Local authority name: South Derbyshire District Council **GO Region: EM**

Mixed urban-rural district covering an area of 34,000 hectares. Swadlincote (population 32,000) is the main focus of the area, the remainder of the district being mostly rural in character. Extensive tracts of countryside interspersed with a number of villages and settlements.

Recent HIP assessments:

1999 – Below Average 2000 – Below Average 2001 – Below Average

General comments:

- The authority has worked hard to overcome financial difficulties over recent years. The Housing Management team has been restructured to become more responsive to clients' needs.

- The management information on which the Housing Strategy and Business Plan are based are largely borne from local knowledge and experience rather than up-to-date survey data. We will be seeking evidence next year that such data has been collected and effectively interpreted.

Strengths and weaknesses and areas which LAs should be looking to improve

i)Housing strategy:

Current and likely future housing problems/needs?

- The rolling programme of sub-district housing needs surveys needs to be completed before objective needs and market trends analysis can be begun.
- The overall housing needs information for the private sector is currently weak and needs updating.
- It is encouraging to note that the authority is working with similar agencies such as Derby City Council, to seek ways in which to analyse and interpret needs survey findings.
- We will expect to see actions identified as a result of the county-wide special needs survey completed in autumn 2001.
- There is currently no up-to-date stock condition data available and this has clear implications for the setting and meeting of decent homes targets.
- There has been a good response to the authority's empty homes survey.

Priorities for action

- The BV review of the authority's Sheltered Housing & Wardens Service identified some weaknesses in the effectiveness of delivery.
- The stock condition survey is due to commence in pilot form in January and be completed in full by September 2002.
- The housing needs surveys should be completed urgently and in time for the next HIP round.

- Encouraging to note that authority is making best use of available data and has identified empty homes, energy-efficiency and low-demand for renovation grants as key priorities to address.
- Tenant participation continues to be patchy.
- Private sector energy efficiency ratings are rather low (38).

Options for meeting the identified priorities

- Pleased to record restructuring of housing into Community Services division with the Head co-opted onto the PCG to lead the HImP. Corporate strategies on consultation, procurement and reviewing fees and charges have also been agreed under BV.
- The findings of the BV review of the authority's Sheltered Housing & Wardens Service will need to be urgently addressed (we recognise that this is already underway).
  We are pleased that the authority has taken steps to rationalise its methods for involving tenants, revised the Tenants Compact and employed a Tenant Participation Officer. We look forward to learning about the impact on sustained tenant involvement that these measures have secured.
  The authority should seek to engage partners in joint-funding arrangements to maximise the amount of investment in housing stock available, but consider how best to deploy its own limited resources in partnering arrangements to avoid them becoming over-stretched. The consultants appointed to consider the authority's financial position will need to report on this and other options for investment.
  The authority has made significant headway in addressing private sector renewal, including through the use of DFGs and energy-efficiency grants.
- Pleased to see progress being made in securing affordable housing through s.106 agreements.

Strategy for the next 5 years and longer

- The medium- and long-term strategies will need to be reconsidered in the light of survey results; consultations with partners and tenants; and the BV review of the Housing Strategy (by April 2001).
- We are reasonably confident that the authority holds a long-term vision but that it still has some way to go in terms of understanding the mechanisms by which it will achieve this.

How has the Strategy been drawn up

- The Strategy could usefully begin with an Executive Summary, which sets out how the update has been informed and the reasons for any changes over the last year.

Presentation

- The Strategy sets out priorities and milestones under the key subject areas, although an abridged set of key priorities would be useful. We would hope that the achievements and milestones sections will be enhanced by the availability of up-to-date management information.

ii)Business Plan:

Objective assessment of current and likely future position.

- Some of modelling assumptions will require revision as firm data comes onstream.
- The authority is still to seek tenants' views on stock options for the future.
- The current levels of knowledge are not sufficient without the addition of survey data.
- The stock condition survey may well provide a significant upward revision of the current estimate of repairs backlog.
- We will be interested to learn what findings stem from the consultant's report on the financial position.

What priorities for action are identified?

- Tenants' satisfaction with level of participation is relatively low (62%).
- Significant progress on average relet time has been made but it remains high (24 days).
- The authority's assessment that the levels of required investment being unsustainable needs to be confirmed by proper data analysis.
- Decent homes targets must be set this summer.
- The authority has drawn up a ten year maintenance Improvement Plan, which will need revising in the light of the 2002 stock condition survey and the housing needs surveys. Bathroom replacement has already been identified as a key tenant concern.

Options for addressing identified priorities

- Pleased to see re-modelling to unpopular sheltered accommodation is being actively pursued.
- The authority needs to urgently review its IT requirements to meet new activities eg rent restructuring.
- District Audit are assisting the authority in considering options for maintaining their stock and we will wish to see this and wider consultation reflected next year.

Strategy for the next 5 years and longer

- Although the authority appears to understand the operation of the 30-year modelling, the priorities and assumptions need updating using survey data and stakeholder feedback.
- The authority should confirm its assertion that the maintenance backlog can be tackled within 10 years. Pleased to note planned:responsive maintenance ratio already high (78:22 in 2000/01) and set to improve further.

Presentation

- The NPV section is a little too reliant on the reader's familiarity with the subject.
- A summary of the priorities would be useful; otherwise, a logical layout of the key topics.

2002/2003 Housing Investment Programme Allocations (£ thousands)

Region/ local authority	Performance band	Housing Investment Programme		
East Midlands		Housing Annual Capital Guideline	Private Sector Renewal Grant transitional payments	Total
Region total		61,273	467	61,740
Amber Valley	Above average	1,536	-	1,536
Ashfield	Well above average	1,616	-	1,616
Bassetlaw	Average	1,216	-	1,216
Blaby	Below average	505	-	505
Bolsover	Average	1,524	369	1,893
Boston	Average	462	-	462
Broxtowe	Average	1,002	-	1,002
Charnwood	Average	1,191	4	1,195
Chesterfield	Above average	1,330	-	1,330
Corby	Below average	352	-	352
Daventry	Average	538	1	539
Derby	Well above average	4,665	44	4,709
Derbyshire Dales	Well below average	802	-	802
East Lindsey	Above average	1,697	-	1,697
East Northamptonshire	Well below average	534	-	534
Erewash	Average	1,087	-	1,087
Gedling	Average	999	-	999
Harborough	Average	634	-	634
High Peak	Average	1,292	-	1,292
Hinckley and Bosworth	Average	745	-	745
Kettering	Average	894	-	894
Leicester	Well above average	10,214	22	10,236
Lincoln	Average	2,201	-	2,201
Mansfield	Above average	2,204	-	2,204
Melton	Well below average	351	-	351
Newark and Sherwood	Above average	1,174	-	1,174
North East Derbyshire	Average	885	-	885
North Kesteven	Average	683	-	683
North West Leicestershire	Below average	768	27	795
Northampton	Average	2,220	-	2,220
Nottingham	Above average	9,776	-	9,776
Oadby and Wigston	Average	334	-	334
Rushcliffe	Average	1,047	-	1,047
Rutland	Average	338	-	338
South Derbyshire	Below average	782	-	782
South Holland	Average	715	-	715
South Kesteven	Below average	1,020	-	1,020
South Northamptonshire	Average	594	-	594
Wellingborough	Average	627	-	627
West Lindsey	Average	719	-	719