE-INSPECTION - THE OUTCOME

- Undertaken in March 2006

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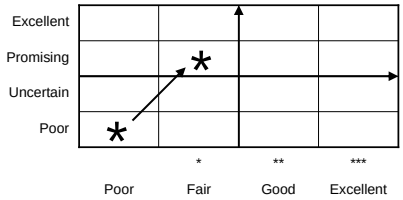

RE - INSPECTION - THE FINDINGS

Audit Commission press release (June 2006):

"It is pleasing that customers have seen a significant improvement in the repairs and maintenance service provided by Mansfield DC. This was previously a very poor service and staff have worked hard to make these changes. But there is more work to be done before the Council achieves a good customer focused service that can demonstrate value for money"

RE - INSPECTION - THE FINDINGS

☺ Strengths:

- Customer satisfaction improved
- Backlog of repairs cleared and response times improved
- Gas servicing good
- Customer involvement improved

RE - INSPECTION - THE FINDINGS

☹ Weaknesses:

- Call answering times poor
- No demonstration of VFM
- Traditional working hours

RE-INSPECTION - PROSPECTS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Good progress made against recommendations
- Improving CPA progress assessment report
- Strong leadership
- Clear vision and aims for the service
- Evidence of culture change - more open management and better communication

WHAT WAS LEARNT FROM INSPECTION?

- How poor the service was - initial inspection was a harsh lesson but gave a clear direction
- Need to ensure service user focus - access, engagement, involvement, standards, and quality
- Need for staff to think and work differently

WHAT WAS LEARNT FROM INSPECTION?

- That a poor service can be improved and developed relatively quickly
- That good leadership and corporate support is essential to drive improvement

and ……..

- That there is still much to be done to achieve the ambition of being a good service by 2008 & excellent by 2015

THANK YOU