



## MID & WEST KENT HOME IMPROVEMENT AGENCY



### HIA ADVISORY GROUP MANAGEMENT REPORT

1 October 2009 – 31 March 2010

David Eaton BA MBA  
**Service Manager**

Aric Goss BSc  
**Senior Building Surveyor**

*Picture above shows Mark Morley, Selina Boyd and Daniel Locke (Handypersons)*

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***in touch* is working in partnership with:**

<p><b>Maidstone Borough Council</b></p> <p><b>Sevenoaks District Council</b></p> <p><b>Tonbridge &amp; Malling Borough Council</b></p> <p><b>Tunbridge Wells Borough Council</b></p>	<p><b>Kent County Council</b></p> <p><b>West Kent Community Health</b></p> <p><b>Kent People's Trust</b></p> <p><b>Kent Fire &amp; Rescue</b></p> <p><b>Kent Police</b></p>
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## HIA Service Manager's Report

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This management report has been compiled to report on the progress of the Home Improvement Agencies managed by *in touch* across Maidstone, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge & Malling and Tunbridge Wells for the period 1 October 2009 – 31 March 2010.

### 2. Agency Progress & Developments

- 2.1 The last two quarters of 2009-10 have proven to be one of our busiest on record.
- 2.2 The Agency has continued to foster and develop its working relationship with The Primary Care Trust in Maidstone and Weald. During the year the Agency completed 273 Hospital Discharge and Rapid Response jobs adding significant value to the Agency's ability to speed up the hospital discharge process for older/disabled patients and help prevent hospital admissions because of slips, trips and falls. Such has been the success that the PCT now wishes to consult with *in touch* on setting up a three year legal contract to provide services.
- 2.4 The Agencies support of Golding Homes (previously Maidstone Housing Trust) which began in 2009 continues into 2010. The Agency was able to raise nearly £7,000 in additional fees from Golding Homes to assist Tenants in supplying the Council with their formal applications for grant. The level of support from the HIA is likely to continue into 2010-11 and will hopefully be extended in providing additional technical support by offering a service to help tenants with crossovers and hardstanding adaptations. In total the Agency assisted 66 tenants to complete and submit their formal applications for Disabled Facility Grants to Maidstone Borough Council.
- 2.4 The new Decorating and Gardening service managed within our new Community Services business stream is progressing well. The service was launched as a pilot just after Christmas and do date we have in excess of 150 people on our books. Decorating works began in earnest in March 2010 and to date 9 decorating projects have been completed with a value of around £9,500.
- 2.5 The gardening service is only just beginning to pick up interest from the public now that the weather has begun to improve. The Agency will be charging £15.00 per hour for this service. Interviews for casual gardeners have been organised for late April..
- 2.6 Both the Decorating and Gardening provided from within our Community Services business are additional services offered by the Home Improvement Agency at no charge to the commissioners or funding partners. These new services are concentrated in the areas of Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge & Malling. Maidstone already has minor decorating and gardening services provided through the Handyperson Service.
- 2.7 The Mid & West Kent HIA has organised a DFG Best Practice Forum for the Mid & West Kent Local Authorities. The event is planned for Monday 14 June 2010 and will be held at the offices of Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council between 09.00hrs – 14.00hrs. The aim of the morning will be to examine how partners might work to improve the outcomes and timescales for those applying for Disabled Facility Grants

(DFGs). There is already great interest in the forum and both senior and operational managers from across the health, social care and housing professions will be attending.

### 3. Human Resources

- 3.1 Since the last report we can report that Mick Clark, one of Handypersons in the Maidstone area, has left the employ of the Agency to develop a new career for a bedroom fitting company. The Agency will be recruiting a replacement Handyperson in the usual way.
- 3.2 We are delighted to formally welcome our first female handyperson to the team. Mrs Selina Boyd joined the HIA on 11 January and has remarked that she is thoroughly enjoying the role and the team she works within.
- 3.2 The Agency has recruited assistant staff for our caseworkers, handypersons and administrators. To date there have been a total of 4 appointments and they are as follows:-
- a) **Mark Morley** – Assistant Handyperson
  - b) **Christopher Spencer**– Assistant Handyperson
  - c) **James Venamore** – Assistant Handyperson
  - d) **Matthew Rae** - Assistant Administrator

The posts are funded by KCC through their “Backing Kent Jobs” initiative. Each placement will remain with the Agency for up to six months but with the aim of assisting the new staff to find permanent employment.

The Governments promise of a guarantee of work for younger people is now a central feature of our employment practices and we are now working closely with our approved contractors and our local authority partners on enhancing the job opportunities of these young recruits in the longer term. To date one of our contractors has expressed considerable interest in the scheme and looking at a formal apprenticeship for our handypersons.

The picture below shows the 18 new recruits employed before the 31 March 2010 across the Kent and Medway HIAs.



- 3.3 We can report that Tracy Topley, our Senior Caseworker has taken up the offer of a secondment opportunity to work at the Medway HIA. The Medway agency was recently won by in touch in a competitive tender and as such has asked Mid & West Kent to assist in the setting up of the new Agency.

#### 4. HIA Performance 2009-10

- 4.1 We are required to report on the overall performance of the mid & west Kent HIAs. As such we list here the core outcomes of both the main HIA services and our Ancillary Handyperson services.

##### Enquiries

The Agency has dealt with 5,034 enquiries during 2009-10.

Enquiries and referrals are sorted into the following categories for the Mid & West Kent HIA.

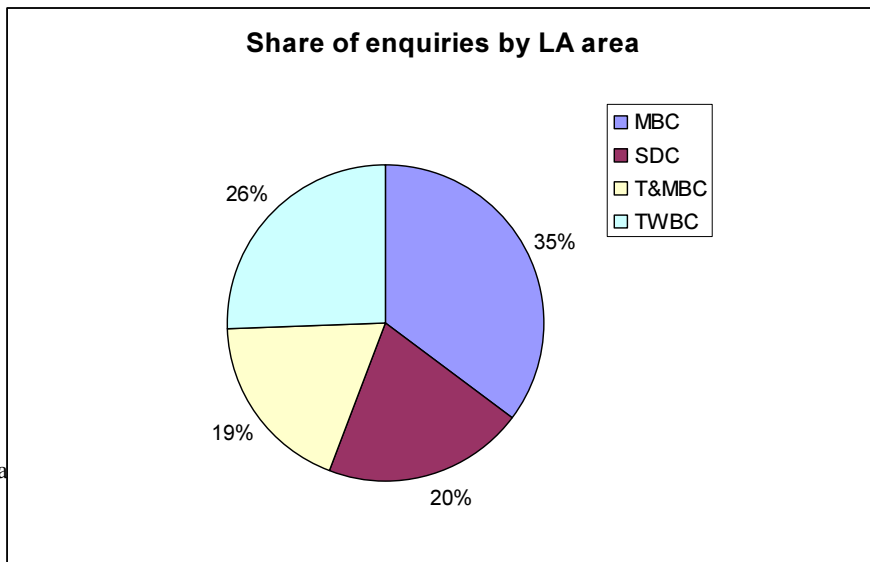
- 1) Core Service Enquiry or Advice Only (CS)
- 2) HomeSafe Handyperson (HH)
- 3) Primary Care Trust (PCT)
- 4) Community Services (CS) (Inc. Gardening and Decorating Services)
- 5) KeySafe (supply and installation) (KS)

The distribution of enquiries across the four districts has been recorded as follows: -

##### Distribution of Enquiries 2009-10

	CS	HH	PCT	CS	KS
MBC	627	837	273	3	42
SDC	459	513	0	36	23
T&MBC	555	307	0	43	27
TWBC	688	530	0	40	31
	<b>2329</b>	<b>2187</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>123</b>
					<b>5034</b>

The share of enquiries across the four LA areas, reported as a percentage reveals that Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells are capturing 35% and 25% of the enquiries respectively.

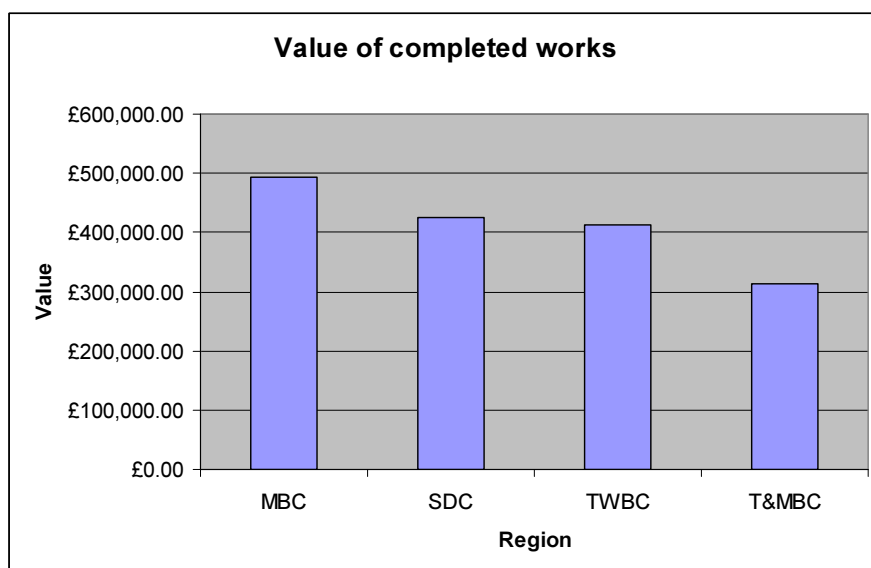


Both Sevenoaks and Tonbridge & Malling are 20% and 19% respectively.

## Value of Work

As of 31 March 2010 the Mid & West Kent HIA reported a total value of work of **£1,647,125.56**. Compared to the previous year the Agency has increased the value of completed work by some 25% completing an additional £330,902.

The value of work has been distributed across the four local authority areas with relative equity with the exception of a notable difference between T&M and MBC and nearly £200K difference in the value of work completed. The reason for this rests largely on the value of grant made available by the District Councils.



## Number and Types of Jobs (core service only)

The Agency has dealt with and successfully completed a total of 328 core jobs. From these building projects 188 have been Disabled Facility Grants, 121 have been Repair Grants and 19 have been private commissions or works funded by charities. This equates to 6.3 jobs completed every week.

The distribution of building projects across the four LA areas is relatively evenly spread.

	DFG	Repair	Private	Totals
MBC	34	34	1	69
SDC	66	2	8	76

T&MBC	41	41	5	87
TWBC	47	44	5	96
Totals	188	121	19	<b>328</b>

DFG projects now control 57% of the building work the HIA undertakes. Repair grants have fallen to only 36% and private works are maintained at previous levels of around 6% of the workload.

## Enquiries for Handyperson Service

Handyperson services have been very busy throughout 2009-10. We now have 6 full-time Handypersons working across the four local authority areas. This also includes our first lady Handyperson and our first Ancillary Services Administrator who helps to manage and co-ordinate the day to day operations of the service.

Handyperson enquiries have increased by as much as 23.4% across the four local authority areas between 2008 and March 2010. This now equates to over 200 enquiries each month and provides a client base of 35 new clients for each handyperson every four weeks.

### Handyperson Enquiries

	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>
Sevenoaks	399	535
Tunbridge Well	462	561
Maidstone	908	1133
Tonbridge & Malling	312	336
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	2081	2565
	<hr/>	<hr/>

## Number and Types of Jobs (Handyperson service)

The nature of the work completed by our handyperson service continues to be wide ranging and diverse.

### Handyperson Completed Jobs

	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>
Sevenoaks	277	451
Tunbridge Well	316	544
Maidstone	691	957
Tonbridge & Malling	245	298
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	1529	2250
	<hr/>	<hr/>

## Value of Building Projects (DFG)

Given the number of DFG building projects it is interesting to note the respective values (£) that these grants attract and the average costs per application.

	<b>DFG</b>	<b>Average Cost</b>
MBC	£227,594.00	£6,693.00
SDC	£368,772.00	£5,587.00
T&MBC	£199,119.00	£4,856.00
TWBC	£261,431.00	£5,562.00
<b>Totals</b>	<b>£1,056,916.00</b>	<b>Average = £5,674.00</b>

## Speed of Service

### Core Service

Core Service	Under £1,000	Over £1,000
	First Visit to Practical Completion	First Visit to Practical Completion
MBC	4	59
SDC	4	51
T&MBC	12	36
TWBC	16	31
<b>Averages</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>44.25</b>

### Handyperson Service

#### Handyperson Service - Enquiry to Practical Completion

MBC	2
SDC	3
T&MBC	2
TWBC	3
<b>Average Total (wks)</b>	<b>2.5</b>

## 5. Supporting People Workbooks

The Quarterly returns for the period April 2009 – 31 March 2010 to Supporting People are a mandatory requirement for the HIA and as such we have included our year end outcome results.

The workbook returns recorded the following outcomes for service users.

### Independent Living

- 3,185 or 63% of our services users were able to remain living independently in their own homes.
- 243 service users were discharged from hospital as a direct result of HIA intervention.
- 276 or 5.4% service users were prevented from being admitted to hospital as a result of HIA intervention.



- 1,857 or 37% of service users were prevented from having to move into a residential or care home as result of the HIA intervention.

### **Fair Access**

- The percentage of new services users from a BME group equalled 8.3% of the total number of enquiries across the four LA areas for the period 2009-10.

## **6. Customer Satisfaction**

The HIA is pleased to report that the increase in work outputs and the number of enquiries has had no detrimental impact on our levels of customer satisfaction.

Our Core, Handyperson, PCT and Community Services have maintained overall customer satisfaction rates at consistently high levels which have dropped no lower than 96% for the period 2009-10.

## **7. Conclusion**

2009-10 has marked an important period of change for the Mid & West Kent Home Improvement Agencies. The HIA's have been forged together under one roof at our new offices in Kings Hill and a formal staff restructure has been completed providing new reporting lines and new senior management positions within the team.

2009-10 has also seen the development of several important new business initiatives.

These have included: -

- Engagement with the Backing Kent Jobs Scheme and the recruitment of 6 new assistant staff.
- A new Community Services Division: Decorating and Gardening Services
- Expansion of our Handyperson Service
- Expansion of our business with Maidstone Housing Trust and West Kent Community Health (PCT)
- 

We would like to thank all our Commissioners, Contractors and Partners for their continued support of the Mid & West Kent Home Improvement Agency.



# Technical Report – Quarter 3 & 4 (2009/10)

Prepared by Aric Goss – Senior Building Surveyor

*in touch* Mid & West Kent Home Improvement Agency

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report has been compiled to record the technical operations and progress of the Mid & West Kent Home Improvement Agency for the period 1<sup>st</sup> October 2009 to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2010. The report takes account of core services only, and excludes ancillary services.

## 2. Income & KPIs

### 2.1 Summary (Quarter 3)

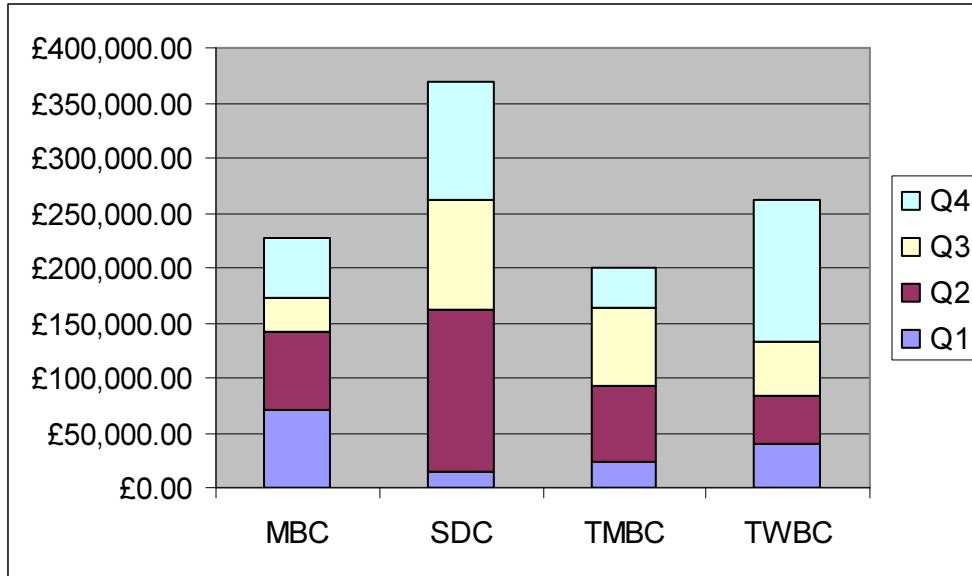
Technical Report					2009-10
Quarter 3					
Business Activity	MBC	SDC	TMBC	TWBC	Total
Fee Income	£6,537.10	£12,711.46	£9,989.14	£11,124.52	<b>£40,362.22</b>
<b>Work Completed (No.)</b>					
DFG	7	19	13	13	<b>52</b>
REPAIRS	5	0	9	12	<b>26</b>
PRIVATE/OTHER	1	2	0	0	<b>3</b>
<b>Value of work completed (exc.VAT)</b>					
DFG	£30,014.82	£99,133.35	£69,708.85	£49,194.50	<b>£248,051.52</b>
REPAIRS	£13,860.69	£0.00	£29,173.00	£36,429.74	<b>£79,463.43</b>
PRIVATE/OTHER	£5,598.00	£14,910.84	£0.00	£0.00	<b>£20,508.84</b>
<b>Speed of Service (Average in weeks)</b>					
Under £5,000.00	16	39	23	27	<b>16</b>
Over £5,000.00	55	56	30	32	<b>45</b>
<b>KPI's</b>					<b>Target</b>
No of Completed jobs	12	21	22	25	<b>70</b>
Site visit within two weeks of caseworker visit (%)	68%	72%	83%	75%	<b>85%</b>
3 weeks to Tender Stage from initial inspection date (minor works) (%)	85%	26%	72%	68%	<b>85%</b>
8 weeks to tender stage from initial inspection date (Major works) (%)	47%	58%	86%	82%	<b>85%</b>
6 weeks from formal grant approval to start date	52%	45%	58%	54%	<b>85%</b>

## Summary (Quarter 4)

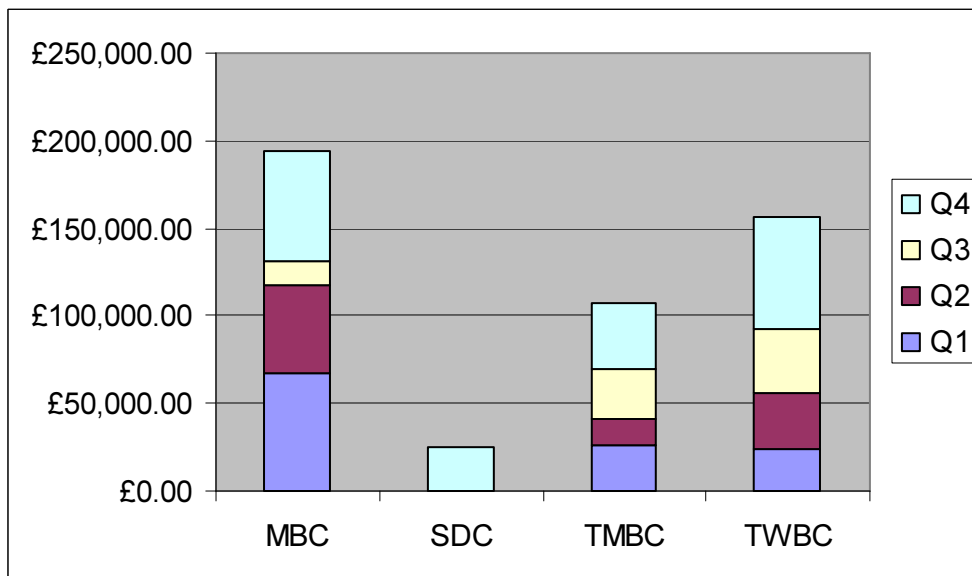
Technical Report Quarter 4					2009-10
<b>Business Activity</b>	<b>MBC</b>	<b>SDC</b>	<b>TMBC</b>	<b>TWBC</b>	<b>Total</b>
Fee Income	£17,365.15	£15,575.52	£9,557.70	£20,382.66	<b>£0.00</b>
<b>Work Completed (No.)</b>					
DFG	9	25	10	18	<b>62</b>
REPAIRS	12	2	9	16	<b>39</b>
PRIVATE/OTHER	0	4	3	0	<b>7</b>
<b>Value of work completed (exc.VAT)</b>					
DFG	£54,922.65	£107,810.06	£35,998.00	£128,944.80	<b>£327,675.51</b>
REPAIRS	£62,578.83	£25,535.05	£37,042.84	£64,360.93	<b>£189,517.65</b>
PRIVATE/OTHER	£0.00	£10,544.00	£12,264.00	£0.00	<b>£22,808.00</b>
<b>Speed of Service (Average in weeks)</b>					
Under £5,000.00	56	34	20	32	<b>16</b>
Over £5,000.00	59	60	33	53	<b>45</b>
<b>KPI's</b>					<b>Target</b>
No of Completed jobs	21	31	22	34	<b>70</b>
Site visit within two weeks of caseworker visit (%)	77%	63%	98%	71%	<b>85%</b>
3 weeks to Tender Stage from initial inspection date (minor works) (%)	48%	23%	78%	68%	<b>85%</b>
8 weeks to tender stage from initial inspection date (Major works) (%)	51%	27%	68%	63%	<b>85%</b>
6 weeks from formal grant approval to start date	78%	62%	70%	58%	<b>85%</b>

## 2.2 Value of Works Completed (Annual Trend)

### 2.2.1 Disabled Facilities Grant

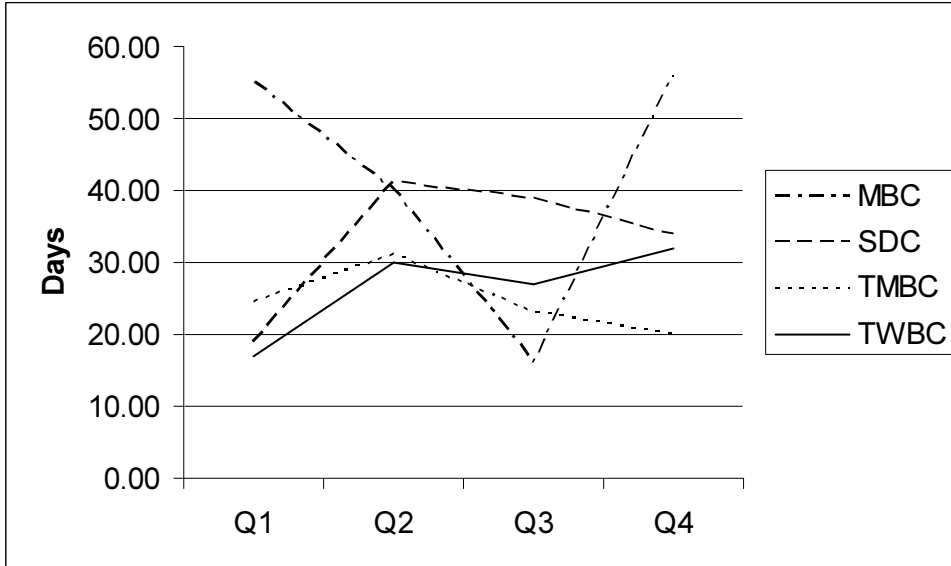


### 2.2.2 Housing Assistance

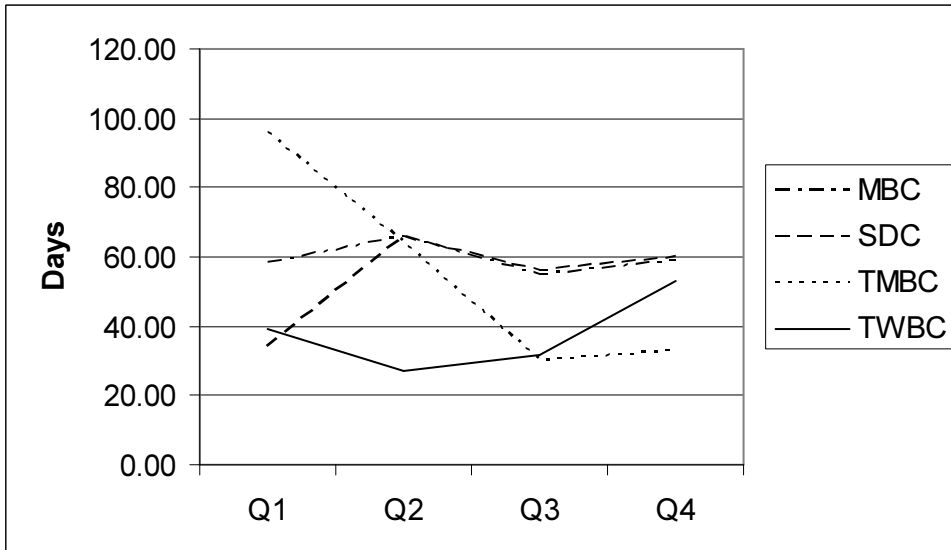


### 2.3 Speed of Service (Annual Trend)

#### 2.3.1 Under £5000



#### 2.3.2 Over £5000



## Commentary

We continue to receive a high volume of new DFG referrals in the MBC area, which is compounding the effect on the speed of service, as there have been delays in the initial caseworker visit and the surveyors visit. Support has continued from other in touch caseworkers and surveyors to prevent the back-log building up, but the volume being received is unsustainable, so the back-log will remain and will continue to affect the speed of service into the next quarter. The number of cases completed in Q4, and particularly Repairs, was significant due to an increased effort to meet 2009/10 budget spends.

The volume of work completed in Q3 and Q4 has been maintained at a high level, thanks to the efforts of the surveyor and caseworker in progressing cases through the application process and on site, and co-ordination with the Local Authority. The budget spend for the year 2009/10 has therefore been significant and well above the previous financial year, and exceeding the initial budget expectations. Going into the new financial year 2010/11 there is some concern at the lack of referrals received from the Occupational Therapy Bureau, which we understand is due to a lack of OT's, and this will obviously affect budget spend in the following quarters for Disabled Facility Grants.

The volume of work completed in the TMBC area has remained steady, although low by comparison to previous quarters. This is understood to be due to careful management of the budgets by the Local Authority due to a back-log created by significant demand in the previous financial year 2008/09.

TWBC area has seen a significant rise in the volume of work completed, due to the back-log of cases from the retirement of the previous area surveyor being pushed forward, and particularly in Q4 which saw a significant effort to get works on site and completed in order to meet the expectations for budget spend of the Local Authority.

## 2.5 Project Activity

### Quarter 3:

	MBC	SDC	TMBC	TWBC	Totals
Initial visits	15	15	27	24	<b>81</b>
Surveys	11	14	7	30	<b>62</b>
Tenders issued	13	13	10	34	<b>70</b>
Tenders received	11	18	21	33	<b>83</b>
Applications issued	28	18	21	33	<b>100</b>
Applications approved	18	17	14	31	<b>80</b>
Works commenced	18	16	22	23	<b>79</b>
Works completed	8	19	23	22	<b>72</b>

**Quarter 4:**

	MBC	SDC	TMBC	TWBC	Totals
Initial visits	9	21	20	10	<b>60</b>
Surveys	18	6	9	16	<b>49</b>
Tenders issued	19	12	14	25	<b>70</b>
Tenders received	7	11	13	25	<b>56</b>
Applications issued	52	15	12	19	<b>98</b>
Applications approved	15	10	26	19	<b>70</b>
Works commenced	10	17	16	28	<b>71</b>
Works completed	20	22	13	31	<b>86</b>

**3 Aborted Works**

	MBC	SDC	TMBC	TWBC	Total
No. of jobs	0	5	12	3	20
Value	£0.00	£45,000	£59,000	£21,000	£125,000

**Case Studies**

3.1 Mr R is an elderly gentleman in his early eighties. He lives with his wife in their house in Tonbridge. Mrs R is a carer for Mr R. Mr R had difficulty bathing and also was unable to access the bathroom without enduring a very difficult and arduous climb to the stair case which is very steep and consists of a set of winders to the top of the staircase. The top of the stair was particularly difficult and risky for Mr R.

The initial works were to provide a stair lift so that access to the bedroom and bathroom were made safer for Mr R. The nature of the staircase design made access a significant problem. The bathroom conversion consisted of removing a corner bath and existing shower and replacing it with a level access shower with a seat so that Mr R can be either assisted with showering or when able to, wash himself independently.





When visiting the property to sign off the works Mrs R expressed that the conversion had made life so much easier for them both and that the contractor whom carried out the works had done so very professionally and was extremely helpful.

	Date	Timescales (working days)
Referral received	11.03.08	-
Initial visit	25.04.08	11
Survey completed	18.06.09	57
Design issued	23.06.09	4
Design approved	30.06.08	6
Tenders issued	03.07.09	4
Tenders received	11.08.09	33
Application submitted	28.08.09	14
Application approved	18.02.10	119
Works commenced	07.04.10	34
Works completed	21.04.10	11

3.2 Mrs B is an elderly lady in her early eighties who has Parkinson's disease, affecting her balance and mobility. She lives with her husband in a 2-bedroom semi-detached house in Tunbridge Wells. Mrs B was referred by the Occupational Therapy Bureau for a level access shower as she had difficulty getting in and out of the bath.

The bathroom is very small, with a separate WC, so the conversion to a level access shower room provided a better space for Mrs B to manage.

The timescales from the receipt of the referral and through the design process were very efficient, and the project progressed well.

Unfortunately there was a significant delay between grant approval and commencement of the works due to the Christmas break and also that the winning contractor was very busy at this time and committed to other work.

Regardless of this delay, Mrs B is very happy with the new shower room, both for ease-of-use and for the standard of finish. Enthused by the work to the bathroom Mr & Mrs B have had help from their family with re-decorating the rest of the house and are now very happy to remain in their home.

	Date	Timescales (working days)
Referral received	10.09.2009	-
Initial visit	16.09.2009	4
Survey completed	23.09.2009	5
Design issued	24.09.2009	1
Design approved	05.10.2009	7
Tenders issued	08.10.2009	3
Tenders received	28.10.2009	14
Application submitted	05.11.2009	6
Application approved	15.12.2009	28
Works commenced	22.02.2010	49
Works completed	09.03.2010	11

#### 4. Conclusions

- 3.3 Overall 2009/10 has seen significant changes in the staff at in touch, which has obviously affected the performance figures in some areas. However, all parties have been involved in making a huge effort in Q3 and particularly Q4 to work together to ensure the budget spend expectations are met.
- 3.4 Going forward into 2010/11 we are implementing significant changes to our in-house procedures to ensure we can work as efficiently as possible, and support each other more easily. This includes a suite of template documents and standard procedures that will be used by all our staff across all Local Authority areas.
- 3.5 We also propose to change the way we monitor our performance, with new KPIs which will measure more accurately our performance and help us to identify potential weaknesses in the process which can be improved. We hope that this will help us to work smarter and continue to build on our working relationships with the Local Authorities and Occupational Therapy Bureau.

## Previous Minutes

### ADVISORY GROUP MEETING 19 August 2009 at 10.00 am

<b>Present:</b>	Names: Chris Thomas Pension & Disabilities Service Cllr D Cure Councillor Cllr J Atkinson Councillor Cllr J Balcombe Councillor Linda Hibbs Housing Services Manager David Eaton Project Manager in touch Lesley Wheal Caseworker in touch Helen Ryan Administrator in touch Mr Jillians Client HIA	<b>To Action</b>
<b>Apologies:</b>	Names: Nicola Tallon Kent Association for the Blind Viv Fuller CROP Alison Batchelor Volunteer Bureau Cllr M Worrall Councillor Cllr J Anderson Councillor Aric Goss Surveyor in touch	
<b>Previous Minutes:</b>	Chris Thomas called the meeting to begin and asked us to introduce ourselves to the group.	
<b>3) Matters Arising:</b>	<p>3.1 Cllr Cure asked if we could get someone from the OT,s Child &amp; Family Education Department to come and speak to the group regarding children's grants.</p> <p>3.2 Linda Hibbs said that a meeting has been set up for October, between John Batty and Roslin Turner from the child directorate to discuss the delays with children's grants. This will then be discussed at the SHAB meeting. Cllr Cure said that he knows that at present there are 23 young children on the waiting list and this is a concern. He feels that the government needs to give the local authorities more funds to deal with the increase in cases. Local Authorities cannot keep taking monies from one years budget to cover another.</p>	

	<p>3.3 Linda Hibbs explained that there is no service level agreement with the OT's and David Eaton said that there is a "Combined Approach" in place. Chris Thomas felt it was important to have a service level agreement in place with the OT's and us. Cllr Cure asked for a breakdown in figures for child cases currently outstanding so that we can see where the problems are occurring. David Eaton said that it will need to be mapped from the point of referral from the OT to when the works are completed. Linda Hibbs and Lesley Wheal said that the date of referral is now on the OT's referral letter so that would be made easier. David Eaton said that these cases are very complex and can take time. Cllr Cure said that it would be good to map these cases to see where the problems are. Chris Thomas said that it would be beneficial to see the DFG's across all 4 area's to see how the timescales vary. David Eaton said that would be possible and Cllr Cure said this would be very helpful to look at.</p> <p>3.4 Mr Jillians was concerned about not having transport to get to these meetings and was not sure if it was difficult for Lesley Wheal to pick him up. Lesley Wheal said that it was very important to have him in the group and explained it was no problem.</p> <p>3.5 Under Agency Round-up it was asked if Robin Cahill had been contacted regarding Community Care Grants. Chris Thomas said that it is important that all information is passed on and Annette Hughes needs to be contacted regarding this. Cllr Cure said that it had been sent to Alison Batchelor and she will pass it on.</p> <p>3.6 Chris Thomas asked if there had been any progress on the Gardening Services under the Handyperson Service. David Eaton explained that no equipment had been sourced and he was waiting to finalise the arrangements for this service. Cllr Cure said that Age Concern do have a gardening service priced at £12 per hour.</p>	<p><b>DE</b></p> <p><b>RC</b></p> <p><b>DC/AB</b></p> <p><b>DE</b></p>
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	<p>3.7 Chris Thomas asked if all the charges are the same for in touch HIA services across the 4 borough councils. David Eaton explained that the contracts with the borough councils were negotiated separately and have evolved over time, it is hoped that now the agency has been combined when the time for renegotiations arises they will be discussed alongside other contract arrangements.</p> <p>3.8 Chris Thomas said that the Agency now needs a single set of accounts in order that it can be compared across the area's. David Eaton explained that by 2011 the councils will look to review all the contracts and also look at the structure and costs. He explained that it will take time to sort out a singular structure and he is constantly aware of the pressures of keeping the costs down and whilst enhancing service provision. Cllr Cure said that any new contract with the Mid &amp; West Kent HIA will be vast and will have to go out under the European tender procedure.</p>	
<p><b>4) Project Managers Report</b></p>	<p>4.1 David Eaton presented his Project Managers Report. With regard to Human Resources, Bernard Barratt the Surveyor for Tunbridge Wells has now left the agency and David was pleased to say that Robert Bushell has now joined us. He comes from a similar work background and has picked up straight away on cases in Tunbridge Wells. Sharon Carrick the Caseworker from Sevenoaks has also now left the agency and her position is being advertised. Lesley Wheal has now gone back to her roots of Caseworker for Tonbridge &amp; Malling and is no longer a Senior with line managing duties.</p> <p>4.2 David Eaton explained that a re-structure of the agency staff was in progress. At present the structure is very flat and he line manages most of the staff. Under the new structure there will be a management team with Seniors in each department. Staff are being encouraged to apply for the new positions available and any vacancies left after this process will be advertised. This will result in 22 staff rather than the 18 at present. David Eaton felt that the whole service would be enhanced especially the Handyperson Service where it will have an administrator specifically for that service, an Ancillary Services Team Leader and a Senior Handyperson. It was thought that this would provide a much better, more consistent service. Cllr Cure thought that this would be a real benefit to the service. David Eaton said that there would also be a new Caseworker recruited for the Ancillary Services who would be involved in visiting clients and completing support plans, then referring them onto all the appropriate support services including handyperson services, core caseworkers, Occupational Therapy and other social groups.</p>	

	<p>4.3 Linda Hibbs asked if the staff are involved in line managing staff with for example the senior surveyor is there to be any back up cover. David Eaton explained that he did not think there was a need for this. Cllr Cure asked how many vacancies there would be and David Eaton said that many of the roles would be filled internally but any posts left to fill, like caseworkers or administrators would be advertised.</p> <p>4.4 David Eaton then went on to explain the Management accounts. There is currently a deficit of £12,500 but that is 50% lower than last year so it has been significantly reduced. Chris Thomas felt that this small deficit was manageable. With regard to the performance information</p> <p>4.5 Cllr Cure was concerned at the 96 weeks timescale for the completion of a case. Lesley Wheal explained that this was a child case and therefore very complex with lots of people involved. Chris Thomas felt that a more detailed breakdown of these timescales was needed as one case can bring the whole average speed of service down. David Eaton agreed to look at these reports in order to give this information.</p> <p>4.6 David Eaton said that the Handyperson service was on target to meet its 100 jobs per year and felt that the target was perhaps too low. He predicted that the service could go on to do as many as 400 to 450 jobs in this current year. Chris Thomas asked that when there are new leaflets available that they are passed out amongst the group members in order that the services can be promoted to their clients.</p> <p>4.7 Cllr Cure asked Linda Hibbs if as a borough we are happy with the service from in touch. Linda Hibbs said that the service is certainly improving since going across to in touch and it was good to see that the backlog of cases is being dealt with. David Eaton was glad to note that the borough is happy with the service provided and said that it would improve further over the next few months.</p> <p>4.8 David Eaton explained about the new services within the Homesafe Handyperson service. With the funding from Supporting people in touch were now able to provide new free products to clients, including carbon monoxide detectors, letter box cages, smoke detectors and electric blankets.</p> <p>4.9 Chris Thomas asked if the electrical installations in properties that we visited were checked as many elderly clients in old properties have unsafe wiring. David Eaton said that when the Handyperson or caseworkers visit they do have a look at wiring and then look into any help if it is required.</p>	<p>DE</p> <p>DE/HR</p>
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<p><b>5) New Advisory Group Structure</b></p>	<p>5.1 Cllr Cure said that on this he was totally opposed to a Chairman who is in a cabinet position. It needs to be an independent chairman for the new group. Cllr Balcombe and Cllr Atkinson agreed. David Eaton said that we need to discuss what the new structure for the group will be. Cllr Cure said that we need to agree how many members are needed to represent each authority. We also need to encourage voluntary group members to come, they have an important role in the group. David Eaton explained that the Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells group agreed with the idea of just 1 group meeting but that it was important to maintain links with the local authority funding partners, voluntary groups and clients. It was thought that perhaps one meeting could be held annually as a forum which would work as an information sharing day to involve the voluntary services and clients.</p> <p>5.2 Chris Thomas said that it was important that an independent meeting was held to deal with certain issues and these cannot be discussed within a large meeting. Quite often although a large information day would get good attendance it does not necessarily get decisions made. It was felt that a big forum is not always the best place to make decisions and discuss issues on the service.</p>	

	<p>5.3 David Eaton said that the consultation for this new format would run until the end of December so once it had been discussed at each advisory group then he would collate the findings and provide an outline plan for the new structure. Cllr Cure did say that an information day once a year to showcase the service would be excellent to let people know about the HIA Service.</p> <p>5.4 Cllr Cure said that perhaps 3 representatives from each authority and then a representative from the voluntary organisations, KAB, British Legion &amp; Volunteer Bureau.</p> <p>5.5 Chris Thomas felt that maybe 3 from each authority was too many as this would be 12 members already so perhaps just 2 from each local authority would be enough. David Eaton said that the key message is to keep communications open with all the members.</p> <p>5.6 Chris Thomas said that there was a lot to discuss on this and that David Eaton should report back to the group once he has spoken to all the advisory groups. Chris Thomas also agreed that the chairman needs to be independent in order to get agreements and decisions at these meetings. Cllr Cure said that a paper needs to be prepared to decide who needs to attend and then need to have an agreement with those members to attend the meeting.</p>	<b>DE</b>
<b>6) Technical Report</b>	<p>6.1 Lesley then gave a brief outline of the technical report. Lesley explained that the 96 weeks timescale on one particular case was caused by waiting 18 weeks for the landlord's approval and not having a surveyor for 6 months. When these factors are taken out it does bring down the figures to a more reasonable timescale. Another two cases took 68 and 70 weeks and this was because the drawings service was outsourced whilst the service was without a surveyor. Chris Thomas said that these issues had now been addressed and it was expected that this timescale will improve. David Eaton explained that the approval to start dates had now improved and over the next quarter we will get a better idea of the service we are providing.</p>	
<b>7) Agency Round-up</b>	<p>7.1 Unfortunately other agencies were not in attendance to give information on current changes in their services.</p>	



<p><b>8) Any Other Business</b></p>	<p>8.1 Chris Thomas explained that the referrals from the caseworkers for the Pension and Disability Service can be unclear and he felt that the caseworkers would perhaps benefit from some training. He would be happy to send someone from the Pension &amp; Disability Service to train the 6 caseworkers. David Eaton said that he would consider this and report back to Chris Thomas.</p> <p>8.2 Cllr Cure said that the Tonbridge Volunteer Bureau is now at the Tonbridge Gateway every Friday and is now also moving into Snodland every other Wednesday.</p> <p>8.3 After a meeting with Cllr Cure on Wednesday 2 September to agree a list of prospective members for the new advisory group format, it has been attached for all members information and will be taken to the Maidstone Advisory Group for their discussion. David Eaton will then report back to all the groups before finalising the details.</p>	
<p><b>9) Date of next Meeting</b></p>	<p>9.1 The date for the next meeting will agreed at a later date.</p>	

