

Draft

HRA Business Plan 2002

SOUTH DERBYSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Stock condition summary, financial position, aspirations, ownership of stock, links to corporate objectives and Housing Strategy, risks and aims. This to refer to assessing excellence and the Council's ability to:

- Plans to bring all stock up to the decency standard by 2010
- Housing management services delivered within a business planning context under the new financial regime
- Rents set to comply with the restructuring frameworks and show that convergence is possible by 2012
- Choice based lettings system established or under consideration
- Tenant participation compacts that give tenants a real opportunity to influence the decision making process
- Cost effectiveness targets of at least 2 percent per year are set and close to being achieved
- Measures to ensure that e-government targets are achieved by 2005
- Policies and practices that address relevant equality and diversity issues (including implementation of relevant codes of practice)

[To be completed CH max 1 page]

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1. INTRODUCTION TO THE AREA

South Derbyshire district is located in the county of Derbyshire in the East Midlands. The area is mostly rural in character, with much of its land still dedicated to farming, although the area is also home to engineering, manufacturing and service industries. Part of the area is in the former Derbyshire coalfields area.

Swadlincote is the main centre of employment, with Hatton, Melbourne, Shardlow, and Willington all providing employment opportunities. The area has good road links, and is within easy commuting distance of areas such as Derby and Birmingham. The majority of the area to the south of the River Trent is now part of the National Forest, and this has an impact locally, bringing environmental, social and economic benefits to the District.

Swadlincote is the administrative centre of the District, with the Council having its offices and a depot in the town. Outside of the urban area of Swadlincote there are 50 parishes.

The District has a population of around 82,500, living in an area of some 34,000 hectares, and for almost two decades has been the fastest growing District in Derbyshire. It has a workforce of 28,450, with unemployment rates of just 2.2% compared to the national average of 3.8%. Main employers include the Toyota car plant, South Derbyshire District Council(?), Nestle and Hepworths. Average regional earnings of £22,000 are higher than the national average but the majority of incomes are in the range £10,000 - £15,000 p.a.

Of the 34,636 homes in South Derbyshire, 87.6% are owner occupied, 10.7% are owned by South Derbyshire District Council, with Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) owning 1.7%. Social housing stock therefore accounts for 12.4% of the total housing in the District. The owner occupied figure includes a significant number of privately rented homes, with an estimated 400 private lets a year being made.

Average house prices in the area range from £52,845 for a terrace to £130,000 for a detached property. The average house price is £87,000.

Rising sale prices and a buoyant rented market makes it difficult for newly formed local households to access accommodation particularly in some of the more rural parts of the District. This has an impact on South Derbyshire, in that it maintains demand for Council housing in most areas but means that tenants are generally not in employment or are in low paid employment, and this affects the services that tenants require from their landlord. Social rented housing is in demand, but the Right to Buy is depleting council rented accommodation in rural areas.

2. INTRODUCTION TO THE BUSINESS PLAN

The purpose of the HRA Business Plan is to link resources available from the Housing Revenue Account to the needs of the services and stock; to ensure the local authority has identified risks to its ability to meet government targets and to ensure targets are clearly identified and plans to meet them are clearly stated.

Consultation on the principles and contents of the plan is crucial. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) guidance is clear that HRA Business Plans are not a document for central government but a management tool for local authorities, which is subject to Government Office scrutiny as well as potentially that of all relevant stakeholders.

The council is aware that a good Business Plan which enables them to identify appropriate options for investment and service delivery, could attract additional capital funding to enable increased investment in improvements, and will also provide other cost efficiency savings. The Council uses its Business Plan as a working tool for making decisions and monitoring performance.

This is the Council's third Housing Revenue Account Business Plan. It considers the Council's housing stock and service as a whole, and its role in sustaining communities. The plan demonstrates how the landlord service contributes to achieving the objectives of the Council's Housing Strategy, and other corporate plans and strategic documents such as the Best Value performance plan.

The format of the plan has changed this year to allow a clearer assessment of its fitness for purpose and to link more clearly related sections of the plan, and to enable an assessment of performance in the future.

Last year, the Business Plan committed the housing service to establishing an asset management framework, considering the options for hard-to-let stock, developing a policy to address under-occupation, and carrying out a stock survey and decent homes assessment. It has achieved many of these, despite the operational difficulties that it has faced in staffing shortages and management changes.

2.1 Corporate, operational and strategic context

The housing service contributes to corporate policies and strategies through its head of service, the Head of Community Services who sits on the corporate management team. The service has been fully supported during the last six months by the corporate management team and by elected members who unanimously approved the proposals to bring in external consultants to assist with a 'root and branch' review of the service after the suspension of the Housing Services Manager in February 2002.

Since the independent service review was completed in April 2002, this corporate support has continued with additional funding being approved to provide additional management support for a short time, as well as to enable physical improvements required to sheltered schemes. The commitment to enable improvements in the housing service reflects the importance of this service in delivering objectives and targets identified and prioritised corporately.

The 2002-3 Corporate plan sets out the Council's vision for the future, "*to promote and enhance the social, economic and environmental well-being of the community through the provision of cost-effective, customer-focused services*".

To achieve this the Council has identified the following principles that will guide all its activities:

- Making decisions openly and with integrity
- Being accountable to the people of South Derbyshire for decisions
- Involving the community in choices about services and local priorities
- Being open and responsive to change
- Treating people fairly and promoting equality of opportunity in employment and service provision.
- Providing reliable and responsive services to customers
- Working with partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors to achieve more than the council can alone.
- Ensuring that the actions taken are sustainable in the long term
- Valuing employees and the essential role they play in service provision.

These objectives were adopted to reflect the priorities of residents from a MORI survey:

- The provision of high quality, value for money services
- The protection and promotion of the environment
- Community involvement in decision making

The objectives within the Corporate Plan are delivered through the objectives, targets and outputs within other statutory and departmental plans and policies that the Council adopts.

These include

- Community Plan
- Best Value Performance Plan
- Crime and disorder audit and strategy
- Tenant participation strategy
- **Draft** Homelessness strategy
- **Draft** Anti- social behaviour strategy
- **Draft** Supporting People strategy
- Asset management plan
- Capital strategy
- Housing Strategy
- HRA business plan

The Business Plan directly supports the Housing Strategy, and delivers some of its key objectives (appendix 1). The Plan considers directly how the Council will involve residents in decisions, how it will ensure compliance with the Decent Homes Standards, and how it will implement Rent Restructuring. All these issues have been addressed by the Business Plan Working Group established last year to consider the options for the future of the council's housing stock, and the work of this group is considered in more detail in the consultation and information section of this Plan.

Clearly the impact of the strategic decisions on investment made by the Council underpins the business plan, and housing is a priority for capital spend to enable the Council to meet its commitment to plans for improving its properties.

The Business Plan objectives are interpreted into operational activity through the service and team plans and are used to create individual targets for staff, for example in the cash targets set for collection of rent to maximise HRA income.

3. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

3.1 Housing Service Vision

The vision of the service annual plan is *“to ensure an effective and efficient housing service, and to agree a long term housing strategy for the District with stakeholders, to be delivered with its partners”*.

3.2 Best Value in South Derbyshire

The Council has produced its third Best Value Performance Plan, for 2002/3. This reports in detail on performance in the delivery of a wide range of services over the last year, and includes housing related performance. It also describes how the authority intends to improve services in the coming year, with clear targets coming out of the best value service reviews and Service Action Plans.

The housing service areas already reviewed include Sheltered Housing and the Warden Service, and the housing strategy and the enabling role including allocations (review underway May 2002). During 2002/3 the management and maintenance of the housing stock will be reviewed, followed by the cross cutting Community Planning review the following year. Cross cutting reviews provide information needed for the Comprehensive Performance Assessment.

The Council was criticised for its Sheltered Housing Best Value review, and has taken this on board for the future, improving processes to include stakeholders in reviews, and to ensure an external 'challenge' by external organisations at key stages. It has also established, within the housing service, two new Improvement Task Team – Housing Services and Asset Management – and these Teams will be responsible for project managing changes identified in action plans for the service.

3.3 Links and contributions to the Housing Strategy

The last housing strategy received a 'below average' rating by Government office and the Council adopted an action plan to address the issues it faced, striving to improve its rating within two years. Since then it has undertaken a housing needs review and commissioned and received information on its own stock condition and compliance with Decent Homes Standards. The council has also adopted a much more inclusive approach to developing its strategy.

The Housing Strategy and Planning Group (a multi - agency group, with representatives of, different council departments including housing, the Government office (East Midlands), Registered Social landlords, estate agents, police, social services, Landlords, the voluntary sector and local residents) was launched and met in June 2002 to review the strategic housing objectives. From the work of this group the Strategy was produced.

The housing strategy seeks to *“address the needs of South Derbyshire residents for good quality and affordable homes, located in healthy, safe and pleasant environments”*.

The Strategic Housing Objectives developed through the group are:

- Identify and define the housing needs of South Derbyshire residents
- Work with stakeholders to maintain and improve the districts housing stock
- Ensure that there is an adequate supply of homes to meet anticipated needs, taking into account demands altered by new industry coming into the area.
- Ensure that vulnerable people have access to appropriate and stable housing
- Provide high quality, customer focused housing service

The council has worked with its partners, and external assessors during the last year to assist it to achieve the 'fit for purpose' criteria. It has an action plan to further develop its strategy, and to turn the vision into reality in the medium term. To assist with the longer term, the Council and its partners are considering the merits of undertaking a more comprehensive needs and demand study in the district.

The Council has built into this year's strategy a methodology for monitoring and evaluating its success, and as part of this will undertake an assessment of its own strengths and weaknesses and those of its partners in future years. Tenants will continue to play an active, and important role in the strategy and its implementation.

3.4 Objectives of the housing landlord business

The HRA business planning group has agreed the following objectives for the housing service, and has promoted these to all stakeholders and through its website:

Finance

- To maintain a minimum working balance for the Housing Revenue Account of £0.5m, with a target of £0.75m to provide more flexibility and choice in the future.
- To identify the costs to be covered by the "supporting people pot" by end March 2002.
- To implement rent restructuring as required by 2012, in accordance with a strategy agreed with members and tenants.
- To establish costs of reducing non-decent homes by one third by 2004, and ensuring full compliance by 2010, and identify how these costs can be met.
- To collect 100% of rent due from 2003 onwards.
- To maximise income to enable spend on repairs.
- To monitor the impact of Right to Buy sales on the Housing Revenue Account financial position.

Tenancy Management

- To set and publicise standards that the housing service strives to achieve, and ensure that these meet customer aspirations by 2002/2003.
- To deliver excellence in customer care through informed staff who take responsibility for dealing with queries/complaints, with IT systems which support the delivery of services in 2002/2003.
- To deliver services in an improved physical environment, that demonstrates the respect that the service has for its staff and customers by 2004.
- To establish an anti-social behaviour policy in 2002.

Supported Housing

- To ensure adequate support packages in conjunction with care providers to maintain vulnerable tenants in tenancies in 2003.
- To review services with tenants to ensure their relevance bi-annually.
- To research the housing and support needs of young people in 2002 and to enable provision from 2003 onwards.
- To model financial changes, before and after review of schemes in 2002/2003, and consider how these impact on both the Council and its tenants. To assess the costs of schemes against other providers and seek value for money services.

Rent Setting

- To achieve a new integrated IT system for 2003, which will enable rent restructuring to be implemented.

Lettings and Demand

- To re-let general rented properties within 4 weeks in 2002/2003, and 3 weeks from 2003/2004.
- During 2002 to consider the appropriateness of difficult to let sheltered schemes within the context of the Council's asset management strategy, and to consider options for dealing with those that are unable to achieve a 4-week re-let time.
- To explore a more open lettings policy to maximise customer choice and lettings in 2003.

Property Services

- To set clear standards of repair and target times for works, by mid 2002, and promote these to staff and tenants to ensure consistent and appropriate service.
- To ensure that tenants are fully consulted/informed and have appropriate choices for works to their property from 2003 onwards.
- To analyse stock condition information and the impact of this on the financial position of the Housing Revenue Account in 2002.
- To ensure inspection visits made within agreed time scales in 2002.
- To introduce an IT repair diagnostic tool for staff in 2003/2004.
- To multi skill works operatives commencing 2002/2003.
- To undertake options appraisals for voids over £2k from 2002 onwards.
- To introduce a Quality Assurance System in 2002/3.
- To establish during 2002 an appropriate asset management policy to provide a framework for investment decisions and option appraisals.
- To provide tenants with 24-hour, 365 day a year access to report all repairs in 2003 with wider access to services via a call centre and Internet.

Best Value

- To review services to ensure value for money compared to others.
- To set a programme of planned maintenance works for a rolling 3-year programme, to ensure decent homes compliance, in consultation with staff, members and tenants, and publish this to all stakeholders.

Management of Services

- To enable access to 365 day services through a call centre.
- To establish an integrated IT system which will provide user-friendly management reports and enable rent restructuring during 2003.
- From May 2002 to collect, and act on, performance information each month, and establish rigorous systems of management.
- To establish an appointment system via an IT system for all staff meeting with tenants in 2002.
- To ensure staff training, information and appropriate management arrangements for the effective running of the service in 2002/2003.
- To ensure that all staff have appropriate reviews and appraisals with clear targets for performance from 2002 onwards.
- To recruit and retain good staff and recognise the contribution and performance of staff.

Tenant Participation

- To increase tenant participation and establish one new group each year.
- To ensure that tenants are involved in decision making processes.
- To establish one "estate action plan" with tenants each year.
- To set up tenant panels for reality checks regular service feedback in 2002.

These objectives have influenced the targets within this plan, which will be cascaded to staff as appropriate into individual targets. A detailed annual service plan is developed annually and the plan for 2003/4 will be developed in the Autumn 2002. This plan will be developed from the strategic action plan within this document, and using HRA priorities. It will set out how teams within the service will contribute to the overall targets for the future.

3.5 Landlord business

Since the last business plan the service received critical feedback after a second Housing Inspectorate visit following its sheltered housing review. The Council suspended the Housing Services Manager in February 2002, and appointed Pennington Consulting to investigate related issues and to undertake a service diagnostic report and to prepare an action plan for the way forward. Following a through investigation of the service a maintenance inspector was also suspended by the Council.

The service diagnostic (summary of which is included at appendix 2) was considered by the corporate management team and a Change and Improvement Plan was agreed, attached at appendix 3. There has been considerable progress since this Plan was adopted and staff briefed, and Pennington Consulting was commissioned by the Council to provide further management support in the short term to assist with the implementation of key projects within the document.

The key findings of the service diagnostic – which form the main actions in the change management plan – were:

- o significant evidence of low staff morale
- o Inadequate support from senior managers
- o longstanding tensions between some staff/ teams
- o high levels of sick leave
- o evidence of a "blame" culture
- o inadequate policies and procedures
- o lack of performance monitoring/ management control
- o inappropriate influence on staff by elected members

The main recommendations were:

- o The establishment of a clear vision for the future agreed by stakeholders and communicated to tenants, staff and members.
- o Improved access to services including a housing call centre for housing and repair enquiries.
- o A focus on operational delivery through Improvement task teams, performance monitoring and some staff structure changes to facilitate better team working.
- o Improved customer care training.

Earlier in 2001 a restructuring of the service had been agreed, and this was fully implemented in March/April 2002, with new senior staff in key posts and the community warden service being operational. This made significant changes predominantly in the sheltered and housing management teams. The new external manager appointments, and some internal promotions, have been successful with a new management team within the service being supported by the Head of Community Services.

The Head of Community Services leads Housing services, Environmental Health, Community and Leisure Development services providing opportunities for partnership and community development work. The Housing Service employs 30 staff, who are

based in the Civic Offices, and 29 wardens and sheltered housing cleaners. The housing DSO employs 12 staff.

At present the housing services are currently delivered through 3 units with specific responsibilities for Housing Partnership and Strategy, Building Maintenance, and Advice, Liaison and sheltered housing. (Appendix 4 shows the existing structure) It is likely that this will change following the report from Pennington Consulting, with a restructuring within the housing maintenance teams and support services envisaged and being discussed with staff and Unions. Consideration is being given to splitting the strategic and enabling role from the landlord service work to work directly to the Head of Community Services and within the private sector housing team.

As part of the development work with staff that the service has identified a training and development programme is underway, including specific training for senior and middle managers.

The Council operates an annual development and review programme, where every employee agrees objectives and development needs which are designed to improve service delivery and personal achievements. The Council is also in the early stages of assessment for the award of Investors in People and has already achieved more than 50% of the required standards. The council recognises the value of staff, and that they are key to the improvements that it wants to make to services. Staff have been enthusiastic about changes, and have welcomed a more inclusive approach to decision taking and to sharing responsibility for service improvements.

3.6 Value of service – now and in the future

The Council knows from its best value review work and satisfaction surveys that its services need to be reassessed and provided in a consistent way and to a consistent standard. It has established a residents panel of ninety four households which it will use as a way of gauging satisfaction, and testing which services it needs to review or improve early in its programme. This assessment will cover costs, needs for the service, needs for different services and how these are delivered and by whom.

3.7 Properties, the Decent Homes standard, and making best use of homes

The Council owns 3,608 homes throughout the District, 1,166 (32 %) of which are sheltered. There are only 72 general let flats. Included in this stock are 222 homes of non-traditional construction.

Table 1 below gives the stock profile.

Table 3.1: General Stock Numbers by Age and Type (South Derbyshire) as at March 31 2002

Stock	Pre 1945	1945-1964	1965-1974	Post 1974	Total
1-2 bedroom and bedsit	185	826	500	645	2156
3+ bedrooms	415	802	121	114	1452
Non-traditional houses and bungalows	0	63	50	109	222
Flats up to 2 storeys	0	152	176	436	764
Flats 3 to 5 storeys	0	55	50	21	126
Total	600	1628	621	759	3608

The council has had a structured programme of improvements over many years, with works focusing on [info from PJ to be inserted]

[Decent Homes information to go here when available]

2,300 properties, 62% of the stock, are located in the urban area of Swadlincote with

the rest dispersed through rural parishes. Almost half of the stock was built during the period 1945-64, with a further 17% prior to 1945.

There is strong interest in the Right to Buy, with an increasing number of properties being sold; 104 properties were sold during the course of the last year compared to around 60 in previous years. The Council is losing properties mainly in rural areas. As the council loses family homes due to the Right to Buy its sheltered housing becomes a correspondingly higher percentage of its stock.

The Council has a policy of prioritising older person moves to sheltered schemes from its larger housing stock, both reducing under-occupation and releasing a family house that can then be re-let. A formal under-occupation policy has been developed as identified in last year's plan and an incentive to move scheme is being introduced from the end of July 2002

The Council's sheltered stock makes up almost a third of its properties and the Council commits an annual sum, £250,000 for 2002/3, to fund adaptations required by Council tenants, with the majority of this going to sheltered tenants.

The majority of this stock is in very high demand, although difficulties are experienced in letting bed-sit accommodation, especially where these have shared bathrooms. Some difficulties also exist with letting first floor flats where there is a large concentration of sheltered accommodation in an area. Properties are generally in good physical condition although there is a recognised need to review the schemes with shared bathrooms. Three option appraisals have been undertaken as identified in last year's plan and members and residents are now being consulted about the recommendations.

The Council will make future investment decisions on the basis of its new HRA Asset Management Framework. The results of the stock condition survey are fundamental to the future development of this strategy and indeed in option appraisals and the council has purchased and been trained on software which enables it to manipulate data, and to update information as planned maintenance work is completed. The integrity of decent homes compliance is therefore assured.

The asset management strategy promotes the take-up of Government initiatives such as the Home Energy Efficiency scheme.

3.8 **Key issues for the Housing Service**

The Change Management plan identified significant problems including lack of management control and absence of key policies and procedures that are now being addressed. The report was endorsed by members and has received the full support of staff at all levels and trade union representatives. This led to the launch of a programme of change and improvement which will impact across the service. The action plan will ensure changes including improved management and better information, developing a clear vision for social housing, stock condition, rents, human resources, listening to customers, lettings and sheltered housing.

The main issues identified for action (and the objectives arising from the business plan working group) have subsequently been incorporated into the housing service plan.

Housing Division Service Plan

The service plan for 2002/3 (appendix 5) was drawn together taking into account the following service related challenges. The next plan will be based on the action plan within this Business Plan.

- The need to deliver an improved, more customer focused repairs service within existing budgets
- The need to increase the percentage of work carried out in a planned rather than responsive way
- Integrating the Advice, Liaison and sheltered housing roles into a new unit
- The need for a fully integrated housing management information system.
- The need to implement rent restructuring, including IT implications
- The need to disaggregate the sheltered budget and implement the "Supporting People" regime.
- Increased tenant involvement in decision making
- Investigating long term stock management options
- The aim to improve the external assessment of the Housing strategy
- Increasing the base information supporting the HRA business plan
- Improving arrears performance (current and former)
- Improved response to neighbour disputes
- Reduced staff sickness levels.

The Council has assessed its services against the expectations within *assessing excellence* and aims to meet these new standards within two years, with an incremental introduction of new working practices and approaches. A staff survey was conducted to assess the gap between the standard and current practice and a summary of the results are attached (appendix 6) This reinforced the evidence gained during the production of the housing diagnostic report, with awareness of policies generally poor, and staff below manager level not feeling part of the policy making process.

Equalities

The district supports the principles of services being available and accessible to all sections of the community including black and minority ethnic groups who may potentially be vulnerable and also individuals who are vulnerable because of their age or particular support needs.

The council has not in the past complied with the CRE code of guidance for rented housing but has committed to using the opportunity of a new housing management information system to begin to collect this data. In addition it will ensure that it can meet its general duty under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

3.9 Consultation and information

A Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan Working Group was established in November 2001 to consider business plan issues and housing stock options. The group comprises key stakeholders, including residents, staff and elected members and has met monthly agreeing objectives for the housing service (attached at appendix 7) which were tested – and then scored - against each option available for the council's stock in the future.

The initial work of this group will conclude in September 2002 with a review of the objectives scored against each option available, together with the financial consequences for residents and for the Council of each option. The group will then make a recommendation to Council based on these assessments and it visits to other organisations.

These options considered during this review included:

- Retention of stock
- Large Scale Voluntary Transfer
- Private Finance Initiative
- Trickle Transfer

- Prudential borrowing
- Arms Length Housing Management Company (with and without additional funding)
- A mix of the options available (including redirecting available capital resources)

The Working Group's extensive programme of work is attached (appendix 8), including the visits and discussions with other Councils that formed part of the review.

The Group considered the Housing Strategy and HRA Business Plan for submission in 2002, and this group will continue to develop the strategic direction of housing for the Council in the future.

3.10 Involvement tools and processes

Tenant involvement has made considerable strides during the year, with the involvement of residents growing both in number and in the range of opportunities. This work is supported by the dedicated Tenant Participation Officer post.

Since the last business plan there has been significant progress including:

- An update and review of the Tenant Compact and action plan
- Revised tenant participation structure, that is more representative and democratic.
- TACT (umbrella organisation for tenant groups) became formally constituted.
- Four studies underway under the governments "Options for Action" programme.
- The development of dedicated Tenant resource centre underway supported by funding from the Council.
- Continued financial support for local tenant groups
- Involvement of tenants in regional initiatives such as the Derbyshire networking conference, Derbyshire tenants forum and East Midlands tenant participation forum.
- TACT members involved in the recruitment of housing staff
- Involvement in Best Value reviews
- Involvement in HRA business planning and stock options/ Housing strategy work
- Development of revised customer charter (attached at appendix 9)
- Tenants delivering training to other tenants on participation initiatives
- Tenants carrying out visits with staff to agree void standards.
- Tenant membership of Supporting People Forum
- Attendance by tenants at feedback session on HIP submission to government office.
- Joint training with staff and members

3.11 Operational targets – achievements against last year's plan

The business plan last year identified actions that the Council wanted to take to make improvements. Despite the operational difficulties that it has had it has achieved significant results:

- a stock condition survey has been carried out, and software purchased to maintain information. This work included the external survey of 100% of the stock, with 30% internal surveys.
- The process of considering the long-term future of some of the sheltered housing schemes has begun, with option appraisal of 3 schemes taking place.
- A review of the management of sheltered schemes was carried out which resulted in changing the management arrangements from a residential to a community based service.

4. THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

4.1 The internal environment

4.1.1 Meeting the decency standard

As set out at section x.x, x% of the Council's properties meet the decency standard, x% fail the standard, x% are anticipated to fail within the period to 2010. The costs of meeting the standard were assessed during 2002 by Property Telectronics as £xxm. The costs of addressing all stock condition issues over the next 30 years is estimated at xxm. **[to be completed when information available].**

The resources available to the Council to address stock issues are set out below:

	2001/2 £m	2002/3 £m	2003/4 £m	2004/5 £m	Total £m
MRA	1.937				
Capital pot resources					
Useable capital receipts					
Proportion of Supporting People costs					
MRA reserve?					
Other?					
Total					

These resources will be used to fund works that contribute to meeting the decent homes standard, as well as environmental improvements and other works to meet tenants' aspirations as set out at appendix xx.

In addition to its housing stock, the Council also owns 334 garages valued at £501,000, communal areas in sheltered schemes valued at £654,000 and four shops valued at £100,000. The condition of the garages is varied and as part of the asset management strategy, their costs and benefits and future viability will be considered. **[require confirmation from council that shops still in ownership]**

4.1.2 Stakeholder perceptions and attitudes

Developing improved relationships with residents has been a priority over the last two years, and the council has worked to address feedback from the tenant satisfaction surveys in late 2000, which identified satisfaction rate with the Council as a landlord at 85% [compared to ODPM national assessment of 77% for 2000/01], with 63% happy with the opportunities available to participate in management and decision-making [compared to ODPM national figure of 60% for 2000/01]. The Council has worked extensively to improve involvement opportunities and will be surveying tenants to establish the success of this work in 2002/3.

Regular feedback from tenants is obtained after repair work is carried out and this shows **[to be completed]**

4.1.3 Service issues – strengths and weaknesses in performance

The council now has a structure to monitor performance, described in detail (appendix 10) and performance information is included. It has also identified strengths and weaknesses in areas not monitored as set out below:

Strengths

Positive tenant participation work, with good progress made and more involvement.
New external appointments to the housing senior management team during 2001 and 2002.
Good understanding of stock condition, and good delivery of programmed repairs.
Development, with tenants, of new customer Charter, setting new standards.

Weaknesses

Poor service delivery in some areas.
Lack of policies and procedures
Poor management controls.

4.1.4 Staff resources

As part of the restructure of the sheltered housing service a new post was created during the year, dedicated to managing and developing the sheltered housing service. In addition an additional tenant liaison post was agreed, and a new member of staff was appointed to this in June 2002.

4.1.5 Internal reviews

Best Value

The poor review of sheltered housing in 2001 (No star and unlikely to improve) has attracted widespread comment locally and in the housing press. A complete review of sheltered housing has been undertaken and a programme of improvements begun. The Council has learned lessons from this review and the feedback it received which it is applying to improvements across the service. Preparations are already under way for the maintenance review next year, in advance of the formal review process.

Reality checks

Reality checks were carried out as part of the Housing Inspectorate review of sheltered housing and the diagnostic report for the wider service. The feedback showed that staff are polite, friendly and helpful, but that the repairs service response can be disappointing to customers. Feedback on the community warden service was extremely positive. Reality checks continue with results being fed back to managers and Committee.

Citizens Panel

Research was also carried out using the Citizens Panel. In January 2002 a survey of 1000 households asked about the housing strategic role. This showed overall that little was known about the Council's strategic and enabling role, with affordable homes being identified as the highest priority.

A previous tenants survey undertaken in 1999 identified the following service priorities in South Derbyshire, and these have been addressed in the action plan. A new survey will be undertaken in 2003 to ensure that tenants priorities for the future continue to be understood and addressed:

- Anti-social behaviour policy
- Tenant consultation

- Dealing with complaints
- Local neighbourhood issues
- Customer care
- Tenancy conditions/ agreements
- Environmental improvements

4.1.6 Performance

The Council uses performance management information as one of the ways of seeking continuously improving services. A revised set of performance indicators has been developed and is attached (appendix 10). This information is monitored and reported to senior managers and committee on a regular basis, and is used to determine any corrective action required to improve performance in any area.

The table below shows the best value performance indicators for the housing landlord service.

Table 2: Comparative Performance

PI	Description	Performance			Target for 2002/3	Top 25% English councils
		99/00	2000/01	2001/2 (e)		
65a	Housing Management Costs (week)	£7.01	£7.56	Not available	£8.50	£8.06
65b	Housing Repairs Costs (week)	£13.98	£11.61	Not available	£14.00	£10.33
66b	Rent – arrears as proportion of rent roll	-	1.92%	1.98%	1.75%	1.90%
68	Average time to re-let homes (days)	-	33.5	32.9	25	26
69	Percent of rent lost from voids	-	1.68%	2.18%	1%	0.90%
72	Percent of urgent repairs in Govt. time limits	97%	85.9%	85.4%	100%	97%

An assessment of performance against national average based on benchmarked data for the financial year 2000/01 shows that South Derbyshire performed well with regards to arrears recovery (98.2% collection compared to 97.6% for the average of the audit group, and 97% for NW Leicestershire.) South Derbyshire also outperforms the national (top quartile) average with its housing management costs, even though these costs are increasing slightly as right to buy sales increase.

However, in terms of void turnaround and repairs performance the authority is under-performing and this is an area where it is putting considerable work into improvement and action plans.

4.2 The External Environment

4.2.1 Political issues

There are many political issues that have impacted the Council and its ability to remain a viable social landlord. In particular the decency standard, rent restructuring and implementation, increased public scrutiny, tenants choice over housing and the options for increasing stock investment.

The Council has acknowledged the benefits in the Government's proposals on the separation of landlord and strategic housing functions, and sees this as a way to take

a more focused approach to the management of the housing stock.

The Council is aware of the potential impacts of a regional assembly proposals and the potential change in relationships with other agencies such as the Housing Corporation and Government Office. The decision on the legislation to allow the creation of Regional Assemblies will shortly go through due parliamentary process. The Council will use this time to agree a political position and lead on the concept and potential impact of a referendum taking place and a 'yes' vote being obtained.

From July 2001, the Council has adopted a revised political management structure based on three main policy committees (Finance & Management, Community Services and Environmental Services), a Development Control Committee, a Licensing and Appeals Committee, an Overview Committee, two Scrutiny Committees (Corporate and Community) and a Standards Committee. This structure operated on a trial basis for a year and in May 2002, the Council confirmed the continuation of this structure on a permanent basis. The implementation of the new structure has recently been the subject of a review by the Council's external auditors, who concluded that "the Council has responded positively to the modernisation agenda by introducing its new arrangements in interim form prior to their formal adoption. We are very impressed by the extent of innovation in developing the overview & scrutiny function. There is much to commend here and we would encourage the Council to continue to build on these foundations." The Council has now approved an Action Plan for implementing changes to the constitution, as identified by the external auditors and the Overview Committee.

4.2.2 Rent restructuring

The Council's initial assessment of the impact of rent restructuring overall is that it has minimal impact, if the implementation is introduced in equal increases and decreases in rent for those above or below the target. The impact for individual tenants has been assessed and reported to Committee in July 2002, and a programme of information provision with tenants has been agreed (report now makes clear rec on implementation!).

4.2.3 Technology and the E Government agenda

The Council is already working towards implementing the vision for accessible local services outlined in the White Paper *Strong Local Leadership – Quality Public Services*. The housing service is committed to making its services as widely available and cost effective as possible, and is enthusiastic about the opportunities that improved information technology offers. The service has an action plan that sets out its contribution to making all services electronically available to customers by 2005.

In line with the principles set out in the White Paper and the consultation paper ' [e-gov@local](#) Towards a national strategy for local e-government – a consultation paper', DTLR April 2002, the council seeks to ensure:

- *National standards and clear accountability* - performance will be shown against targets so that people can see how services compare
- *Devolution* – giving local leaders responsibility for delivery and *delegation* to front line staff the ability to make improvements
- *Flexibility* – to allow action to improve services
- *Choice* – for all consumers of public services

The Council submitted its Implementing E-government Statement as required and is investing in improved IT systems and support that will bring benefits to residents in the future, however this places additional costs on the Council for coming years. During the last year the service has provided staff training in IT systems and

increased the use of electronic diaries, and email which is now available to 61% of housing staff. During 2003/4 the Council will introduce a new integrated housing system to enable it to cope with rent restructuring arrangements, it is expected that this will cost in the region of £250k

4.2.4 Socio-cultural issues

People in need of any form of housing including social housing are becoming more discerning and discriminating about where they want to live. The appearance of the local environment, its image and public perception, the quality of local schools and amenities are all-important issues in determining where people live.

Prospective tenants do have choice and the Government is eager that that choice should be enhanced. The Council is only one of the social housing providers in the district and recognises that it operates in a market where it has to ensure that its housing is of a quality and at a price that is competitive and affordable.

4.2.5 Demand

The housing demand and needs survey commissioned by the Council in 2002 shows that generally demand for council properties is healthy, except for three sheltered schemes which are now being subject to option appraisals as set out below.

Empty properties account for 2% of the Council's stock, and 40% of these are considered to be difficult to let. The Council is addressing the issue of vacant properties through a range of methods including intensive asset management, selective intervention, active marketing of difficult to let properties, and letting to alternative client groups. There is however substantial demand for properties in rural areas, and it is seeking to protect rented housing for local people in villages by considering the trickle transfer of properties in these areas to an RSL. (as part of the HRA BP groups` s deliberations?)

It will also continue to identify those properties that are a financial burden as well as in unpopular areas, and undertake option appraisals to determine the future of these properties. This process has already begun, with studies taking place on 3 sheltered housing schemes.

Rethinking construction

Rethinking construction set out five drivers for change; committed leadership, focus on customers, product team integration, quality driven agenda and commitment to people. It also identified key areas of performance, which were to be measured if real improvements were to be made.

The proposals in the consultation document *Rethinking construction accelerating change* seek to identify barriers so that changes can be embraced. This identifies the important of new technology, sustainable construction – whole life performance - and the role of design in delivering good products.

The council shares the vision of the three drivers identified to secure continuous improvement within the paper:

- The need for client leadership
- The need for integrated teams
- The need to address people issues, particularly health and safety

The housing maintenance service is committed to best practice, innovation and to promoting respect for all within its practices. The consultation paper seeks to establish 10-12 key targets during 2002, and the council is committed to adopting these, where relevant, within its maintenance and improvement function and to

reporting on progress.

4.2.6 Competition

There are few other housing providers with substantial stock in the area, with only 476 homes owned by Registered Social landlords. The Council provides almost all of the sheltered housing in the district. Whilst this is a benefit in that many local people therefore access social housing through the Council, it is also a disadvantage in that it has allowed the Council to become complacent in the past and this has led to an under-investment in modernising schemes and work practices. The council is also now exposed to risks of decreasing demand for sheltered schemes, and is aware that it needs to monitor this closely as well as implement improvement schemes in those developments that are viable in the long term.

4.2.7 Registered Social Landlords

The Council works in close partnership with the nine RSL's operating in the area and with the Housing Corporation to ensure the continued supply of quality, affordable housing.

It will in the future regularly assess the housing market and the changing pattern of demand and aspirations to enable it – with other providers - to determine who is best placed to meet housing need as it arises rather than see an over supply of certain types of housing.

4.2.8 Private rented sector

The private renting market makes about 400 lets a year in the district.

4.2.9 Owner occupier sector

The owner occupier sector takes up more than 87% of stock in South Derbyshire and is seen by many to be the housing option of choice. The cost of home ownership means that many are in need of social sector housing or housing within the rented private sector.

4.2.10 Supporting People

The service is committed to the effective implementation of Supporting People from 2003, and seeks to improve the strategic commissioning of tenancy related support across the district in relation to its own and county priorities. To deal with the issues raised by the Supporting People framework, a Core Strategy Group has been set up in Derbyshire, which includes all District Councils, the County Council, Probation Service and Health Authority. There is also a Supporting People Forum, a Commissioning Body and Supporting People Team working alongside the Strategy Group.

The Council is reviewing services and costs of supported housing provided in the district to prepare for the new Supporting People regime and has identified **£xx [to be confirmed]** relating to the support service costs and the amount of pooled rent income financing support services.

In the short term the HRA will benefit from this income as costs will be met from elsewhere, however in the medium to long term it recognises the need to review services and costs to ensure that its provision is in line with the needs identified by the County. The risk to the Council's present funding and business arrangements are considerable given that sheltered properties represent about one third of its portfolio. The service will be putting into place an action plan and risk minimisation strategy over the next six months.

The review has also identified gaps in provision including housing for young people and those with mental health problems.

4.2.11 Demographic data

9% of households have a head of household over 75 years, with 15% of unfit dwellings have a head of household over 75 years. .

4.2.12 Housing need

Housing targets are set for South Derbyshire within the Derby and South Derbyshire structure plan. In 2002, a balance of 2457 units remains outstanding.

5. PRIORITIES FOR THE FUTURE

5.1 Table of priorities

Priority area	Action	Objective met by action	Financial and resource implications	Implementation date	Outcomes and milestone short term (1-3 years)	Lead officer	Partners to support
Housing market							
Mismatch of supply and demand	Understand housing needs in area by survey and waiting list analysis	Housing strategy 'to understand housing market to prioritise provision'	To be completed staff through existing resources	New database to enable queries 2002	Information on demand for council properties by area and type	Dawn Dawson	IT department
	Carry out options appraisal on schemes with more than 5% voids	Housing strategy 'to bring empty homes back into use'	Funding to be prioritised for properties to be improved under the asset management strategy, or alternatives considered	2002 onwards	To reduce voids to 0.5% of stock by 2003/4	Dennis Dorman	
Affordability	To implement rent restructuring by 2012 as required	Housing strategy 'implementation of rent restructuring'	The council continues to evaluate this overall and for individual tenants.	After consultation with tenants and members implementation from 2003	Commencement of restructuring 2003, with annual actions.	Kevin Stackhouse	
Stock condition							

Decent homes	To identify and implement a programme to enable council to achieve decency standards, including selective intervention for high cost properties if required 2004/2010	Housing strategy DHS targets	From existing resources or with funding provided by others in partnership	2003	To reduce non decency by one third from 2001-4.	Dennis Dorman	RSLs, private sector and others as identified for specific projects
Community cohesion							
BME population	To survey minority residents to enable action plan to be prepared to address current and future housing needs	Housing strategy 'involving service users in planning services'	From existing budgets and other match funding	2003/4	To make services more relevant to minority tenants to achieve satisfaction rating of 90%+	Dawn Dawson	CRE
Those with support needs	To prioritise security measures for older people To identify those needing care plans or floating support to maintain tenancies	Housing strategy 'to improve security for older people' Identify and plan provision for meeting special needs including appropriate housing based support, for vulnerable people	From existing repairs budget and other match funding To be funded from existing supporting people resources	2003	20 homes each year	Tony Ward/ Dennis Dorman	Age Concern and other agencies
Wider issues							
Lettings strategy	Review allocations policy to embrace recent allocations/homeless	Housing strategy 'Provide suitable affordable housing, particularly for young	Will be linked to new IT system eventually to provide wider information and	2003	To prioritise housing groups presently under	Dawn Dawson	

	legislation and choice based lettings principles	people'	access for the public.		represented in council stock. With target for lettings to young people of xx%		
Anti social behaviour	To introduce proactive ASB policy with public launch and staff training	Crime and Disorder Strategy 'xxx'	Initial publicity and training resources required £3,000	To enable staff to deal with ASB proactively with actions within 2/5/10 days depending on category.	Satisfactory outcomes 60% in 2003, 75% in 2004, and 90% in 2005.	Dawn Dawson	Probation services, police, social services, youth workers, mediation services
Management controls							
Improved performance information	To introduce a new integrated IT system		Provisional estimate £300k	2003	To reduce duplicated inputting and produce user friendly reports by 2003/4	Project co-ordinator	
Performance	To introduce and maintain management controls, performance management systems, QA systems		QA system provisional estimated cost £5k	2003/4	To ensure first time right and consistent service with audit trail 100% compliance	Dennis Dorman/ project co-ordinator	

5.2 Action Plan

The priorities set out for the future will be met by the actions set out in the related action plan which is attached at appendix 11.

5.3 Analysis of options to achieve the action plan and priorities

The service is aware that there are always options in how priorities can be addressed, and it is committed to considering these options and selecting the most appropriate in terms of cost efficiency, customer satisfaction, and viability. The stages that are used in appraising options are set out in a short pro forma for managers. For the more complex or larger projects this will include a test to determine the robustness of the option SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) and PEST (Political, Economic, Social and Technological) analysis. Options will be subject to a variety of the following; objective achievement tests, feasibility tests, financial tests, dependency tests, the 'what if' test, and testing against scenarios.

This methodology should ensure that the council achieves the best results possible within the options that it has to address priorities. In addition the Council also expects that options will be considered against the criteria set out in its Capital Strategy where all schemes are expected to meet corporate or service objectives and are tested against the following core criteria summarised below:-

- **Sustainability** – whether the scheme costs are realistic and the level of future support required
- **Additional Funding** - Potential to draw down external funds and enhance Council investment
- **Strategic Importance** - Links with Council, regional and national objectives.

5.4 Monitoring and evaluating framework

Monitoring

The action plan (and the subsequent Service Plan and Team Plans) will be monitored by the relevant Improvement Task Team to ensure progress against actions identified, key dates, spend profiles, and outcomes based on the reports to be submitted bi-monthly by the lead officer responsible. Schemes may be visited if appropriate as part of a quality audit process. All projects that contribute to the action plan will have success criteria identified, and these will be part of the next stage, measuring success.

Measuring success

The council will use a variety of the following methods to assess the success of a project:

- Compare performance against targets
- Feedback from service users and partners (through a variety of media)
- Feedback from government
- Success of bids for funds
- Comparison of actual completion date to original date
- Benchmarking against other comparable schemes/councils

Evaluation

The council will consider:

- How the information available about the 'before' has improved since the project was commenced/finished. (Statistical information/indicators will be provided by lead officer)
- Has the project met its objectives?
- What impacts has the project had – positive/negative
- What demonstrated improvements are there for beneficiaries as a direct result of the project?
- What has the project cost compared to other comparable schemes?
- What are the reasons for success or failure?

Assessing the impact of the policy

The council will undertake this assessment in spring each year in preparation for any update:

- There will be a measurement of the impact of the strategy taking into account other contributors to success. Non-programme factors will be considered by using control groups, matched samples or statistical modelling where possible. This will eliminate the amount of the achievement that would have happened anyway (due to other factors/investment).
- Performance indicators will be used (input, process, output, outcomes) as appropriate.
- Comparison to National and Local indicators.

6. DETAILED FINANCIAL INFORMATION

[to be completed by Paul once Kevin Stackhouse completes model]

6.1 Resources and funding sources by option

To be completed once options are confirmed

6.2 Key assumptions

6.3 Key outputs from financial modelling

To be inserted once modelled information agreed

6.4 Financial ratios and unit cost information

To be inserted once information agreed

6.5 Unit cost trends

To be completed once unit costs agreed for the year and then to be compared to previous years and ideally to other organisations where benchmarking figures are available

6.6 Sensitivity analysis

6.7 Analysis and impact of changes to key assumptions

To be rewritten once all key assumptions identified

6.8 Risk management

To be inserted once all financial and related risks of preferred options have been evaluated.

7. MOVING THE BUSINESS PLAN FORWARD

7.1 Review of strengths

The service has moved forward positively, improving its work with tenants and the opportunities they have for being actively involved in decision making. A start has been made on updating policies and procedures, and this is addressing areas of previous lack of management control and accountability.

Through recognising the need to change, stakeholders have begun to develop a positive action plan, and have begun to address the basic information requirements to ensure that the service make decisions on an objective basis, and appreciates the value of its service to tenants.

The HRA Business Plan Working Group plays a pivotal role in the future of the service and this will continue, being strengthened by wider representation. The Improvement Task Teams – housing services, IT and asset management, will be developed to include tenants and members in future, and play a vital role in monitoring the progress of action plans, and in making recommendations to committee about updated policies and procedures.

7.2 Identification of areas requiring further work

The Council is aware that it still has a significant way to go in addressing the issues faced by its housing service, however it is committed to ensuring that it has the management capacity to achieve its objectives, and that it project manages action plans to ensure that they are addressed.

The strategic role has been developed over the last six months, with the formation of a group specifically to enable partners to contribute. This will continue, led by the Head of Community Services, and possibly in partnership with a secondee from the private sector.

The future of the service will be assured by its managers, and a training and development programme has been started which will continue over a two year period.

7.3 Information gaps

The Council can now identify the information from its performance that cannot easily be provided at the current time, and it is putting into place a number of databases to help in the short term until a new integrated IT system is commissioned in 2003.

The Council is aware that its housing needs information is not as comprehensive as it should be, and it will therefore be commissioning a further survey over the next 2 years, this will also be supplemented by a demand survey, to establish the viability of the landlord business over the long term.

The council lacks information on housing demand for sheltered schemes and will undertake a specific piece of research during this year to help with its decision on the future of some of its less popular sheltered schemes. This will include information to enable the council to understand how the public perceives its housing services, and aspirations to move into council owned sheltered accommodation in the future.

The service would also be assisted if it had information about the services that its tenants require in the future, and a tenant survey will be undertaken in 2003/4 to assess satisfaction with existing services, and the need for new provision in the future.

The stock condition survey for the Council's stock has been received and it is aware of compliance with the decent homes standard. However, the survey provides a considerable amount of information and enables it to consider the most appropriate ways of putting together programmes of work which are cost effective, meet the decency standard but also incorporate tenants aspirations where these are in addition to criteria in the standard. Over the next three to six months the Council will develop its understanding further and will work with tenants and members to model the most appropriate approaches to future improvements.

7.4 Stakeholder involvement and consultation

The Council has made significant strides in its involvement and consultation, and during the next year will specifically consider if its tenants should have voting rights at Community Services Committee on housing issues.

feedback including future services/support requested by tenants, the allocations process, housing benefit and welfare advice provided, paying methods for rent, access to services and rent restructuring implementation, needs of vulnerable tenants – older, with disabilities, those fleeing domestic violence, asylum seekers and black and minority ethnic residents.

The council is aware that it cannot provide excellent housing management services unless it has policies that reflect legislative changes and good practice. It has reviewed all its policies and procedures to ensure a bi-annual review, with updating when good practice or legislative amendments require. The Council's review of its policies is set out in the action plan within this plan.

The Council also recognises the importance of staff who have had appropriate training, including professional development and customer service skills. This is achieved through performance reviews, work appraisals, and structured training. These principles will be embodied in the process for achieving the "Investors in People" award.

10 APPENDIX

Performance Indicators

Local authorities are required to gather and publish details of their performance annually as part of the drive for efficient public services and Best Value. Guidance and national Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI's) are set out for 2002/3 in "Best value performance Indicators for 2002/3" Feb 2002 (ODPM)

Local authority's are required to use a range of P.I.' s including those nationally set and those considered appropriate to measure local performance. National indicators (BVPI's) are set by the ODPM but the trend is to keep these to a minimum. Instead, authorities are encouraged to develop a range of local indicators which address their own issues, priorities and concerns. Local performance indicators measure local performance and the responsiveness of authorities to meeting local objectives, and are used by the council to drive improvements.

In setting local performance indicators, there is a need to address a combination of factors:

- Business critical issues are crucial. This includes issues relating to income and expenditure, eg. rent arrears, and government requirements such as implications of the "decent homes" standard,)
- Indicators should also address priorities from residents, staff, and members.
- Corporate objectives should be addressed.
- Systems need to be established to collect data.

The housing areas on which government places particular importance are decent homes, homelessness, race and housing, reducing reliance on bed and breakfast, affordable homes and low demand and abandonment. The councils BVPI's are structured to capture this information to enable it to monitor and improve performance. It also has local BVPI's to monitor quality services delivered, sick leave, voids performance and budget spend.

For the Council, expanding the range of indicators, and developing stretching targets is seen as a key component of the Improvement process that has recently been launched within housing services. These indicators have been divided into 3 groups, monthly, quarterly and annual indicators (as attached). This reflects a combination of relative importance and availability of sufficient significant data. Managers and team leaders have been involved in the development of these indicators.

Performance Indicators

These initial indicators and targets are a starting point, to be regularly reviewed and updated taking into account trends that are identified and the changing priorities of customers.

Monthly performance management information

BVPI	Indicator
	Total rent arrears (sum)
	Current rent arrears as % of rent roll
	Arrears attributable to housing benefit
	Former tenants arrears £
66a	Proportion of rent collected (cum)
	Number of evictions of rent arrears
	Rent loss % due to voids (cum)
	Number of management voids at month end (cum)

	% of stock void (mgt)
	Number of non-management voids at month end
	% of stock void (non-mgt)
	Number of relets in month
	Nomination requests from RSLs
	Average relet times all properties (days)
	Average relet times sheltered (days)
	Average relet times general (days)
	% of voids let within 4 weeks
	Time taken to process applications
	% of emergency repairs completed within target
	% of non-emergency repairs completed within target
185	% of routine repairs where contractor appointment made and kept
	Number of repair orders issued
	Number of repair orders not completed
	% of repairs post inspected
	Rental income £ (cumulative)
	Maintenance spend
	Maintenance spend % of budget
	Tenant participation spend
	Salary and on costs (cumulative)
	Number of housing management complaints
	% responded to in timescale
	Number of maintenance complaints
	% responded to in timescale
	% of member enquiries dealt with in timescale
	Number of tenants not receiving regular visits
	% of scheme fire alarms tested once a month
	Number of calls to central control answered within 60 seconds
	Number of new lifeline clients
	Number of staff taking sick leave in the month
	% of days lost through staff sickness

Quarterly performance management information

BVPI	Indicator
	Staff at absence trigger points % without review
	Average training days per member of staff
	% staff having work review/PDR
	% staff without personal achievement targets
	Average days absence per member of staff
	Number of applications
	Number of sales
	Applications determined within 33 days
183	Average length of stay in B&B and hostels
	Number of households using B&B (cum)
	Average rent per dwelling
	Rent written off as not collectable
	Manner of tradesman %
	Satisfactory outcome %
	Work completed on time %
	% of claims turned round within 14 days (cum)
	Number of claims
	Number of properties without current gas certificate
	Spend against budget as a %
	% of correspondence responded to in 10 days
	Number of tenants attending training/consultation seminars
	Number of recognised associations

	Number of TACT meetings with officers and or councillors present
	% of housing stock covered by recognised resident groups
	Number of introductory tenancies ended by SDDC
	Number of live ASB cases

Annual performance management information

BVPI	Indicator
	Average weekly repair cost per dwelling
184a	Proportion of homes not meeting decency standard as at 1.4.02
184b	% change in proportion of non decent homes April 2002-April 2003
63	Average SAP rating of LA owned homes
	Average waiting time for adaptations
	% of total repairs budget spent on responsive works
74	Overall satisfaction with services provided by landlord (1) overall (2) BME residents (3) non BME residents
	Satisfaction of sheltered tenants
	Satisfaction with opportunities for participation in management and decision making
	Percentage of RSL nominations taken up
	Annual stock turnover %
164	Adherence to CRE code of practice in rented housing and tackling racial harassment
	Average weekly management costs per dwelling
	Minimum working balance of £0.5m
	% above or below budget

The service is required to set targets for national Best Value performance indicators and has already done this for those housing indicators that form part of the Council's Best Value Performance Plan, and these will be used to monitor performance in the future and are included in this report.

The government expects council's to achieve a level of performance equivalent to the top twenty-five percent performing authorities by 2005 in those areas where it has set national targets; rent collected, rent loss due to voids, average relet time in days, % of emergency and non urgent repairs completed within target. It also requires councils to meet the decent homes standard by 2010, with an interim target in 2004 of reducing non-decency by one-third from the level assessed at 2001.

Targets will be set in all areas over the next couple of months as information on past performance is gathered, these targets should 'stretch' those involved in service delivery but should not be unattainable, and should take into account the resources available in these service areas. In some areas, for instance reletting void properties, the service will need to do a considerable amount of work, and to introduce new systems and procedures which take some time to do, before significant performance improvements can be made.

The collection of information and setting of targets is merely a way of establishing performance at any point in time, the value of performance management information is that it enables actions to be identified, appraised, and implemented to improve service in areas that seem to be under-performing, or to understand why other areas perform well. The Audit Commission report *Acting on facts; using performance measurement to improve Local Authority services* May 2002, confirms expectations that Council's will be able to demonstrate that they have considered and acted on performance information – not merely collected it.

The targets set in areas of the service will be included in this year's business plan where available and in future year's plans, and will be cascaded down to managers and staff so that all involved are clear how they contribute to the overall service

improvements required.

Benchmarking with others

The service is also investigating the benefits and costs associated with membership to a benchmarking facility for housing services such as those offered by Housemark. This would give members and staff access to comparable information to enable the council to understand its performance against that of many other local authorities, as well as providing access to good practice information and briefings.

Benchmarking is not just a financial exercise, although cost is an important driver in services, it is not the only one. Benchmarking satisfaction and demand is just as relevant as benchmarking the costs of services compared to others. The value of comparing services is that those leading the field can be identified, and the reasons for better performance considered – rather than constantly 're-inventing the wheel' this enables organisations to learn from others, and adapt procedures or solutions to suit their local circumstances to improve performance.

Implementing the performance information framework

When considering the performance information framework it is necessary to acknowledge that the Council does not have an integrated IT system which will readily produce user friendly reports, indeed some of this information cannot be obtained at all without considerable manual manipulation of data. However, a specification is being drawn together for a new IT system which will integrate repair and housing management information and provide valuable performance management outputs, and it is anticipated that this system (which will include the requirement to provide this and further performance information requirements in the future) will be in place in the next financial year.

In the meantime the service is to establish a stand-alone database to provide information on voids and lettings, and to monitor complaints and other information in similar databases that reduce manual work in collating statistics. Staff training on these systems has been, and will be provided, as they are operational, and information sessions are being run for all staff through team meetings about the use of this information and its value to the service.

It is expected that all this information (backdated to start from April 2002) will be gathered incrementally until it is fully available by December 2002, at which time staff training will also be complete.

12 APPENDIX

Assessing excellence in housing management

The Audit Commission published a framework for assessing excellence in housing management in response to the Government's ALMO proposals. It applies to all housing authorities and ALMOs, and was used by the Council to test its housing performance as part of the preparation for the Business Plan to be submitted in July 2002.

Housing excellence seeks to ensure that housing is well managed, tenants well treated and receiving value for money, and that there is a reasonable strategy to tackle disrepair for its stock by 2010. In its best value work the Audit Commission looks for a rigorous programme of service reviews, evidence of improvements in quality and value for money, and that the four C's of best value – *challenge, consult, compare and compete*- have been applied.

The document sets two fundamental issues for the service to address:

- How good are the services being inspected
- Will those services improve

The Council has been addressing these questions and others set out in the document and in *Seeing is believing* (1) and has used these issues to review its service from a number of perspectives:

- Staff in the service were asked their opinions through [detailed questionnaires, conferences, team meetings, structured workshops]
- Tenants were surveyed through a range of media [examples here of best value reviews, use of reality checks, desktop analysis, review of complaints, feedback groups, tenants or other panels, staff involvement, member involvement, external challenge, expert assistance with scoping reviews, focus groups, observations, visits to property, interviews with key stakeholders, customer surveys, training for staff in best value techniques]

The results of this research has fed into the action plan included within the business plan, and ensures that consultation and comments directly influence service improvements for the future.

This action plan takes into account the DTLR requirement for the service to meet top quartile performance by 2005 for a range of indicators:

	London Boroughs	Metropolitan Boroughs	Unitary Authorities	District Councils
BVPI 68 – average time to relet homes (days)	42	29	28	25
Percentage rent collected	99.3	98.6	99.2	99.8
Rent loss through voids	1.1%	2.6%	1.4%	1.1%
Repairs within government times	91%	93%	94%	96%

DTLR recommends the use of the Housing Corporation/NHF STATUS survey to gauge tenant satisfaction with services and the Council intends to survey tenants in 2003 to supplement its earlier survey. In addition the Council is discussing with its stakeholders the information that it can obtain to provide it with other more focused