



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Report of the

AD HOC SCRUTINY PANEL

into

**REPAIRS PRIOR TO PAINTING AND PAINTING
SCHEMES**

AD HOC SCRUTINY PANEL INTO REPAIRS PRIOR TO PAINTING AND PAINTING SCHEMES

MEMBERS: Councillor David Robinson (**Chair**)
Councillor Ghulam Maniyar
Rose Paxman, Kirklees Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations

Officer Support

David Gordon, Committee Administrator
Eric Gordon, Housing Services, Principal Surveyor, Planned Maintenance Team
Michael Kimmings, Housing Services, Building Maintenance Surveyor, Planned Maintenance Team
Stephan Brown, Head of Catering, Caretaking and Cleaning

Dates of Meetings

26 November 2001
10 December 2001
19 December 2001
11 February 2002
25 March 2002 - to consider the draft report and to determine recommendations

Terms of Reference

- (1) To investigate the painting cycle in respect of the period of time in between paintings of properties.
- (2) To ascertain whether the cycle of painting, and associated repairs, have been and are carried out equitably across the Authority.
- (3) To ascertain and evaluate the effectiveness of the criteria for inclusion of properties into the annual round of repairs and painting.
- (4) To ascertain and evaluate the quality of the painting actually delivered to tenants.

Background

The Ad Hoc Panel was established following concerns which were raised by the Batley Housing Management Committee that a number of housing properties did not seem to be painted for 8-10 years when they should be repainted on a six year cycle, which was causing distress to tenants. It was also felt that repairs were undertaken which were not necessary. Cut backs in funding from £2m - £3m per year to £1.5m in 2000/2001 had reduced the number of properties that could be repainted each year. In 2001/2002 funding of £2.5m to £3m was approved and the objective was to clear the backlog. Concerns had also been expressed regarding the operation and co-ordination of the Repairs Prior to Painting Programme on an Authority wide basis.

Summary of Discussions from Meetings of the Panel

(a) 26 November 2001

The Panel had preliminary discussions on the following matters in respect of the proposed work programme for the scrutiny review:

- (i) To determine the methodology for undertaking investigative work for the different sections of the terms of reference.
- (ii) To consider undertaking site visits and to determine witnesses to invite to a future meeting(s).
- (iii) To determine a draft timetable for the scrutiny review to complete the various sections of its work and to report back to the Housing Scrutiny Panel.

Eric Gordon and Michael Kimmings informed the Panel that from April 2001 low maintenance, high performance paints were now being used for the painting programme rather than the traditional oil based paints which broke off after approximately 3 years. The new type of paint has a longer life span and is expected to last between five and six years. In addition, only two coats are needed, whereas three coats have been required when using oil based paints. The Panel was also informed of the quality control procedures and tests which are being applied and carried out on site on painting schemes.

Eric Gordon reported that £3m has been allocated in the current Housing Investment Plan for the Repairs Prior to Painting and Painting Programme. The average cost of painting a standard three bedroom terrace property is between £240/£250 (without repairs). On average £1.2m a year is spent on painting schemes, with the remainder being spent on repairs. Having regard to the improvements being made, it is expected that the amount spent on repairs will reduce each year.

(b) 10 December 2001

The Panel received a schedule giving details of the Painting Programme - Last Paint Dates and considered the site visits to be undertaken to a number of housing estates, taking the following criteria into consideration:-

- (i) A painting scheme which has been carried out approximately 3/4 years ago.
- (ii) A painting scheme which is due to commence in the near future.
- (iii) A painting scheme which has been completed in the last year.
- (iv) A painting scheme which is currently ongoing.

Accordingly, the Panel agreed that site visits take place to the following Housing Estates:-

Healey By-pass Estate, Batley
Dewsbury Moor - Moorside, Schools and Wroe Street
Foxroyd Estate, Thornhill, Dewsbury
Grange Moor, Huddersfield
Fernside Estate, Almondbury, Huddersfield - Phase II and III
Waterloo Estate, Waterloo, Huddersfield

(c) **19 December 2001**

As agreed at the previous meeting, the Panel undertook site visits to the following Housing Estates:-

- (i) Healey By-pass Estate, Batley - Abbey Road, which was last painted in 1990 and currently out to tender.
- (ii) Dewsbury Moor - School Lane and School Crescent (last painted in 1998), Moorcroft Road (last painted in 1999), Wroe Street (last painted in 1997) and Heckmondwike Road (last painted in 1997).

Low maintenance, high performance paints have been used at School Lane, School Crescent and Moorcroft Road. Traditional oil based paints have been used at Wroe Street and Heckmondwike Road.

- (iii) Foxroyd Estate, Thornhill, Dewsbury - Foxroyd Lane, which was last painted in 1993 using the traditional oil based paint. The estate is due to be painted again in 2002.
- (iv) Grange Moor, Huddersfield - South View Terrace and Bedford Avenue, which were last painted in 1998 using traditional oil based paints. The estate is due to be painted again in 2005.
- (v) Fernside Estate, Almondbury, Huddersfield - Phase II and III - Fernside Crescent and Fernside Avenue. The painting scheme is now ongoing using Jotum paint, which is waterbased.
- (vi) Waterloo Estate, Waterloo, Huddersfield - Canby Grove. Painting scheme has been carried out in 2001 using Jotum paint.

(d) **11 February 2002**

Councillor Robinson welcomed Sandra Gledhill from the Chinewood Tenants and Residents Association, Batley who attended the meeting as a witness to give background information on the Repairs Prior to Painting and Painting Programme in respect of her Estate.

Sandra indicated that she could not remember the exact date when the Chinewood Estate was last painted. Sandra also thought that the windows on her Estate were of a poor quality with some houses only having one double glazed window.

Councillor Robinson referred to the site visit undertaken by the Panel to the Healey By-pass Estate, Batley and felt that the Chinewood Estate has similar problems to the Healey By-pass Estate, which was last painted in 1990. A scheme has just commenced and was due to finish in June/July 2002.

Michael Kimmings informed the Panel that the Chinewood Estate was last painted in 1994. The Estate is due to be painted again in 2002/2003. It is acknowledged that it is not acceptable when Estates have not been painted for 10 years. In accordance with the painting programme, Estates should be painted every 6 years at the latest and it was again emphasised that the use of low maintenance, high performance paints which were introduced, following trials from April 2001, will, in the long term, improve the painting programme and the quality provided.

Discussion took place on the maintenance aspects of the Repairs Prior to Painting and Painting Programme and Eric Gordon reminded the Panel that tenants are given the option of being able to have either UPVC or timber double glazed windows installed. There is not now a big difference in price as the cost of timber windows has now decreased. However, Eric indicated that the cost of maintaining timber windows is approximately twice as much as for UPVC windows.

Eric also referred to the Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) proposals for Housing Services which were approved at a meeting of the Council held on 6 February 2002. On the assumption that the bid to the Secretary of State for Transport, Local Government and the Regions for extra resources is successful, Officers are currently looking at identifying priorities in the Repairs Prior to Painting and Painting Programme for 2002/2003. If the full bid for the ALMO resources is successful, it is proposed that Term Contracts will be prepared over a 3/4 year period in respect of the Repairs Prior to Painting and Painting Programme.

In the event of the ALMO bid being unsuccessful, Eric reiterated that the previous allocated funding would be utilised for the traditional painting programme and replacement of windows.

At this point, Councillor Robinson thanked Sandra Gledhill for attending the meeting.

(e) 25 March 2002

The Panel considered its draft report and determined its conclusions and recommendations. The Panel also received details of the proposals in the Housing Investment Plan for 2002/2003 in respect of the Repairs Prior to Painting and Painting Programme. The proposals, which were approved by the Cabinet on 3 April 2002, are as follows:-

There is ongoing pressure on the Revenue Budget, together with some reclassification of Budgets. The principal impact is that the Repairs Prior to Painting and Painting Programme/Painting Budget (standstill Budget would be £3.2m.) can no longer be classified entirely as revenue. Only the cyclical Painting Programme can now be treated as revenue expenditure. Repairs Prior to Paint and Window Replacements (standstill cost £2.2m.) must now be funded from the capital.

A £1m. budget per annum would be sufficient to maintain a six year cyclical Painting Programme. However the 2002/2003 Programme includes completion of Repairs Prior to Painting and Painting commitments arising in 2001/2002 and accordingly the Budget has been set at £1.170m.

The greater certainty of additional resources as a result of the conditional allocation for the ALMO to meet the Government's Decent Homes target presents great opportunities. To continue with a £3.2m. Repairs Prior to Painting and Painting/Painting Programme in the present format when an aim of the Decent Homes target is to replace all single glazed windows within four years, could waste valuable resources.

Taking these concerns into account, the Cabinet has approved the following Strategy for this Budget :-

- * All 5000 properties included in the 2002/2003 Painting Programme to have repairs carried out and all previously painted items except windows to be painted.

- * Subject to additional ALMO resources, all single glazed windows to be replaced with double glazed windows.
- * Subject to additional ALMO resources, all external doors which do not meet the decent standard to be replaced with new high performance doors.
- * All six highest ranked investment bids (Estates that would be painted in 2002/2003) to have window replacements as a priority funded from the £2.2m. savings within the Capital Budget. These schemes are included in the Investment Plan and this work is not subject to additional ALMO resources.

It should be noted that there is a risk in this strategy in that should additional ALMO resources not be forthcoming or be delayed, painting work could be affected by adverse weather conditions in early months of 2003 resulting in the appearance of some Estates suffering for an extended period. Should this occur, a commitment will be given to fund Repairs Prior To Painting/Painting of all properties in the 2002/2003 Programme having existing single glazed windows (with one off replacements as necessary) before 31 March 2003, subject to suitable weather. Thus, irrespective of whether additional ALMO resources become available, or not, no Estates will be the worse off than had the present arrangements continued.

Housing Services are currently preparing to enter into a number of Term Contracts for the supply and installation of double glazed windows rather than individual tenders. Following agreement with the Kirklees Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations, tenants will continue to be consulted on the choice of window material for their Estate. Whilst the majority decision will determine the material chosen (UPVC or timber) for the entire Estate, individual tenant choice will be permitted except where maintenance/accessibility issues are paramount in properties higher than three storeys.

In view of imminent changes to Part L - Conservation of Fuel and Power - of the Building Regulations and also the need to meet the Decent Standard it is proposed to adopt the use of Pilkington's K-glass in all future new window installations. The extra over cost of providing this high performance coated glazing, which will help to improve the energy efficiency of domestic buildings, is approximately 8-10% but is considered value for money with reduced heat loss for tenants throughout the life of the window.

CONCLUSIONS

- (i) The Panel feels that the Review has been a useful and beneficial exercise and, subject to the receipt of the additional ALMO resources, looks forward to the implementation of the proposals in the Housing Investment Plan in respect of the Repairs Prior to Painting and Painting Programme.
- (ii) The Panel is of the opinion that the previous criticisms about the Repairs Prior to Painting and Painting Programme have been addressed by Housing Officers and that improvements have been made and are being implemented.
- (iii) It is considered that the recent introduction and use of low maintenance, high performance paints will, in the long term, improve the painting programme and the quality provided.

RECOMMENDATION

Taking the above conclusions into account, the minimum requirement should be that all Council housing properties are repainted on a six year cycle.

In conclusion, the Chair, Councillor Robinson thanked the Members of the Panel and the Officers involved in the Review for the valued comments and contributions they had made at meetings.

David Gordon, Committee Administrator,
Councillor David Robinson
Councillor Ghulam Maniyar
Rose Paxman, Kirklees Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations