

## **BOROUGH OF BARROW-IN-FURNESS**

### **HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM**

Meeting: Thursday 16th June, 2011  
at 2.00 pm (Committee Room 4)

Group Meetings at 1.15 pm

## **A G E N D A**

### **PART ONE**

1. To consider the appointment of a Chairman for meeting management.

N.B. Councillor Hamilton was appointed as Chairman of the Housing Management Forum by Council on 17th May 2011. However, Executive Committee on 28th May, 2003 (Minute No. 216) agreed: "That a Member Chairman for the purpose of the Housing Forum be appointed by Council for the purpose of recognising responsibility but retaining the Forum's freedom to appoint an alternative chairman for meeting management if it so wished".

2. To note any items which the Chairman considers to be of an urgent nature.
3. Admission of Public and Press

To consider whether the public and press should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of any of the items on the agenda.

4. Disclosure of Interests

A Member with a personal interest in a matter to be considered at this meeting must either before the matter is discussed or when the interest becomes apparent disclose

1. ***The existence of that interest to the meeting.***
2. ***The nature of the interest.***
3. ***Decide whether they have a prejudicial interest.***

A note on declaring interests at meetings, which incorporates certain other aspects of the Code of Conduct and a pro-forma for completion where interests are disclosed will be available at the meeting.

5. Confirmation of minutes of meeting held on 3rd March, 2011.
6. Apologies for Absence/Changes in Membership.

### **FOR DECISION**

#### **STRATEGIC PLANNING**

- (D) 7. Appointment of Representatives to Working Groups etc.

- (D) 8. Housing Services Delivery Plan 2011/12
- (D) 9. Homelessness Funding 2011/12
- (D) 10. Supporting People Funding
- (D) 11. Community Involvement Strategy 2011/13

**FOR INFORMATION**

**OPERATIONAL**

- 12. Performance Information Report 2010/11
- 13. Planned Maintenance Programme

**NOTE:** (D) – Delegated to the Executive Committee  
(R) – Referred to the Council

**HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM MEMBERS:**

Councillors: Hamilton (Councillors' nominated Chairman appointed at Annual Council meeting)

Barlow  
Burns  
Irwin  
Murray  
Pointer  
Richardson  
Williams

Tenant Representatives: Mrs. P. Charnley  
Mr. N. Hird  
Mrs. K. Hotchkiss  
Ms. C. McFadyen  
Mr. A. McIntosh  
Mr W Ward  
Plus two representatives to be nominated at Tenants Forum AGM on 13th June, 2011

**For queries regarding this agenda, please contact:**

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<b>HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM</b>	<b>(D) Agenda Item 7</b>
<b>Date of Meeting: 16th June, 2011</b>	
<b>Reporting Officer: Chief Executive</b>	
<b>Title: Appointment of Representatives to Working Groups etc.</b>	
<b>Summary and Conclusions:</b>	
The Council on 17th May, 2011 gave delegated authority to Committees to make appointments to Outside Bodies, Working Groups etc.	
<b>Recommendation:</b>	
You are requested to make recommendations regarding appointments to the following Working Groups:	
Tenant Compact Working Group:- three Members (3:0) and three Tenant Representatives; and	
Homelessness Funding Working Group:- two Members (2:0) and two Tenant Representatives.	
Note:- (Labour: Conservative).	

**Report**

At the Annual Council meeting on 17th May, 2011 the allocation of seats in respect of Forums, Panels, Working Groups etc. were agreed.

You are requested therefore to nominate Members and Tenant Representatives to the Tenant Compact Working Group and the Homelessness Funding Working Group for 2011/2012.

**Background Papers**

Nil

# HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM

Meeting: 3rd March, 2011  
at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT:- Councillors Biggins, Hammond, James, Pointer, Richardson and Waiting.

Tenant Representatives:- Mrs P. Charnley (Chairman), Mrs M. Burgess, Miss C. McFayden, Mr T. Slater, Mr W. Ward and Mr T. Wilson.

## **43 – Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20th January, 2011 were agreed as a correct record.

## **44 – Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillor Irwin and Tenant Representatives, Mrs K. Hotchkiss and Mr A. McIntosh.

## **45 – Tenant Services Authority (TSA) – The Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England from April 2010**

The Housing Manager submitted a report informing Members of the Housing Service's compliance with the requirements of the TSA regulatory framework and sought endorsement of the agreed local standards.

He reported that the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) had become the regulator for all social housing with effect from April 2010. The new framework had been set around the principle of co-regulation, encouraging providers to undertake robust self-regulation which incorporated effective tenant involvement.

Despite it having been announced in October 2010 that the TSA was to be abolished and its functions would transfer to the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) by April 2012, current guidance was that the principles of regulation introduced by the TSA must be complied with until social housing providers were instructed otherwise.

He reported that the regulatory framework placed a number of requirements upon social housing providers such as the Council and that the Council was on schedule to meet all of the requirements.

A self-assessment of all services had been undertaken following consultation conducted through the Council's Tenants Forum, Tenant Compact Working Party Group and Involvement Sessions and the results of that assessment had been published in an Annual Report to tenants which had been delivered in advance of 1st October, 2010 deadline.

Following initial tenant consultation through the Involvement Sessions, the Council formed a Local Standards Focus Group consisting of tenants and staff who had

worked together to produce a draft list of local standards. Those standards had been printed in the tenants' Christmas Newsletter, displayed at the Housing office and promoted through the Tenants' and Residents' Associations to ensure that every tenant had been consulted and had been given the opportunity to comment.

It was noted that the Council had not received any negative feedback on the draft standards and therefore proposed to adopt them, to launch on 1st April, 2011 in compliance with the TSA requirements. Details of the proposed local standards had been appended to the Housing Manager's report.

RECOMMENDED:- (i) To note the measures taken to comply with the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) regulatory requirements; and

(ii) To endorse the agreed local Standards.

#### **46 – Cumbria Housing Partners (CHP) Investments 2011-15**

The Housing Manager submitted a report requesting Members to consider and agree the appointment of suitably qualified contractors to undertake delivery of the Housing Department's Planned Investments via CHP over the next four years.

He reported that in the summer of 2010, Procure Plus had established a new four year framework to deliver cost effective improvement works in the social housing sector. The procurement process provided CHP members with one of two options:

- **Option 1** - Direct call off to appoint the highest ranked contractor in the relevant work stream category;
- **Option 2** - Mini-competition to evaluate contractors registered for the relevant work stream category.

The Housing Manager advised Members that selecting the highest ranked contractor within a particular work stream did not always guarantee the most economically advantageous tender, unless additional references had been sought from existing customers. He reported that G H Jones and Sons was presently the highest ranked painting contractor and had been successfully delivering painting works in Barrow for the past two years. Members had been requested to agree to the re-appointment of G H Jones and Sons using the 'direct call off' process to carry out painting works between 2011 and 2015.

He further reported that mini-competitions had been advertised and tendered via CHP using the Procure Plus web portal for the following work streams:-

- Rewires;
- Kitchens;
- Bathrooms; and
- Heating.

It was noted that in assessing each mini competition, tender submissions had been evaluated using the following criterion:-

- Customer Satisfaction;
- Equality and Diversity;
- Service Delivery;
- Health and Safety;
- Local Skills and Benefits; and
- Price.

RECOMMENDED:- (i) To agree to the appointment of the following contractors using the Procure Plus 'direct selection' and 'mini competition' procurement process for the period 2011 to 2015:-

- Painting – G H Jones and Sons;
- Bathroom Installations – A B Mitchell Ltd;
- Heating Installations – A B Mitchell Ltd;
- Kitchen Installations – A B Mitchell Ltd; and
- Re-wire Installations – Keith Wilson Electrical Ltd; and

(ii) To agree that members of the Tenant Participation Compact Working Party monitored service delivery standards and key performance indicators for Cumbria Housing Partners' work streams on an annual basis.

#### **47 – Review of Anti Social Behaviour Policy and Procedures**

The Housing Manager submitted a report requesting Members to consider a revised Policy on how the Service managed and responded to complaints of anti-social behaviour. The revised Policy updated the existing Policy and sought to ensure an effective response to such complaints. Members had been requested to agree the new Policy to be introduced with effect from the next financial year.

A copy of the updated Anti Social Behaviour Policy had been appended to the Housing Manager's report.

He reported that Members would be aware of recent announcements of proposals to introduce new arrangements to replace ASBOs. However he explained that his report was principally about how the Council managed complaints of anti-social behaviour, and should new legal remedies become available, they could be incorporated at a later date.

The Policy had been drafted to reflect the wide range and complexity of complaints that were received by the Service. It sought to clarify how the Service would respond to complaints and this had been discussed with tenants in agreeing local standards regarding the issue. It had also been drafted in recognition of experience over the last twelve months, during which time the Council had received additional support from ASB Action Ltd, a specialist adviser in the field.

It was noted that in drafting the Policy, ASB Action Ltd had been requested to review the document and operating procedures and had commented as follows:-

"The Policy was clear as a declamation of intent and the anti-social behaviour leaflet had given staff and residents an overview of what outcome was required and what to expect. The format was good on the 'public face' of the organisation."

Following the feedback, two new operational arrangements had been introduced including:-

- Introduction of new 'Case Files' with clear guidance for staff; and
- Introduction of new 'Incident Diaries' for victims of anti-social behaviour complete which included examples of how to complete the diary to ensure the correct level of detail was recorded.

In line with the requirements of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, the Policy and Procedures would be made available on the Council's website under the Neighbourhood Management Section.

**RECOMMENDED:-** To agree that the new Anti Social Behaviour Policy be introduced from the start of the next financial year 2011-2012.

#### **48 – Arrears Prevention and Recovery: Policy**

The Housing Manager submitted a report requesting Members to consider a revised Policy on how the Service managed arrears prevention and recovery. A copy of the revised Policy had been appended to the report. The revised Policy updated the existing policy on managing rent arrears and sought to ensure a holistic approach to debt prevention and recovery by the Service. Members had been requested to agree the new Policy to be introduced from the start of the next financial year.

He reported that in drafting the proposed Policy, consideration had been given to the various income streams relevant to the Housing Service. It was noted that at present the most significant income stream was managed directly by the Housing Service, through the rent accounting system. Some parts of the income functions were presently shared with Finance, who on the instruction of the Housing Service would revise invoices and pursue non payment.

The Policy proposed to bring responsibility for all income streams within the Housing Service, making better use of the existing IT system that was available. It was also noted that in drafting the Policy the previously agreed objective to operate a 'firm but fair' approach to managing had been incorporated.

**RECOMMENDED:-** To agree that the revised Arrears Prevention and Recovery Policy be introduced from the start of the next financial year 2011-2012.

#### **49 – Homeswapper UK**

The Housing Manager submitted a report seeking Members' approval to subscribe to the Homeswapper Scheme, a national scheme which helped tenants to find and arrange mutual exchanges. He reported that the Council was on target to go live with Choice Based Lettings (CBL) by 12th April, 2011 and that as part of the process

of looking at how the Council improved its approach to housing options in line with CBL Partners, options had been considered for helping tenants to arrange mutual exchanges.

It was noted that at present the Council operated a manual system which enabled Council tenants to advertise in a book within the Housing Office.

Homeswapper would be an alternative to the manual system. Homeswapper was the largest national mutual exchange service for Council and Housing Association tenants wanting to swap homes throughout the UK. The Housing Manager advised that many partners within Cumbria Choice were members of Homeswapper which enabled their customers free access to the scheme.

The Housing Manager reported that in terms of Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs), housing options should be accessible to all and progressing the Homeswapper option would enable access to all of the Council's customers. At present, 16 of the Council tenants were registered with Homeswapper at a quarterly cost of £7.99 per individual to be registered with the scheme. To ensure everyone had equal access to housing options, the Council had been keen to progress membership to Homeswapper alongside the implementation of Cumbria Choice and requested Members' instructions. It was noted that the annual membership to the Scheme would be £2,275.00 plus VAT and that no budget provision had been made for this but the Housing Manager was confident it could be found from within existing budgets.

**RECOMMENDED:-** To agree not to join the Homeswapper Scheme at this time but to agree to advertise the availability of the scheme to Council tenants.

## **50 – Electrical, Gas, Water Services Policy and Procedures: Housing Service**

The Housing Manager submitted a report informing Members that the Council had recently agreed a Corporate Policy and Procedure on Electrical, Gas and Water Installations. Whilst the Health and Safety Policy was relevant to all Departments, the purpose of the report was to agree a supplement to the corporate document in order to reflect the management of the Housing Service's property assets.

Attached as an appendix to his report was a supplementary note reflecting the Housing Service's approach to managing Electrical, Gas and Water services in properties managed by the Housing Service. The purpose of the supplementary note was to ensure clarity of responsibility for such services managed by the Housing Service. It was noted that the supplementary notes had been agreed with the Council's Health and Safety Adviser.

**RECOMMENDED:-** To agree to the content of the supplementary notes with regard to safe management of Electrical, Gas and Water services in properties managed by the Housing Service. A copy of which are attached at **Appendix 1** to these Minutes.



## 51 – ASB Action Ltd

The Housing Manager submitted a report providing Members with information on the Service Level Agreement (SLA) currently in place with ASB Action Ltd to assist the Housing Service with the effective management of anti-social behaviour, a key component in the Housing Service achieving its aim to provide well-maintained homes and estates where people chose to live.

He reported that the Council had an obligation to the residents in the local areas they managed to do all they reasonably could to prevent crime and disorder in the area. The Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 also required social landlords to review their policies for tackling anti-social behaviour annually and publish their policies and procedures for inspection.

It was widely accepted that failing to tackle anti social behaviour and nuisance promptly could undermine not just physical regeneration of areas but community cohesion. Residents would not wish to live in an area of crime, graffiti, environmental damage (fly-tipping) or noise nuisance. It would therefore be in the interest of both parties that complaints be dealt with speedily and that a seamless service was presented to residents who had historically complained about their case being referred to a variety of agencies with no real ownership of the case.

The core service provided by ASB Action Ltd was the provision of anti-social behaviour and neighbour nuisance services. This would assist the Housing Service to deal effectively with anti-social behaviour and neighbour nuisance, using tried and tested methods developed by three of the country's leading practitioners in the field.

ASB Action Ltd offered a Service Level Agreement in which the Council's Housing Service could undertake to purchase 15 days to be used over a 12-month period. The 15 days could however be used in a way which the Council considered would best suit the needs of the Estates Team i.e. training, mentoring, critical friend, case work reviews, etc. Within the 15 days staff were not deducted any time for telephone or e-mail advice and staff could ring through with problems and they would be advised of the course of action to take. The Housing Service would be invoiced monthly with itemised work/cases giving hours used as an audit trail.

During the last 12 months the Service Level Agreement with ASB Action had assisted the Housing Service to successfully obtain four Injunctions for anti-social behaviour, one Injunction for homophobic abuse related to a hate crime and three Injunctions for anti-social behaviour in relation to a race hate crime.

The cost of a 15 days Service Level Agreement including training was £7,068.25.

Effective management of anti-social behaviour was a key component of the Housing Service achieving its aim to provide well-maintained homes and estates where people chose to live. ASB Action Ltd offered a specialised service which focused on assisting social housing providers to deal with such issues. The Housing Manager therefore recommended that the Forum agreed a further annual Service Level

Agreement with ASB Action Ltd and suspended the requirement to obtain alternative estimates.

RECOMMENDED:- (i) To note the information on the Service Level Agreement with ASB Action Ltd; and

(ii) To agree to progress a Service Level Agreement for a further 12 months with ASB Action Ltd and to agree that the requirement to obtain written quotations be suspended due to the specialised service provided by ASB Action Ltd and to note approval from the Director of Corporate Services for this requirement to be suspended.

The meeting closed at 2.25 p.m.

## Housing Assets - Supplementary Notes

The Housing Manager will manage the provision, inspection, testing and maintenance of services within the Council Housing stock, shops and community centers in accordance with the corporate procedure relating to legal requirements, hazards and control of risks associated with Electrical and Gas services.

The control and management of Legionella in hot and cold water systems in operational premises is a corporate responsibility and the role of Statutory Duty Holder rests with the Technical Support Unit (TSU). The Council has engaged a specialist water treatment contractor to ensure competent advice and service. The Councils TSU are responsible for the management, maintenance and repair of the housing departments main offices located at Cavendish House and the Mobile Caretakers offices at Middlefield with regard to legal requirements, hazards and control of risks associated with Water, Electrical and Gas services.

## Housing Maintenance

The Housing Maintenance Manager shall co-ordinate maintenance contracts in order to maintain safe electrical, water and gas services to the Council housing stock, shops and community centers and will:

### Provision

- Engage a competent contractor to carry out the contract.
- Ensure contractor certification and registration to the relevant regulatory body is in place and relevant to the services required, i.e. Gas Safe and NICEIC
- Validate qualifications and experience of the contractor's managers and site based personnel to establish competency levels.
- Ensure that contractor's carry out their role effectively and in accordance with the agreed service schedules.
- Undertake periodic surveys of the electrical and gas services to ensure all domestic Council housing, shops and community centers are included in the appropriate maintenance contract.
- Ensure that the service installation for domestic properties, shops and community centers are suitable for use within the building.
- Ensure that contractor's risk assessments, method statements and any other records required by legislation are available to the CDM Co-coordinator, contractors, sub-contractors, workers and relevant personnel for reference.
- Ensure that information regarding health and safety matters is provided to the CDM Co-coordinator, contractors, sub-contractors, workers and relevant personnel.
- Oversee the re tender of the contract at the end of its term in accordance with the Councils Procurement Policy and Standing Orders.
- Ensure adequate Public/Employee Liability insurance cover is in place throughout the contract term

### Inspection

- Ensure that the electrical, water and gas services to Council housing, shops and community centers remain in an efficient state of repair and a safe condition.
- Ensure safe systems of work for maintenance, inspection and testing are in place and implemented.
- Monitor contractor's service and compliance standards.
- Maintain service maintenance and inspection records.
- Coordinate any necessary remedial works.
- Carry out any necessary assessments and reviews of the service installation.
- Decommission/commission systems as necessary.

## Testing

- The Gas Technician will ensure that gas services to the Council owned housing stock (Domestic only), shops and community centers are safety checked and tested at no more than twelve month intervals or at each change of occupancy, including;
  - Issuing the gas safety repair order to contractors 75 days before the “12 month anniversary date”
  - Recording all attempts made by the contractor to gain access
  - Contacting the tenant in writing or by other suitable means where access has been denied
  - Hand delivering a final warning notice prior to legal action
  - Taking appropriate enforcement action to gain access via the courts
  - Providing new occupants with a copy of the LGSR sheet
  - Sample checking of the Landlords Gas Safety Record (LGSR) sheets
  - Reviewing risks and sub standard works identified by the contractor
  - Issuing of follow on works to the contractor
  - Liaison with the contractor, Gas Safe and the HSE with regard to RIDDOR incidents and serious gas safety issues
  - Filing and record keeping of the current years LGSR sheets with a Minimum of 4 previous years on file)
- The Contract Supervisor will ensure that electrical services to the Council owned housing stock are periodically checked at ten year intervals, and shops and community centers are periodically checked at five year intervals or at each change of occupancy or mutual exchange request, including
  - Issuing the periodic electrical test order to contractors 75 days before the “5 year anniversary date”
  - Recording all attempts made by the contractor to gain access
  - Contacting the tenant in writing or by other suitable means where access has been denied
  - Checking and validation of the Periodic Electrical Test record sheet
  - Reviewing risks and sub standard works identified by the contractor
  - Issuing of all “Priority 1 & 2”, coded works to the contractor
  - Liaison with the contractor, NICEIC and the HSE with regard to RIDDOR incidents and serious electrical safety issues
  - Filing of electrical test certificates on the relevant house file
- Monitoring customer satisfaction levels
- Authorising payment for all contractor services.

<b>HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM</b>	<b>(D) Agenda Item 8</b>
<b>Date of Meeting: 16th June, 2011</b>	
<b>Reporting Officer: Colin Garnett, Housing Manager</b>	
<b>Title: Housing Services Delivery Plan 2011/12</b>  <b>Summary and Conclusion:</b>  The purpose of this report is to consider key tasks for the Housing Service in 2011/12.  The report also gives an update on progress of Key Tasks for 2010/11.  <b>Recommendation:</b>  Members' comments are requested on the Key Tasks for 2011/12.	

### **Report**

The purpose of this report is to note progress of the 2010/11 Key Tasks and agree Key Tasks for the Housing Service in 2011/12.

The Key Tasks will form the focus of the service's work during the year and achieve the Housing Service's vision to "Provide well-maintained houses and estates where people choose to live".

Attached at **Appendix A** is the 2010/11 Key Tasks. They have been updated to reflect progress on each of the tasks.

Whilst a number are shown as 'complete', eg the implementation of Choice-Based Lettings, there is still ongoing work to manage the process. However, I would propose they are removed from the 2011/12 Key Tasks.

A number of Key Tasks are still ongoing and comments are added to the Appendix as appropriate. These will form the basis of the Key Tasks for 2011/12 and reflect discussions with Officers and Tenant Representatives.

The Key Tasks to remain for 2011/12 have been marked on the Appendix accordingly.

An additional Key Task for this financial year is the completion of Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) for:

- anti-social behaviour;
- income and debt recovery;
- homelessness; and
- review of existing EIA.

### **Recommendation:**

Members' comments are requested on the Key Tasks for 2011/12.

(i) Legal Implications

Not Applicable.

(ii) Financial Implications

Not Applicable.

(iii) Health and Safety Implications

Not Applicable.

(iv) Key Priorities or Corporate Aims

**Corporate Vision:** To become recognised, both by local people and those outside the area as a prosperous pleasant, health and safe place to live and work.

(v) Risk Assessment

Not Applicable.

(vi) Equality and Diversity

Not Applicable.

(vii) Health and Well-being Implications

Not Applicable.

Background Papers

Nil

<b>HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM</b>	<b>(D) Agenda Item 9</b>
<b>Date of Meeting: 16th June, 2011</b>	
<b>Reporting Officer: Colin Garnett, Housing Manager</b>	
<p><b>Title: Homelessness Funding 2011/12</b></p> <p><b>Summary and Conclusion:</b></p> <p>Communities and Local Government has confirmed its intention to continue funding to prevent homelessness and assist in implementing homelessness strategies.</p> <p>The funding available for 2011/12 is being increased to £113,420.</p> <p>The purpose of this report is to agree a spend profile.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b></p> <p>Members are asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Agree the following spend profile: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) £ 5,000 Shelter: South Cumbria Offenders Scheme</li> <li>(b) £21,217 Deposit Guarantee Scheme (DIGS) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>£ 2,000 Barrow Borough Council Sanctuary Scheme</li> <li>£12,000 Barrow Borough Council Refurbishment of Temporary Accommodation</li> </ul> </li> <li>(c) £ 8,226 CADAS Communication Service</li> <li>(d) £ 2,700 Destin (Performance Management System) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>£13,000 Barrow Borough Council Homeless Prevention Funding</li> </ul> </li> <li>(e) £12,000 Court Desk Funding</li> <li>(f) £10,000 CAB Surgery</li> <li>(g) £ 2,275 Mutual Exchanges/HomeSwapper</li> </ul> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">-----</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;"><b>£88,418</b></p> </li> <li>2. Suspend the Council's normal procurement requirements with regard to (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g) above on the basis of them being specialist services.</li> <li>3. Request the Homeless Task Group to consider and develop proposals for the remaining funding.</li> <li>4. Note the proposed action with regard to the Rough Sleeper funding.</li> </ol>	

### Background

The Homelessness Directorate previously awarded funding to this Authority to support the implementation of the Homeless Strategy and prevent homelessness. It has now been confirmed funding will continue for the year 2011/12 and has been increased to £113,420 (previously £60,000, plus £10,000 for a Court Desk Facility and £28,500 for prevention of repossession funding).

It would appear that the funding will remain at this level for 2011/12 and 2012/13 and is likely to be set at a similar level for 2013/14 and 2014/15.

## Report

Members previously agreed a Homelessness Working Group should be established, made up of three Elected Members, three Tenant Representatives and the Operations Manager to:

- develop an application procedure for homeless funding;
- devise grant conditions;
- consider applications and make recommendations to the Executive Committee; and
- register future funding against homeless outcomes.

Due to operational issues it has not been possible for the Working Group to meet since the funding was confirmed.

In considering the way forward, therefore, I would suggest the Forum gives consideration to extending funding where Officers deem it appropriate and for the Task Group to consider and develop proposals for the best use of the remaining funding.

## Homelessness within the Borough

The following information provides details of homeless activity within the Borough.

### Presentations

<b>TABLE A</b>	<b>Homeless Applications</b>	<b>Advice and Assistance</b>	<b>Total</b>
2008/9	335	343	678
2009/10	283	376	659
2010/11	227	445	672

Note:

- Number of homeless presentations has fallen
- Number of advice and assistance cases increased

### Acceptances

<b>TABLE B</b>	
2008/9	82
2009/10	40
2010/11	27

### Number of Clients provided temporary accommodation by Barrow Borough Council

2008/9	52
2009/10	35
2010/11	45

Note:

- Whilst acceptances have reduced, the number of clients provided interim accommodation has increased, however the number owed a full duty has decreased, owed in part to prevention measures now being taken.



## Reasons for Homelessness

	<b>2008/9</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>
Domestic Violence	38	23	16
Mortgage	17(4)	11 (1)	2 (1)
Asked to leave by parents	87	80	18 (3)
Rent arrears	10 (0)	18 (0)	7 (0)
Shorthold (Section 21)	20 (4)	23 (4)	4 (5)
Leaving prison	22 (4)	18(0)	6 (2)
16/17 year olds	46 (16)	37 (6)	18 (2)

### Note:

- Only includes formal presentations
- Only includes the most significant reasons so figure won't balance with above.
- Figures in brackets represent those clients owed a full duty.
- There is a clear reduction in the number of young people presenting to the Council, this is in part due to the recent High Court ruling, which states that Children's Services are responsible in the main for assessing the needs of 16/17 year old homeless young persons.
- Due to the emphasis on prevention, the number of shorthold (section 21) clients making presentations has decreased.
- A combination of Mortgage Rescue Scheme, CAB debt advice and Court Desk facility could account for the reduction in approaches by owner occupiers.

## Reasons for Advice and Assistance

	<b>2008/9</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>
Domestic Violence	6	3	0
Mortgage	11	9	1
Rent arrears	22	24	6
General Housing Assistance	336	376	438

## Summary of the Council's Homelessness Service Delivery 2010/11

- Homeless Prevention Funding has enabled flexibility and provides clients in priority need, owed a full duty to access the private rented sector as a housing option.
- Increased emphasis on prevention as reflected by the statistics is time consuming.
- CAB weekly surgery enables clients to access debt advice with minimum delay at Cavendish House
- Court desk provides clients access at Court to legal representation, to endeavour to sustain their current accommodation
- DIGS scheme enables some clients to access private rented sector as an alternative to Local Authority accommodation.

Over recent years there has been increasing emphasis on improving preventative services and in reducing the numbers of people in temporary accommodation. As can be seen there has been a reduction in the number of applicants to whom the Council owed a 'full duty'. However, over the same time framework there have been a significant number of applicants offered advice and assistance.

Also shown on Table A are figures for those who were offered advice and assistance; Table B shows the number of those accepted for a full duty.

In discussion with colleagues it is clear that to identify applicants who are potentially homeless early and have flexibility to provide advice and assistance to prevent homelessness is key to reducing the number of applicants to where a full duty is owed.

Whilst it is not always possible to show explicitly the link between preventative measures and reduction in the number of people owed a full duty, the reduction in such numbers would suggest the use of the 'preventative funding' over previous years has contributed to the reduction.

However, it is also the case the number of social rented property becoming available in the Borough has been reducing. In moving forward with the Council's approach to preventative work, regard has to be given to enabling people to remain in their current home where possible to assess all housing options and have flexibility to enable the Housing Advice Officers to respond as necessary on a case-by-case basis.

### **Suggested Spend Profile**

- **£5,000 - Shelter South Cumbria Offenders Scheme**  
Provided in conjunction with SLDC to provide housing advice service for offenders.
- **£21,217 - Deposit Guarantee Scheme (DIGS)**  
County-wide service. The figure includes the administrative cost of providing the service and offering guarantees to landlords to cover loss of property or furnishings.
- **£2,000 - Barrow Borough Council Sanctuary Scheme**  
Would be used to assist domestic abuse victims to remain in their own homes and subsequently the need for the Council to provide alternative emergency accommodation.

Funding would be used 'flexibly' to enable the victim to remain in the home but, for example, may include improved security measures.

- **£12,000 - Barrow Borough Council Refurbishment of Temporary Accommodation**  
The Council currently uses 10 dispersed units of emergency temporary accommodation throughout the Borough.

The properties are changed when necessary due to the nature of their use, regular short stay occupancy, and need regular refurbishment.

- **£8,226 - CADAS Communication Service**  
Funding has previously been provided to establish and sustain this service. It provides a mediation service for applicants identified as potentially homeless but also to resolve estate management issues.
- **£2,700 (plus VAT) Destin (Performance Management System)**  
In 2009/10 Members agreed to fund the initial start-up costs for Destin to develop a software package which assists the Homeless Section with case work, up-to-date legislation and all tasks involved in providing an efficient homeless service. Regular updating of the system is vital as nothing remains still in this environment and without means of ensuring material is up-to-date, it would quickly lose its value.

The funding will cover the annual fee for changes to the system as and when legislation, case law and practices change.

- **£13,000 - Barrow Borough Council Homeless Prevention Fund**

The purpose behind this funding is it is to be used in a flexible manner. In all cases the Council will undertake a financial assessment by a CAB debt advisor to ensure they are not financially able to cover payment. The amount will depend on the household's circumstances and will be made at the discretion of the Operations Manager. If the amount exceeds £250, the case will be discussed with the Housing Manager prior to a decision being made.

A criteria to ensure proper use of the funding by Officers is attached at **Appendix B**.

- **£12,000 – Court Desk Funding**

Previously funding for this purpose was specifically provided.

It was used to develop the Court Desk Service in partnership with CAB to enhance existing advice and assistance provided by CAB. This has operated for a couple of years and I would suggest it be continued.

- **£10,000 – CAB Surgery**

This facilitates a debt advice surgery in partnership with CAB, held one half-day a week at Cavendish House. It is available for both potentially homeless applicants or Council tenants with debt problems.

The surgery has proved successful and I would propose we continue for 2011/12.

- **£2,275 – Mutual Exchange / HomeSwapper**

At the meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2011 (Agenda Item 10 refers), Members were asked to consider subscribing to a web-based mutual exchange system. This has been adopted by a number of social landlords in Cumbria in conjunction with Choice-Based Lettings.

At the time it was decided not to subscribe. However following feedback to the supplier they offered a 'free trial' to demonstrate its value. This was taken up and 17 applicants have registered with HomeSwapper from within the Borough as at 5<sup>th</sup> June 2011.

HomeSwapper is a simple to use housing option tool which:

- Offers enhanced tenant choice
- Moves those in urgent need of re-housing
- Improves occupancy
- Increases stock utilisation
- Reduces void costs
- Improves audit results
- Is accessible to all

Mutual exchanges are not incorporated within Cumbria Choice Choice-Based Lettings. Barrow Borough Council currently operates a manual mutual exchange register for customers to view at Housing Reception. This does not promote choice as the register only includes properties within the Borough and does not assist tenants to move out of the Borough. In accordance with Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs), housing options should be accessible to all, by becoming a member of HomeSwapper, Barrow Borough Council would ensure all our customers had equal access.

I would request Members to give further consideration to subsidising the Homeless Prevention Grant to fund the subscription.

In considering the above proposal, I would also ask where it is necessary Members agree to recommend the Council normal procurement standing orders are suspended on the basis they are 'specialist' services.

- In addition to the above funding, the Homeless Directorate has also recently made available £10,000 towards developing a strategy to tackle rough sleeping in Cumbria. I have taken the liberty of suggesting that in view of the small number in Cumbria, it would be disproportionate to invest the time in liaising across the County to devise such a strategy. I have suggested it would be made better use of by distributing amongst the six districts to use in their homeless prevention plans. I will raise it at the next Cumbria Housing Group and would ask you to endorse this action.

## **Moving Forward**

There are a number of changes in housing policy that may put additional pressures on housing advice services. In addition, there is scope to develop Choice-Based Lettings within the Borough with particular emphasis on engaging with the private rented sector.

In agreeing this above spend profile it would be appropriate for the Homeless Task Group to consider and develop proposals for the remaining funding.

### **Recommendations:**

Members are asked to:

1. Agree the following spend profile:

- (a) £ 5,000 Shelter: South Cumbria Offenders Scheme
- (b) £21,217 Deposit Guarantee Scheme (DIGS)
  - £ 2,000 Barrow Borough Council Sanctuary Scheme
  - £12,000 Barrow Borough Council Refurbishment of Temporary Accommodation
- (c) £ 8,226 CADAS Communication Service
- (d) £ 2,700 Destin (Performance Management System)
  - £13,000 Barrow Borough Council Homeless Prevention Funding
- (e) £12,000 Court Desk Funding
- (f) £10,000 CAB Surgery
- (g) £ 2,275 Mutual Exchanges/HomeSwapper

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**£88,418**

- 2. Suspend the Council's normal procurement requirements with regard to (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g) above on the basis of them being specialist services.
- 3. Request the Homeless Task Group to consider and develop proposals for the remaining funding.
- 4. Note the proposed action with regard to the Rough Sleeper funding.

(i) Legal Implications

Not Applicable.

(ii) Financial Implications

All proposals in this Report will be funded from the Homeless Prevention Grant.

(iii) Health and Safety Implications

Not Applicable.

(iv) Key Priorities or Corporate Aims

Meets the housing needs of the Borough and makes decent homes more accessible.

(v) Risk Assessment

Not Applicable.

(vi) Equality and Diversity

Not Applicable.

(vii) Health and Well-being Implications

Not Applicable.

Background papers

Nil

<b>HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM</b>	<b>(D) Agenda Item 10</b>
<b>Date of Meeting: 16th June, 2011</b>	
<b>Reporting Officer: Colin Garnett, Housing Manager</b>	
<b>Title: Supporting People Funding</b>	
<b>Summary and Conclusion:</b>	
The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the intention for Supporting People contracts to be tendered during this financial year.	
The process will be applied to a number of existing contracts within the Borough, provided by various service providers.	
With regard to the Council's Housing Service, it will have consequences for Homelink customers and our Floating Tenancy Support Scheme.	
<b>Recommendations:</b>	
Members are recommended to:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Note the information contained in this report; and</li><li>2. Instruct the Tenant Compact Working Party to consider and develop an appropriate response to the competition process.</li></ol>	

### **Background**

The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the intention for Supporting People contracts to be tendered during this financial year.

The process will be applied to a number of existing contracts within the Borough, provided by various service providers.

With regards the Council's Housing Service, it will have consequences for Homelink customers and our Floating Tenancy Support Scheme.

### **Report**

Supporting People contracts enable the Housing Service to provide the following services:

- Homelink Services to tenants living in sheltered accommodation for older people.
- A Floating Support Service for vulnerable tenants up to a maximum of 24 tenancies.

For both services, contracts with Supporting People represent the majority of income to the services.

These services have operated since the introduction of Supporting People funding and although 'quality assessed' have not previously been subject to 'competition'.

It is therefore the County Council's intention to tender the services in the coming months.

In addition, from a recent briefing, it would appear there were a number of additional objectives, I would summarise these as follows:

1. To achieve efficiency savings through the tendering process to contribute to the efficiencies required within Supporting People.
2. To 'standardise services' particularly within older person services there are significant variations in service provision and cost across the County.
3. To reduce the number of contracts currently in place.

The procurement process will look to establish a framework contract. Service Providers may be drawn off from the framework or alternatively mini-competition operated.

As referred to above there are implications for two service areas managed by the Housing Department on which I would comment as follows:

### **Homelink**

Members will be aware the Service has seen a substantial reduction in demand over a number of years which has challenged its viability. A decision on its long term provision was deferred pending the Supporting People review of Older Persons Services. With the imminent tendering of the service, further consideration is required regarding the future sustainability of the service and feasibility of responding to the competitive process.

### **Floating Support Service**

This has formed an integral part of the Housing Management function, seeking to ensure 'vulnerable' tenants create sustainable tenancies. In addition, the service also provides management support to the temporary tenancies of dispersed emergency accommodation operated in order to meet the Council's homeless person's responsibilities.

In view of the risk to these services, colleagues directly involved have been kept informed and their union representatives advised of the situation.

It is likely the tendering process will convene shortly, certainly before your next meeting.

I would propose the Tenant Compact Working Party be tasked with considering the Housing Service's response to the competition process and the sustainability of respective services with or without Supporting People funding.

There are two further meetings with Supporting People following the drafting of this Report which I will update you on at your meeting.

### **Recommendations**

Members are recommended to:

1. Note the information contained in this report; and
2. Instruct the Tenant Compact Working Party to consider and develop an appropriate response to the competition process.

(i) Legal Implications

Not Applicable.

(ii) Financial Implications

Supporting People Funding represents the majority of income to the Service areas under consideration. Change in funding arrangements or loss of contracts will have an impact on the service areas.

(iii) Health and Safety Implications

Not Applicable.

(iv) Key Priorities or Corporate Aims

Not Applicable.

(v) Risk Assessment

The tendering of these services will ensure their continuation. However, they may result in change in service specifications and risk to the continuation of the Council's direct service provision.

(vi) Equality and Diversity

Not Applicable.

(vii) Health and Well-being Implications

Not Applicable.

Background Papers

Notification from Adult & Local Services to end contract by March 2012.



<b>HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM</b>	<b>(D) Agenda Item 11</b>
<b>Date of Meeting: 16th June, 2011</b>	
<b>Reporting Officer: Joanne Tyson, Community Involvement Manager</b>	
<b>Title: Community Involvement Strategy</b>	
<b>Summary and Conclusion:</b>	
The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the Housing Department's development of a written Community Involvement Strategy and to seek endorsement to its implementation going forward.	
<b>Recommendation:</b>	
Members are asked to note and endorse the Community Involvement Strategy for 2011/13.	

### **Background and Introduction**

As you are aware, the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) became the regulator for all social housing with effect from April 2010. You will also be aware that the functions of the TSA will pass to the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) by April 2012. However, until this time, we are required to comply with the current regulatory system.

As part of the TSA regulatory requirements, we must undertake an annual self-assessment to ensure we are complying with five national standards, including the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard.

When we completed our assessment in June 2010, we identified that we did not have an adequate strategy for community involvement and therefore devised an action plan to address this.

### **Action Plan**

The full action plan is shown at **Appendix C**, but essentially consists of the following:

- a. We sought interest from involved tenants and residents already known to us and asked them to become part of a strategy group, specifically tasked with developing a Community Involvement Strategy.
- b. We selected six people who we felt had a sound understanding of the workings of the Housing Service and had the skills, knowledge and representational ability to contribute effectively on behalf of their communities.
- c. We had three meetings in total to form the content for the strategy document which is now complete in draft form and is attached as **Appendix D**.

## Consultation

We sought feedback on the draft strategy document in the following ways:-

- a. Copies were distributed to all our Tenants' and Residents' Associations and Street Voice representatives.
- b. Copies were distributed to members of the Tenant Compact Working Party Group.
- c. All Housing Service staff were directed to read and give feedback on the draft strategy, where appropriate.
- d. We publicised details of how to access the draft strategy in our tenants Newsletter "Housing Matters", on the Barrow Borough Council website, "Quick News Feed" page, in the Evening Mail Newspaper and on the Housing Service web-pages.

## Recommendations

You are asked to note and endorse the strategy.

(i) Legal Implications

The TSA regulatory requirements derive from the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 and therefore have legislative effect.

(ii) Financial Implications

Not Applicable.

(iii) Health and Safety Implications

Not Applicable.

(iv) Key Priorities or Corporate Aims

Providing excellent customer focused and accessible services. Involving and empowering residents.

(v) Risk Assessment

Not Applicable.

(vi) Equality and Diversity

The TSA regulatory requirements place an emphasis on Equality and Diversity as a cross cutting theme across all standards.

(vii) Health and Well-being Implications

Not Applicable.

## Background Papers

Nil

HOUSING SERVICE VISION: “Provide well-maintained homes and estates where people choose to live”

KEY TASKS FOR THE HOUSING SERVICE IN 2010/11: UPDATE

HOUSING OBJECTIVE	AREA OF WORK	CURRENT POSITION	PROPOSED ACTION WITH TARGET DATE FOR EACH	LEAD OFFICER	TARGET DATE FOR COMPLETION	UPDATE
Providing excellent customer-focused and accessible services	Choice-based Lettings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy to be agreed June 2010.</li> <li>Partnership agreement to be signed by end of June.</li> <li>ICT contract to be signed by end of June 2010.</li> <li>Implementation plan being progressed.</li> </ul>	Implement Choice-Based Lettings	Janice Sharp	End of financial year	Completed.
	Homelessness: Advice and Assistance *	The current county-wide Homelessness Strategy ended in 2010.	To work with other Cumbrian authorities through the Homeless Task Group to agree new strategy.	Janice Sharp	Dec 2011	No progress as yet on county-wide strategy. We continue to receive funds for preventing homelessness and this system works well.
Investing and maintaining housing and estates to the best possible standard with resources available	Housing Maintenance Contract *	Existing contract to end November 2011.	Consider and prepare for the re-tendering of the Housing Maintenance Contract	Les Davies	4 Nov 2011	Procurement process in progress.
	Stock Condition Survey	Survey complete	Consider evidence of Stock Condition Survey:  1. Agree plan for next five years of Investment Plan 2. Review draft Asset Management Plan and present to HMF	Les Davies Les Davies	17 June 2010 2 Dec 2010	Complete.
Prudential financial management to ensure financial resources are used effectively and with regard to value for money	Homelink Service *	Service provided under contract with the Supporting People Commissioning Body (SPCB). Following reduction in client base, the service is running a deficit. Discussions are ongoing with SPCB regarding viability of the service.	Prepare report outlining options for the service.	Colin Garnett	Sept 2010	See report Agenda Item 10.
	Review of Housing Revenue Account *		1. Respond to consultancy paper 'Council Housing: A Real Future Prospectus' 2. Continue to work with ARCH on progress of review and review Barrow Plan in light of outcome of the review.	Colin Garnett Colin Garnett	4 July 2010 March 2012	1. Chairman of Executive Committee responded in July 2010. 2. Ongoing

HOUSING OBJECTIVE	AREA OF WORK	CURRENT POSITION	PROPOSED ACTION WITH TARGET DATE FOR EACH	LEAD OFFICER	TARGET DATE FOR COMPLETION	UPDATE
Investing in Communities	Anti-social behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remains a key priority to tenants.</li> <li>New Service Level Agreement for advice now in place with ASB Action Ltd.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To complete a consultation exercise with users of the service to review and agree local standards.</li> <li>Review operational procedures.</li> </ul>	Janice Sharp  Janice Sharp	Summer 2010  Dec 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policies and procedures completed. Recommendations submitted to HMF 3 March 2010</li> <li>Completed.</li> </ul>
	Housing Strategy *	The Council has participated in the development and implementation of a Cumbria Housing Strategy. This is due to end in 2010. Consideration of how the strategy should be updated is required.	To work with other Cumbrian councils through the Cumbria Housing Officers' Group to consider approach and re-draft the Strategy.	Colin Garnett	Autumn 2011	Ongoing
	Financial Inclusion *	Housing officers have improved the targeting of our resources to help assist tenants to manage their finances and minimise rent arrears. We have developed our relationship with the CAB to provide advice surgeries in our offices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To continue to work with other agencies to develop a credit union within the Borough that is available to all.</li> <li>To work with other agencies to introduce a loan service for social tenants within the Borough.</li> </ul>	Colin Garnett	March 2011  Autumn 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Study Group set up to establish credit union. Members include tenant reps.</li> <li>Completed.</li> </ul>
Involving & Empowering Residents	<b>Delivery of Community Involvement Strategy:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define/develop strategic aims</li> <li>Review existing involvement structure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information</li> <li>Consultation</li> <li>Involvement/Influence</li> </ul> </li> <li>Develop priorities for action: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide customers with wide variety of involvement opportunities</li> <li>Keep customers informed of decisions, plans and changes that affect them.</li> <li>Maximise potential for customers to influence decision-making at all levels</li> <li>Build customer and community capacity to influence service delivery</li> <li>Achieve high customer satisfaction and value for money in involvement activities</li> </ul> </li> <li>Review/develop service standards</li> <li>Review/develop performance management framework</li> <li>Monitoring/review/evaluation of strategy</li> </ol>	There is no current formal strategy in place although there are existing processes which give some structure to this area of work.	Set up strategy group of tenants and residents to look at each numbered point 1-6. It is anticipated that the group will have its first meeting in June 2010 with two further monthly meetings thereafter in July 2010 and August 2010 to deal with points 1-5. Point 6 is follow-up action to review whether the strategy has been delivered and will take place by January 2012.	Joanne Tyson	Sept 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The deadline for this task was extended at the request of the Strategy Group who felt that more meetings were required. The strategy draft has been completed and circulated to the Tenants' Forum, Tenant Participation Compact Working Party and staff.</li> <li>See Agenda Item 11.</li> </ul>

HOUSING OBJECTIVE	AREA OF WORK	CURRENT POSITION	PROPOSED ACTION WITH TARGET DATE FOR EACH	LEAD OFFICER	TARGET DATE FOR COMPLETION	UPDATE
<b>Involving &amp; Empowering Residents <i>continued</i></b>	<b>Annual Report to TSA</b> 1. Review of services against national standards conducted by service managers 2. Service managers produce brief report/action plan to Housing Manager following reviews 3. Results shared with Tenants' Forum 4. Report prepared	As this is a new requirement, there has been no work done in this area although regulatory reporting is embodied into the structure from previous regulatory reporting requirements.	Each service manager will take responsibility for policy review and implementation of any action to meet the standard. The findings of all reviews and proposed actions will be presented to Tenants Forum in September 2010 for information and approval, where appropriate. This process will be co-ordinated by a lead officer who will then report to the TSA.	Joanne Tyson	October 2010	Annual Report completed and delivered to all tenants in September 2010, in advance of the TSA deadline. Completed.
	<b>Progress Status Survey</b> 1. Identify organisations for selective tendering 2. Consider tenders/quotes 3. Make decision on tenders/quotes 4. Commission survey 5. Evaluate results and publish	Two providers identified to date. The Department for Communities and Local Government have asked providers to temporarily suspend their plans for the STATUS Survey	Subject to further guidance from the Department for Communities and Local Government, identify further providers and seek approval from Tenants' Forum on who should be commissioned. Aim to commission by end of July 2010 with evaluation of results by September 2010. These dates are subject to change.	Joanne Tyson	Nov 2010 (may be subject to change)	This is no longer required.
	<b>Develop Local Standards/Offers</b> 1. Seek interest for new Local Standards Steering Group. 2. Set up Steering Group – tenants/residents/staff. 3. Agree Local Standards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home</li> <li>• Tenant involvement and empowerment</li> <li>• Neighbourhood and community</li> </ul> 4. Develop a performance management framework	As this is a new requirement, no formal work has occurred in this area.	A Steering Group/Resident Scrutiny Panel will be formed to develop local standards. The Housing website, newsletter and TRA groups can be used to generate interest for the Steering Group. The group is expected to have up to 10 members and will be up and running by August 2010 with further monthly meetings until January 2011.	Joanne Tyson	January 2011	Local Standards have been agreed by Local Standards Group of tenants and staff. They were printed in Autumn/Winter tenants' newsletter to ensure all tenants consulted. Standards will be launched on 1 April 2011 in compliance with TSA deadline. Completed.

\* Items will remain for 2011/12.

## HOMELESS PREVENTION BUDGET GUIDANCE

<b>Aim</b>	A budget is available for use by the Housing Advice Team to provide financial assistance to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. The payment of certain expenses will allow the applicant to remain in their existing property or access alternative accommodation instead of being placed in expensive temporary accommodation.
<b>Eligibility</b>	<p>Applicants who are eligible for these payments are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Families and single people who have been accepted as statutory homeless.</li> <li>• Families and single people who are likely to be accepted as statutory homeless if the assistance is not offered.</li> <li>• Families where the cost of providing temporary accommodation for limited periods (e.g. intentionally homeless families awaiting a review) should be greater than the cost of providing financial assistance.</li> </ul>
<b>Costs which could be approved * / **</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bonds</li> <li>• Rent in advance</li> <li>• Tenancy administration charges (tenancy administration charges, credit checks, solicitors' fees, agents' fees)</li> <li>• Rent payments for limited periods</li> <li>• Housing allowance top-up for limited periods</li> <li>• Court costs incurred by tenants</li> <li>• Legitimate expenses incurred by landlord or tenant in retaining or arranging alternative accommodation</li> <li>• Limited costs incurred by applicant in seeking accommodation (e.g. bus or taxi fares)</li> <li>• Payment of rent arrears to avoid eviction (in certain circumstances)</li> <li>• Guarantees of payments if tenant/agency defaults on payments (liability must be limited to agreed level)</li> <li>• Assistance in moving to a more affordable property</li> <li>• Assistance to access debt or other advice which could sustain a tenancy or owner occupation</li> </ul>
<b>Period of Assistance</b>	If a bond or rent in advance payment is to be made, a commitment from the landlord or agent to allow the tenancy to continue for at least 12 months should be sought.
<b>Recovery of Costs</b>	When making a payment, it should be assumed that none of the costs incurred will be recovered. However, the recovery of bonds and rent in advance should be pursued at the end of the tenancy if this is practical and economic to achieve. The recovery of these costs will allow further applicants to be assisted and reduce the financial burden on the Authority.

\* Amounts exceeding £250 to be agreed by Operations Manager and Housing Manager.

\*\* Approval agreed following an Income & Expenditure Assessment by CAB debt advisor to confirm VFM/sustainability.

HOUSING SERVICE VISION: “Provide well-maintained homes and estates where people choose to live”

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY ACTION PLAN

LEAD OFFICER: JOANNE TYSON

HOUSING OBJECTIVE	AREA OF WORK	PROPOSED ACTION	TARGET DATE FOR COMPLETION	PROGRESS AND COMMENTS	
Develop and agree a Community Involvement Strategy with tenants	1. Seek interest for new Strategy Group	<b>Preparation Pre-Meeting</b>			
		a. Write to all Tenant Representatives and Street Voice Representatives.	July 2010	Complete	
		b. Assess and select group members based on aim to achieve a mixed representation of the community which covers as wide an area of the Borough as possible.	July 2010	Complete	
	2. Set up Strategy Group made up of tenants and residents facilitated by Community Involvement Manager.	<b>Initial Meeting</b>			
		a. Invite group members to initial meeting to enable group members to meet each other and key staff and to give the group more information on what they are becoming involved in.	July 2010	Complete – Meeting scheduled 3 August 2010	
		b. First Meeting of group.	August 2010	Complete	
	3. Define/develop strategic aims	a. Invite the group to discuss and agree strategic aims.	August 2010	Complete	
		b. Write up into a draft format.	August 2010	Complete	
	4. Review existing involvement structure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information</li> <li>• Consultation</li> <li>• Involvement/Influence</li> </ul>	a. Invite the group to discuss and agree what currently exists in practice and record this.	August 2010	Complete	
		b. Identify current methods of involvement in terms of information, consultation, involvement and influence.	August 2010	Complete	
		c. Write up into a draft format.	August 2010	Complete	

	<p>5. Develop priorities for action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide customers with wide variety of involvement opportunities</li> <li>• Keep customers informed of decisions, plans and changes that affect them.</li> <li>• Maximise potential for customers to influence decision-making at all levels</li> <li>• Build customer and community capacity to influence service delivery</li> <li>• Achieve high customer satisfaction and value for money in involvement activities</li> </ul>	<p><b>Second Meeting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Invite group to consider and discuss priorities going forward and to identify areas of development and improvement.</li> <li>b. Write up into a draft format.</li> </ul>	<p><b>September 2010</b></p> <p><b>September 2010</b></p>	<p>Meeting arranged for 17 August 2010 - Complete</p> <p>Complete</p>
	<p>6. Review/develop service standards and review/develop performance management framework.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Invite the group to agree on service standards in relation to the Strategy which can also be fed into the wider local offer/standards.</li> <li>b. Identify methods and timescales in terms of monitoring the standards.</li> <li>c. Write up into draft format.</li> </ul>	<p><b>September 2010</b></p> <p><b>September 2010</b></p> <p><b>October 2010</b></p>	<p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p>
	<p>7. Circulate Draft Strategy to the group for comments, amendments.</p>	<p><b>Third Meeting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Make any amendments and agree draft within the group.</li> </ul>	<p><b>October 2010</b></p>	<p>Meeting arranged for 26 <del>October 2010</del></p>
	<p>8. Seek feedback/approval of final draft.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Consult the Tenants Forum for feedback.</li> <li>b. Consult staff for feedback.</li> <li>c. Share with TPCWG</li> <li>d. Publicise to tenants using Newsletter, local press, website.</li> </ul>	<p><b>December 2010 – April 2011</b></p>	<p>Complete</p>
	<p>9. Introduce Strategy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Seek endorsement of the Strategy from Housing Management Forum (HMF and adopt.</li> </ul>	<p><b>June 2011</b></p>	<p>Ongoing</p>



## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY: ACTION PLAN 2011 – 2013

OUR PRIORITIES	PROPOSED ACTION	TARGET DATE
Aim 1		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use profile data to identify which groups are under-represented and target involvement activities accordingly.</li> <li>▪ Review the Tenant Compact to ensure its content remains relevant and that it is compatible with the Customer Involvement Strategy</li> <li>▪ Review the expenses policy to make sure it sets out clearly what support customers can expect and publicise it to all customers.</li> <li>▪ Explore further opportunities for involving customers in a variety of ways including use of electronic media.</li> <li>▪ Ensure that individual tenants' and residents' associations and customer involvement groups are inclusive of the needs and aspirations of their communities.</li> <li>▪ Ensure that the range and nature of involvement opportunities offered makes involvement accessible and meaningful to the full range of customers.</li> </ul>	<p>Examine data collected from 'knowing our Customers to Improve our Services' profiling form.</p> <p>Review with the Tenant Forum</p> <p>Publicise expenses policy using tenants' newsletter.</p> <p>Investigate the use of Barrow Borough Council Facebook page.</p> <p>Investigate use of Equality &amp; Diversity Policy.</p> <p>Review the choice of involvement opportunities and link to a database of all involved tenants.</p>	<p>At least annually</p> <p>By end of October 2011</p> <p>At least annually</p> <p>By end of June 2011</p> <p>At least annually</p> <p>At least quarterly</p>
Aim 2		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Deliver information on involvement opportunities to new tenants during the post tenancy visit which is carried out six weeks after moving in.</li> <li>▪ Display minutes of recent meetings of all the forums in the reception area.</li> <li>▪ Publish a clear menu of involvement opportunities in the newsletter, as appropriate.</li> </ul>	<p>Redesign post-tenancy checklist to include information being given on involvement opportunities.</p> <p>Identify an area in reception and display the last minutes of all forum meetings.</p> <p>Allocate space in the newsletter for a newly designed menu of involvement opportunities.</p>	<p>By end of June 2011</p> <p>By end of June 2011</p> <p>Every time a tenants' newsletter is produced</p>
Aim 3		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop and deliver a mystery shopper programme to establish a comprehensive service-testing regime.</li> <li>▪ Enhance scrutiny arrangements to review services and make reasonable recommendations for improvements.</li> </ul>	<p>Research how other organisations undertake this and recruit and train the shoppers.</p> <p>Review terms of reference of TPCWP.</p>	<p>By end of March 2012</p> <p>By end of December 2011</p>

OUR PRIORITIES	PROPOSED ACTION	TARGET DATE
Aim 4		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Introduce a system of skills auditing and record training for all customer training activities.</li> <li>▪ Introduce an evaluation form to monitor the effectiveness of training accessed.</li> <li>▪ Use fun days more effectively to obtain feedback on services.</li> <li>▪ Consult and agree with customers' local standards, where appropriate.</li> </ul>	<p>Draft a form/s to record skills and training form.</p> <p>Draft a training evaluation form.</p> <p>Undertake surveys and/or obtain feedback sessions and/or supply promotional material/information as appropriate.</p> <p>Undertake consultation exercise and then engage with Local Standards Group of tenants and staff to agree and implement standards which reflect what is important at a local level to tenants.</p>	<p>By end of June 2011</p> <p>By end of June 2011</p> <p>Every time there is a fun day organised by our TRA's.</p> <p>Annually</p>
Aim 5		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Undertake an annual impact assessment to evaluate the cost effectiveness of involvement activities.</li> <li>▪ Benchmark costs and performance in customer involvement against others in the sector to identify areas of potential improvement.</li> <li>▪ Formulate action plans to address any weaknesses identified through impact assessments, status surveys and other customer feedback.</li> </ul>	<p>Complete annual impact assessment form.</p> <p>Use Housemark to benchmark against other similar size organisations.</p> <p>Produce action plans to tackle any weaknesses.</p>	<p>Annually</p> <p>At least annually</p> <p>As appropriate</p>

## HOUSING MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT

Performance Indicator	Actual 2009/10	Actual 2010/11	Target (Median)
<b>£ Rents Collection</b>			
<b>£ Rent collected</b>	£ 8,546,587	£8,738,448	£ 8,321,841
Rent collected as % of rent due	98.46%	100.97%	99%
<b>£ Current Arrears</b>	£165,452	£158,236	£175,679
<b>£ Former Arrears</b>	£123,432	£103,064	£128,081
<b>Write Offs</b>	£129,709	£114,706	£34,616
Tenants evicted for rent arrears	18	10	13
Current tenants arrears % of rent owed	1.91%	1.86%	2.10%
Former tenants arrears % of rent owed	1.42%	1.18%	1.90%
<b>£ Rent arrears Garages</b>	£4,094	£3,289	£ 3,750
<b>£ Rent Arrears Shops</b>	£28,131	£27,524	£ 25,000
<b>Void management</b>			
<b>No. of Voids</b>	281	268	225
Average relet time for dwellings (days)	31	28	31
<b>£ rent loss through vacant dwellings</b>	£101,530	£85,909	£129,811
<b>£ rent loss due to vacant garages</b>	£4,873	£4,907	£4,500
<b>£ rent loss due to vacant shops</b>	£4,253	£4,844	£4,000
% properties accepted on first offer	NA	73.9%	70%
Cost per Void (Rents, Repairs, Mgt & Arrears)	NA	£ 2,556	
<b>Maintenance</b>			
<b>No. Repair Orders issued (Tenant Demand)</b>	13,068	10,890	8,946
% all reactive repairs completed on time	81%	92.5%	95%
% emergency repairs completed on time	97%	98.9%	97%
% urgent repairs completed on time	88%	89.6%	95%
% routine repairs completed on time	93%	90.6%	94%
Average end-to-end time for all reactive repairs (days)	12.6	12.6	9
Percentage of repairs completed right first time	NA	NA	94.7%
Appointments kept as a percentage of appointments made	97%	97.13	97%
Appointments made as a percentage of repair orders (exc gas & voids)	100%	100%	94%
Percentage of dwellings with a valid gas safety certificate	99.5%	99.2%	100%
Average time taken to answer inbound telephone calls (in seconds)	NA	NA	
Percentage of homes that fail to meet the Decent Homes Standard	0%	0.0%	6.70%
*Average energy efficiency rating of dwellings (based on SAP 2005)	76.20%	68.3	69.10%
<b>Equality &amp; Diversity</b>			
<b>ASB cases reported</b>	213	85	119
Percentage of closed ASB cases that were successfully resolved	13.1%	72%	NA
% Vulnerable people achieving independent	87%	95%	77.2
% Diversity Information : Age	99.90%	96.06%	100%
Gender	100%	98%	98%
Ethnicity	66.90%	66.62%	75%
Disability	42.40%	41.78%	75%
Sexuality	43%	39.08%	55%
Religion or belief	43%	40.34%	55%
Percentage of Stage 1 complaints upheld	NA	25%	NA

## HOUSING MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT

Performance Indicator	Actual 2009/10	Actual 2010/11	
<b>Satisfaction</b>			
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the landlord's services overall	87%	87%	NA
Percentage of tenants satisfied with repairs and maintenance	88%	88%	NA
Percentage of tenants satisfied that their views are taken into account	76%	76%	NA
Percentage of new tenants satisfied with the allocation and letting process	NA	NA	NA
Percentage of residents satisfied with estate services	81%	81%	NA
<b>Value for Money - Cost per property - direct costs</b>			
Major & Cyclical works (service)	£1,406	*	£1,450
Responsive Repairs	£400	*	£385
Void Repairs	£132	*	£202
Rent Arrears & Collection	£68	*	£67
Community Involvement	£31	*	£25
Anti Social Behaviour	£37	*	£24
Neighbourhood Mgt (Estates/Tenancy mgt.)	£95	*	£138
Housing Options	£45	*	£28
Leasehold	£31	*	£136
Total staff turnover	8%	10.3%	8%
Ave. working days lost / sickness absence	14.0	22.3	10.5

Housing Property	Dwellings
HSE	1293
FLATS	1251
BUNGALOWS	157
<b>TL DWELLINGS</b>	<b>2711</b>
<b>LEASEHOLDS</b>	<b>201</b>
GARAGES	484
SHOPS	21

SOLD PROPERTIES	No	£
HSE	4	231,000
FLAT	2	260,200
<b>TL</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>259,700</b>

HOMELESSNESS	Actual 2009/10	Actual 2010/11
Homeless ave. days in temporary dispersed accommodation	47	46
Homeless ave. days in temporary B&B accommodation	22	31
Homeless presentations	NA	225
Homeless preventions	NA	146
Eligible Homeless	NA	27

HOUSING REGISTER	Actual 2009/10	Actual @ 30.4.11
Applicants on housing register		1700
Cumbria Choice Register		895

# COMMENTS ON HOUSING MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE

## Background

The current set of measurements were agreed by the Tenants Participation Compact Working group and the Housing Management Forum in January 2011. The Management Forum requested additional information on Homelessness and Housing Register, both of which are now shown. The indicators are selected to highlight strengths and weaknesses in various aspects of Housing Management which range from efficient use of resource (Value for Money), effective use of resource (applying the resource to the right area) and compliance (Equality & Diversity).

## Performance Improvements 2010-2011

The last year has delivered a great performance from the Income Management team. The accumulated arrears and write offs are **£42k less** than the previous year, a result of collecting more rent and arrears from both current & former tenants. **Notably evictions were almost halved down from 18 to 10.** Garage arrears are also down however, shops arrears have increased slightly. This improvement has been delivered with less staff working smarter and a greater shift towards prevention rather than enforcement. There is now a clearly defined Income Management Policy which ensures a consistent approach to all areas of Housing Income.

Additional resource and attention is being directed towards Void Management to reduce the number of tenancies which fail each year. The associated costs are high; loss of rent, arrears, damage & repairs, cost of management. The cost per void has risen throughout the year but this is mainly because we are getting better at isolating the staff and repair costs in turning round a void. We would expect to see an improvement in the coming year..

## Lettings have improved the void turnaround from 31 days to 28.

For the coming year Lettings (Housing Options) will invest more time in getting the right support to those tenancies that appear more likely to fail to reduce the number of abandonments (19) and voids which are already down from 281 to 268.

For 2011-2012 Maintenance are now responsible for ensuring that the turnaround remains at a healthy level. On time repair times remain at a good level and **100% of all properties continue to meet the Decent Homes standard.** The SAP rating (average energy efficiency measure has fallen from 76% to 68% but it is compared to a higher standard than last year.

Satisfaction levels reported are those from the last STATUS Survey in 2008. STATUS is no longer a requirement. However, in recognition that 'satisfaction' is a key management indicator, a revised model 'STAR' is being developed. I hope to report on this to your next meeting to consider whether you wish to adopt it. STAR is a way to denote good levels of satisfaction are maintained despite significant reductions in costs and that our resources are applied in the areas that make a difference to tenants.

The Value for Money direct costs have not been validated yet.

The Housing Register (Cumbria Choice) now has 895 applicants against 1700 under the old system. We are monitoring the situation and will ensure that any vulnerable groups are followed up. The reduction is in keeping with other areas when they have introduced Choice Based Lettings.

We will continue to benchmark our performance against other local authority and private sector housing providers to ensure that our costs are competitive. All our Performance Indicators are validated by the same benchmark organisation, Housemark before they are reported to Tenants in their annual report.

## PLANNED MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME 2011-12

### PLANNED INVESTMENTS 2011-12

SCHEME	CONTRACTOR OR SUPPLIER	AVAILABLE BUDGET	NO OF PROPERTIES	INVOICES PAID TO DATE	START DATE	ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE	CONTRACTOR	TARGET COST	OUT TURN ESTIMATE	COMMENTS
REWIRES	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	£253,000	137	£15,000	1.4.2011	Feb-12	K WILSON	£273,929	£253,000	15% Complete
BATHROOMS	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	£300,000	181	£16,690	1.4.2011	Feb-12	AB MITCHELL	£253,000	£300,000	5% Complete
KITCHENS	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	£800,000	290	£107,391	1.4.2011	Feb-12	AB MITCHELL	£717,000	£800,000	20% Complete
HEATING	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	£850,000	213	£60,000	1.4.2011	Feb-12	AB MITCHELL INTEGRAL	£615,350	£850,000	25% Complete
RE-POINTING	TBC	£150,000	50	£0	1.7.2011	31.3.2012	TBC	£150,000	£150,000	Tender documnts being prepared
PAINTING	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	£200,000	500	£0	1.4.2011	Feb-12	GH JONES	TBC	£170,000	Commenced on site June 2011

### HOUSING MAINTENANCE COMMITMENTS 2011-12

	Funding Available 2011-12	Gross COMMITMENT	Weekly Available	Gross Comm. as a % funds available
<b>Tenant Demand Repairs</b>	£900,000.00	£107,806.00	£17,307.69	12%
<b>Voids</b>	£200,000.00	£26,243.00	£3,846.15	13%
<b>Gas Servicing</b>	£425,000.00	£43,395.00	£8,173.08	10%
<b>Decoration Vouchers</b>	£35,000.00	£4,702.00	£673.08	13%
<b>Disrepair Claims</b>	£25,000.00	£0.00	£480.77	0%
<b>Environmental Impmts</b>	£50,000.00	£2,555.00	£961.54	5%
<b>Disabled Adaptations</b>	£300,000.00	£44,947.00	£5,769.23	15%
<b>Electrical Testing</b>	£175,000.00	£4,164.00	£3,365.38	2%
<b>Door Entry Maintenance</b>	£20,000.00	£9,714.00	£384.62	49%
<b>Total</b>	<b>£2,205,000.00</b>	<b>£243,526.00</b>	<b>£40,961.54</b>	