## SOUTH DERBYSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL HOUSING SERVICES

# South Derbyshire

of The National Forest

HOUSING
ASSET
MANAGEMENT
STRATEGY

**Second Revision March 2005** 

#### A. Introduction

This Housing Asset Management Strategy (AMS) provides a framework for the effective management of the housing stock from the perspective of maintaining and improving Council homes. The document is structured to measure the performance of South Derbyshire's Housing Services against a series of key objectives which have been established to ensure that the Council's housing assets are managed efficiently and effectively. It seeks to ensure that the stock is maintained in good condition and that products and service delivery continue to improve to achieve 'Best Value' and a high standard of customer satisfaction. By doing this the Council will avoid the deterioration of housing assets, minimise future repair costs and place itself in a position to meet legislative and regulatory requirements.

In June 2003, in accordance with the requirements of first draft, the Asset Management Strategy was reviewed to take into account changes that have occurred since the plan was first produced in 2002. At that time, it was considered that the contents of the strategy were still relevant to the needs of the authority and that there should be a continued focus on rolling out the actions that were defined in the strategy to ensure the maintenance and improvement of housing stock remained on course.

This version of the AMS, which should be read in conjunction with the Stock Condition Survey, reflects the progress that has been made by the authority to meet the government's 'Decent homes' targets by the latest review of progress against annual targets. The review represents the position and the achievements that have been made since the AMS was first produced in 2002. The strategy continues to integrate with the Council's over arching aims and priorities for the community which are set out in the Corporate Plan, The Best Value Performance Plan, the HRA Business Plan, The Corporate and Housing Service's Procurement Strategies and the Housing Strategy.

March 2005

#### B. Organisational Arrangements for Housing Asset Management

The Housing Asset Management Strategy was originally developed through the Asset Management Improvement Task Team set up as part of the Housing Change and Improvement Programme.

The terms of reference and aims for this group were:

- 1. To drive improvement in Asset Management and Maintenance forward.
- 2. To review the work programme for Asset Management identifying key areas of risk.
- 3. To develop the draft Asset Management Strategy.
- 4. To develop the draft Procurement Strategy.
- 5. To review the repairs procedures.
- 6. To review the requirements for preparation work for the best value review of Assets Management.
- 7. Develop an approach to resident involvement in Asset Management.
- 8. To ensure Housing Management input into decision making.
- 9. To develop a Void Option Appraisal Methodology.
- 10. To review the IT requirements of Asset Management and Maintenance.
- 11. To link where appropriate with the Improvement Task Team Housing Management.

This 2002 Group was originally Chaired and led by the Building Maintenance Manager and involved front line staff from Building Maintenance and Housing Management, and Tenants Representatives. Since then, having largely achieved their aims, the group has been disbanded.

Following a restructure within Housing Services, primary responsibility for the delivery of the Asset Management Strategy now lies with the Repair and Improvement Manager and the repairs and improvement staff.

The forum for review of progress is carried out by the Repairs and Improvement Manager through a variety of performance measurement mechanisms and conducted within the Repairs and Improvement Section on an ongoing basis.

#### C. Objectives of the Asset Management Strategy

The key objectives of the Asset Management Strategy remain:

- To set a framework for the Council to achieve the Decent Homes
   Standard on all Council homes by 2010.
- b) To maximise the asset value of it's housing stock.
- c) To maximise customer satisfaction to meet the needs of our customers.
- d) To aid the retention of existing residents.
- e) To reduce the level of void properties.
- f) To contribute to the sustainability of neighbourhoods.
- g) To ensure cost effectiveness and probity in expenditure in stock.
- h) To review and challenge the approach to asset management to ensure best value.

However, since 2003 there have been 4 further key objectives which have been included. These are:

- i) To monitor and maintain the housing stock to ensure high standards of safety.
- j) To engage our customers and local business in decisions related to the well being of the community.
- k) To maintain sustainable homes through education, awareness and providing access to grant funding schemes.
- To use innovative methods of procurement to ensure quality and value for money for goods and services used to maintain and improve homes.

The Council's Corporate Plan sets out eight key corporate aims which are designed to guide service delivery so that Housing Services can achieve the Council's vision which is "to promote and enhance the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the community through the provision of cost effective, customer focussed services".

The AMS continues to help the Council deliver these key aims.

The Council's key aims and, where appropriate, the associated key objectives of this Housing AMS are set out below:

a) To strengthen and develop the local economy through support for business development and inward investment.

Related AMS Objectives:

- To engage our customers and local business in decisions related to the well being of the community. (Objective j)
- b) To safeguard and enhance the natural and built environment.
  Related AMS Objectives:
  - To contribute to the sustainability of neighbourhoods. (Objective f)
  - To maintain sustainable homes through education, awareness and providing access to grant funding schemes (Objective k)
- c) To address the needs of South Derbyshire residents for good quality homes, of a variety of tenures, located in well planned and safe environments.

AMS Objective:

- To set a framework for the Council to achieve Decent Homes
   Standard on all Council Homes by 2010. (Objective a)
- To maximise customer satisfaction and meet the needs of our customers. (Objective c)
- To monitor and maintain the housing stock to ensure high standards of safety. (Objective i)
- d) To promote the health and welfare of all sections of the community, including access to leisure and cultural activities.
- e) To secure continuous improvements in the quality and efficiency of services provided by the Council.

AMS Objective:

- To review and challenge the approach to asset management to ensure best value. (Objective h)
- To use innovative methods of procurement to ensure quality and value for money for goods and services used to maintain and improve homes (Objective I)

#### f) To manage resources efficiently and effectively.

#### AMS Objectives:

- To maximise the asset value of its housing stock. (Objective b)
- To aid the retention of existing residents. (Objective d)
- To reduce the level of void properties. (Objective e)
- To ensure cost effectiveness and probity in expenditure on stock.
   (Objective f)
- g) To listen to, represent and provide leadership to the people of South Derbyshire in local, regional and national arenas.
  - To engage our customers and local business in decisions related to the well being of the community (Objective j)
- h) To support the development of the National Forest and its enjoyment by residents and visitors.

#### **D. Strategic Considerations**

A fundamental aim of the AMS is to ensure that the housing stock is maintained in good condition in order to achieve customer satisfaction to avoid deterioration of assets, prevent future repair costs and meet legislative and regulatory requirements.

The effective management of the housing stock must reflect the stock's future viability by consideration of demand for stock, property values, and stock condition. The Strategy must also take into account the following:

- Sustainability
- Environmental Factors
- Technology including e procurement
- Price, quality and value
- Democratic Representation
- The need to remain competitive

The AMS Strategy should now be read in conjunction with the Corporate Procurement Strategy and the Housing Service's Procurement Guidance Document where these considerations are factored. Each should ensure that investment priorities and processes reflect the different needs of the Housing Service to ensure its assets remain effectively maintained and meet high standards of performance and sustainability.

All of the strategies build upon the Council's pre defined guiding principles by:

- making decisions openly and with integrity setting out a clear framework on how investment decisions will be made;
- being accountable to the people of South Derbyshire for our decisions – using the AMS to make the best use of scarce resources and being open and sharing this information;
- c) involving the community in choices about services and local priorities – involving tenants' representatives;

- d) being open and responsive to change using a range of information and looking at different options so that the best result is achieved;
- e) treating people fairly and promoting equality of opportunity in employment and service provision;
- f) providing reliable and responsive services to our customers;
- g) working with partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors to achieve more than we can on our own looking at a range of different investment options;
- ensuring that the actions we take are sustainable in the long term – making sure that scarce resources are targeted wisely to achieve the best benefits;
- valuing employees and the essential role they play in service
   provision involving a range of front line staff in developing the AMS and developing options.

#### E. Context

South Derbyshire District Council continues to believe that the quality of its housing maintenance and improvement services is of vital importance both for the satisfaction of its tenants and to maintain the value of its housing stock.

The Government remains focussed on clear targets for the standard of housing stock. All social housing should meet the Decent Homes Standard by 2010.

The 2004 target of upgrading one third of the non decent stock has now been achieved. The Council continues to be focussed on meeting the 2010 targets. Consequently effective investment and procurement programmes for 2005/10 remain essential to this process.

#### F. Latest Stock Information

The Council now owns 3235 homes (as of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2005) throughout the District, 1094 (33.8%) of which are sheltered. This figure has reduced by 373 homes since the original survey was conducted in Sept 2002, which includes the disposal of 50 Elderly Persons Accommodation.

The table below shows the profile of our housing stock.

Building type	Beds	Pre 1945	1945 - 1964	1965 - 1974	Post 1975	Grand Total
Bedsit	1 bed	0	8	20	6	34
Total bedsits		0	8	20	6	34
Bungalows	1 bed	16	153	91	46	306
	2 bed	0	55	152	123	330
	3 bed	0	0	0	1	1
Total bungalo	ws	16	208	243	170	637
Flats	1 bed	0	16	98	266	380
	2 bed	0	177	55	180	412
	3 bed	0	1	2	3	6
Total flats		0	194	155	449	798
Houses	1 bed	2	0	0	0	2
	2 bed	147	347	24	18	536
	3 bed	323	668	99	97	1187
	4 bed	29	5	6	1	41
Total houses		501	1020	129	116	1766
		////				
Grand Total		517	1430	547	741	3235

#### **G. Progress on meeting standards**

The original stock condition survey was carried out in Sept 2002 by Property Tectonics. The report to the Council concluded that 79% of the housing stock currently met the 'Decent Homes Standard' with the remaining 21% failing due to a variety of reasons including heating, windows, doors, insulation, kitchens and bathrooms.

The stock condition data is held on 'Lifespan' software which is now used by Housing Services to monitor and manage stock improvements.

The 2002 report highlighted that many properties had failed due to gas and electric central heating systems being beyond their design life and the need to have a full replacement programme. The report also recommended a systematic approach to the replacement of kitchens, bathrooms and windows. This resulted in the preparation of a Planned Maintenance and Improvement Programme which sets out a systematic approach to improving the stock in line with 'Decent Homes' standard by 2010.

The programme has been measured against a series of baseline assessments which has ensured that so far South Derbyshire have met government targets to meet the standard for 2004 and looks set to achieve them for 2006 and 2010. The data continues to be validated both at desktop and on site with details checked for accuracy using 'Lifespan'. The Planned Maintenance and Improvement Programme is modified to accommodate any changes as a result of the 'Right to Buy' effects upon stock numbers.

To date, since 2002, the programme has reduced the number of non decent homes from 774 down to 534 and is on course to meet the 2006 target of 387 comfortably. Detail of the expenditure through the Planned Maintenance and Improvement Programme is appended to this document.

#### H. Procurement methods and Best value

In 2003, the Council produced a Corporate Procurement Strategy which was modelled on the National Procurement Strategy Guidance prepared in line with 'Byatt Taskforce' recommendations. Housing Services have since produced a Procurement Strategy Guidance Document that is designed to meet many of the actions set out in the Corporate Procurement Strategy and to ensure that the service delivers 'Best Practice' in this area.

The guidance sets out a process and considers the essential component parts that are needed to provide 'Best Value' for goods and services procured on behalf of Housing Services. The document supports Objective I of this AMS by encouraging innovation and use of different methods of procurement to attain value for money. It covers:

- Training for Members and Officers
- Probity, transparency and Legislative compliance
- Meeting Best value Needs by
  - o Challenging through process
  - Consulting suppliers and stakeholders on their needs
  - o Comparing through benchmarking and market research
  - Competing through various means including open competition, partnering and collaboration
- Identifying and Managing Risk
- Securing continuous Improvement
- Use of evaluation models to ensure best standards

Many of the recent procurement initiatives have been modelled around the principles set out in the guidance document and applied to Housing Service's Maintenance and Improvement Programmes.

#### I. Planned Maintenance and Improvement

Since 1983, Housing Services have operated an annual planned maintenance programme which has ensured that the housing stock has systematically benefited from refurbishment in line with modern standards. Funding for the programmes has always presented challenges and resulted in the need to prioritise specific improvements based upon needs rather than desires.

The stock condition survey which was undertaken in 2002 identified 79% compliance to 'Decent Homes' standards which is a reflection of the good practice and frugal use of limited funding by the authority in previous years of planned maintenance.

Most recently, the annual planned maintenance scheme has been incorporated into the Planned Maintenance and Improvement programme for 2004/2010.

#### a) Housing Stock Modernisations

This work is undertaken through a formalised partnering agreement with a local building works contractor. The partnering agreement was formed in 2003 following many years of a successful contracting relationship and periodic market testing which had resulted in the contractor consistently out performing other competitors for the work.

The work consists of a variety of housing stock improvements which are identified within the capital improvement programme covering roofing, window and door replacements, general interior and exterior building works as well as kitchen and bathroom replacements.

The partnering agreement has realised benefits by releasing internal supervisory resources that had previously been deployed upon the standard form of contract in line with industry practice.

The core group of the partnering team consisting of client, contractor and other interested parties meet on a regular basis to consider progress and innovative ways to improve quality and cost on the contract. The aim of the Core Group is to identify where savings can be made on the contract through efficiency.

#### b) Central Heating Modernisations

The central heating modernisation programme is configured to deliver two vital key elements. These are:

 To ensure that the non decent homes identified in the original stock condition survey of 2002 are brought up to standard 2. To systematically identify and improve the heating systems in those properties, on a rolling annual basis, that are likely to fall below the standard.

The prioritisation of this work is designed to ensure that sufficient funds and resources are deployed to bring about a unilateral improvement in stock condition. This will ensure that future maintenance and improvement costs are minimised and remain consistent in future years following 2010.

The programme remains on course to deliver this overall improvement.

Details of the progress to date are set out in the Planned Maintenance and Improvement Programme annexed to this document.

#### c) Electrical Installation programme

The Electrical Installation Programme is a recent initiative which is currently under development within Housing Services. Previously electrical repairs and rewires were undertaken as a consequence of Periodic Electrical Inspections following repairs or void letting. The recommendations of the specialist electrical contractor were examined and full electrical rewires or upgrading were commissioned from annual budgets on that basis.

More recently, maintenance and improvement staff have considered that factoring in the automatic electrical upgrades as a consequence of the installation of new kitchens and bathrooms should create longer term savings if they were harmonised with an electrical installation programme. This will involve a full examination of all electrical certification documents and the preparation of a database.

The benefits of this approach are that properties can be systematically upgraded to IEE 16<sup>th</sup> Edition Standards within a shorter time frame and through targeted use of funding.

At present, Housing Services are considering the benefits of delivering this scheme through a partnering agreement as against open competitive tendering. Consideration is also being given to the benefits of letting the

contract separately compared to a packaged contract which includes the responsive repairs work.

#### d) Managing Asbestos in the Home

Following legislative requirements to identify and act upon asbestos found in housing stock, Housing Services commissioned Environmental Contamination Services (ECS) to undertake a survey and make recommendations to eliminate the risks associated with asbestos in the home.

The results of the survey will form a database of the current condition of properties that contain asbestos. This will then be used to prepare an action plan during which time consideration will then be given to the implications on future budgets.

During 2005 customers will be receiving advisory leaflets and interactive guidance online to ensure asbestos is effectively managed within the home.

#### J. Responsive Repairs Service

The responsive repairs service for Housing services is delivered through three interrelated contractual arrangements. They are:

- Gas Service and Repairs provided by a local gas servicing contractor (Not related to the Central Heating Improvement Programme contractor)
- Electrical Repairs and Maintenance provided by a local electrical contractor (currently under consideration for a partnering agreement for the new Electrical Installation Programme)
- General building repairs and maintenance currently provided by Housing Service's own DSO of 11 tradesmen

**Gas servicing and repairs** are delivered by Gascare Ltd which is the newly appointed contractor following a full review of the service. The review involved incorporating improvements to the service programme and subsequent retendering.

This was carried out in early 2004 and has resulted in a general improvement in the performance of the responsive repairs service. In 2004/2005 Housing Services reviewed access arrangements through their procedures to support the contractor in accessing homes in order to carry out statutory landlord gas servicing duties.

The **electrical repairs and maintenance service** is currently under review and consideration is being given to whether the contract would benefit through economies by packaging with the proposed electrical installation programme and adopting a partnering agreement. Although the service is performing adequately, the Repairs and Improvement team consider that value and performance could be improved through a re appraisal of present arrangements. The commencement of the new contractual relationship is planned for around July 2005.

The **general building repairs and maintenance service** is provided by Housing Service's Direct Service Organisation which carries out responsive repairs in Plumbing, Joinery and Bricklaying trades to the Council's housing stock. The organisation turns over around £750,000 per annum but has not tendered for its work since 1999.

Current performance of the DSO is measured by KPI's which show that its strengths lie in the ability to respond to and complete emergency work within timescales. However, the organisation is weak on delivering routine works on time and this is an area that has prompted a re-examination of the service to identify what the best course of action would be to improve performance, quality and value.

The Housing Service has plans to examine the 'make or buy' options that exist for the future of the general building responsive repairs and to consider the various opportunities that may be presented through re tendering, collaborative working or wholesale externalisation of the service.

The Repairs and Improvement Manager is preparing an Options Appraisal Strategy to address this issue.

#### K. Sustainability

Part of South Derbyshire's drive to improve stock condition and community well being includes the activation of plans to ensure sustainability. The relevance to sustainability overlaps many areas of the work that is undertaken by the Repairs and Improvement Team in their delivery of a range of services.

The Housing Services Procurement Guidance Document covers the aspects of sustainability when undertaking a review of goods or services under 'Best Value' However sustainability also embraces environmental and eco aspects that will have a direct impact upon the management of assets in the future.

As a consequence, Housing Services are to roll out two initiatives during 2005 which are considered as vital ingredients of meeting and sustaining the 'Decent Homes' standard.

#### a) Energy Efficiency

Housing Services are currently in the early stages of developing a strategy which will address improvements to the energy efficiency of housing stock through grant funded means with a number of energy suppliers.

The strategy will also incorporate an energy advice service that will provide tenant customers with details of ways in which they can reduce energy costs within the home as well as having access to an energy advice line and web access for specific queries.

#### b) Lifetime Homes

Future planning for the incorporation of better design features into existing and modernised housing stock will include, wherever financially practicable, inclusion of 'lifetime homes' aspects which are drawn from Part M of the Building Regulations as well as the 'Lifetime Homes' Standard.

A workable guide for the Repairs and Improvement Team is to be prepared as a working document that will be considered prior to any capital investment programming.

#### L. Customer Satisfaction

At present, indications are that the level of customer satisfaction with the services provided is satisfactory, however, the Head of Housing is conscious of the limitations of the data that is provided. As such a series of meetings have taken place with TACT (Tenant Advisory and Consultation Team) to establish views for improving services. The results of this consultation will form the basis of a series of local performance indicators, some of which will gauge customer satisfaction and perception in greater depth.

#### M. Customer Movement and Retention

Since the preparation of the first Asset Management Strategy, movement and retention of the Housing customer profile has been consistent with many other authorities of a similar size. Since 2002, the stock total has reduced through 'Right to Buy' by 373 from 3608 to 3235. This figure is characteristic of recent falls of social housing stock numbers to private ownership.

The Head of Housing undertakes periodic reviews of this aspect of the service and the issue was considered as part of the Option Appraisal process undertaken in 2004 and which is scheduled to be updated by September 2005.

#### N. Conclusion

At present, Housing Services remain on course to achieve the 'Decent homes' Standard by 2010. However, more work needs to be carried in order to bring together repair and improvement strategies through better coordination to deliver longer term value and sustainable housing stock.

The following action Plan sets out the main objectives for 2005/2006.

Appe	Appendix 1:	Asset Management Strategy – Action Plan	РІал вичному праводня при пределення при пределення при	
Repa	Repairs and Improvement Section	ASS.	Asset Management Action Plan 2005/6	
Ref	Objectives for 2005/6	Progress to Date	Designated officer	Completion Date
(e)	Update and maintain Repairs and Improvement Programme including funding (AMS Objectives a, b, c, d)	Redraft completed. Programme on target up to end March 2005	Repairs and Improvement Manager	1.4.5
(q	Prepare draft of the Electrical Installation Programme (AMS objectives a, b, i, j, l)	All electrical records being coordinated and analysed to establish a database of electrical systems stock condition. Consultation currently taking place with electrical contractor(s) to establish their views on packaging with responsive electrical repairs.	Quantity Surveyor Improvement Manager	30,4.05
(°	Implement Asbestos survey and analysis regime to include database and advisory information for customers (AMS objectives i, k)	Present sample of homes surveyed full survey programme proceeds having been specified and surveying prices obtained. Database to be established by ECS along with preparation of advisory information	Repairs and Improvement Manager	1.10.05
(p	Review contract for Electrical Repairs (AMS objectives a, b, i, j, l)	New electrical procedures written. Consultation with contractor(s) currently underway to seek views on packaging as per b)	Quantity Surveyor Improvement Manager	1.07.05
(ә	Carry out full competitive Options Appraisal for service currently provided by DSO. (AMS objectives c, e, g, h, j, l)	Partially prepared Options Appraisal Plan and timescale. Consultation with stakeholders and customers planned for May/June. Procurement Panel to be assembled	Repairs and Improvement Manager	1.10.05

f)	Increase energy efficiency programs	Policy document currently being	Repairs and Improvement Manager   1.06.05	1,06,05
	and maximise external funding.	drafted and contact made with Energy		
	Prepare advisory information for	savings Trust to access grant		
	customers (AMS objectives b, c, d, g,	organisations.		
	f, k)		de personal de la company de l	
(b	Action plan and guidance document	Initial preparatory work undertaken to Improvement Manager	Improvement Manager	1.12.5
;	required to reflect lifetime homes and	establish standards needed		
	ecological issues			
	(AMS objectives b, d, f, I, k)			
h)	Improve KPI information through	Initial consultation taken place with	Housing Services Manager	1.08.05
ı	extending consultation methods (AMS	review of current Local and BV KPI's		•
	objective j)	underway		

### Housing Improvements and Planned Maintenance Programme

Over the last three financial years, from April 2002 to March 2005, the Council have had a programme of improvement programmes supplemented by a planned maintenance programme.

#### **Housing Improvement Programme**

The improvement programme includes for the replacement of central heating, kitchens and bathrooms on a programme that is planned until 2010.

Partnered contracts were introduced in the 2004–05 financial year for heating and kitchen replacements. A partnered contract will also be introduced for bathroom replacements to commence in April 2006, which will involve a range of stakeholders including Members and TACT.

The expenditure and number of completed properties over the three years is detailed below:

Financial Year	Number of Properties	Expenditure
Heating Improvements		
2002-03	227	£591,093.00
2003-04	167	£446,982.00
2004-05	177	£510,000.00
Kitchen improvements		
2002-03	75	£241,162.82
2003-04	85	£247,992.00
2004-05	78	£240,000.00
Bathroom improvements		
2002-03	0	£0
2003-04	104	£159,856.24
2004-05	85	£160,000.00
Total	998	£2,597,086.06

The expenditure for the 2004-05 contracts is subject to Final Accounts being agreed.

#### Planned Maintenance Programme

The planned maintenance programme supplements the improvement programmes and with continued investment reduces the requirements on the day-to-day responsive repairs.

The works concentrate on the external fabric and structure of the housing stock, which includes:

- the provision of PVCu windows with double glazed units, to replace all timber, metal and single glazed PVCu windows,
- replacement of defective external doors,
- pre-paint repairs and external painting,

- damp-proofing where rising damp exists,
- · roof repairs and re-roofing where required,
- repairs for paths and the repair and
- renewal of front boundary fences.

The expenditure and number of completed properties is detailed below:

Financial Year	Number of Properties	Expenditure
2002-03	613	£1,075,713.19
2003-04	595	£1,116,784.00
2004-05	672	£1,070,000.00
Total	1880	£3,262,497.19

The expenditure for the 2004-05 contracts is subject to the Final Account being agreed.

The above expenditure was funded from a combination of the Housing Revenue Account and the Major Repairs Allowance.

#### **Partnering**

The partnered contracts for heating, kitchens and planned maintenance schemes all commenced in April 2004 for a five-year period, and expire in March 2009.

The contracts and contractors are:

Number of Properties	Value (2004-09)*
652	£1,735,000.00
493	£1,970,000.00
3300	Subject to funding
	493

<sup>\*</sup>The value of the contracts are subject to funding.

Robert R Prettie & Co Limited and Harvey & Clark Limited also currently undertake the Bathroom Improvements.

Bathroom contracts for the 2005-06 financial year have been negotiated following successful completion of the 2004-05 contracts. Both contractors will be included on the tender list for a partnered contract. The partnering procurement process will take place in during 2005 for a partnered contract to commence in April 2006.