

BOROUGH OF BARROW-IN-FURNESS

HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM

Meeting: Thursday, 27th November, 2008 at 2pm in Committee Room 4

Group Meetings at 1.15 pm

A G E N D A

PART ONE

1. To note any items which the Chairman considers to be of an urgent nature.

2. 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.

3. 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 accompanies the agenda and reports for this meeting.

4. Confirmation of minutes of meeting held on 28th August, 2008.

5. Apologies for Absence/Changes in Membership.

FOR DECISION

OPERATIONAL

- (D) 6. Equality Impact Assessments
- (D) 7. Choice-Based Lettings
- (D) 8. Stackwood Avenue Community Centre
- (D) 9. Ocean Wave Community Centre
- (D) 10. Mediation Services
- (D) 11. Financial Inclusion: Development of Credit Union
- (D) 12. Status Survey

STRATEGIC PLANNING

FOR INFORMATION

13. Performance Information Report – 7th April to 5th October 2008
14. Planned Maintenance Programme 2008/09

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

HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM MEMBERS:

Councillors: D. Dawes
O. N. Flitcroft
J. Hamezeian
L. Hammond
M. Irwin
D. V. James (Councillors' nominated Chairman appointed at Annual Council meeting)
Maltman
J. Waiting (Chairman for meeting management purposes)

Tenant Representatives: Mrs. P. Charnley
Mrs. M. Burgess
Mr. N. Hird
Mrs. K. Hotchkiss
Mr. A. McIntosh
Mr. D McMillan
Mr. T. Slater
Mrs. J. McMurray

HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM

Meeting: 28th August, 2008
at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT:- Councillors Waiting (Chairman), J. Hamezeian, Irwin, James and Richardson.

Tenant Representatives:- Mrs A. Burgess, Mrs P. Charnley, Mr N. Hird, Mr A. McIntosh and Mr D. McMillan.

18 – The Local Government Act, 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 and Access to Information (Variation) Order 2006

Discussion arising hereon it was

RESOLVED:- That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972 the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 and Paragraph 2 (Minute Nos. 26 and 27) of Part One of Schedule 12A of the said Act.

19 – Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Dawes.

20 – Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28th February, 2008 were taken as read and confirmed.

Councillor Hamezeian stated that he was not in agreement of the accuracy of the Minute with regards to the Housing Services Delivery Plan (Minute No. 14 refers).

21 – Appointment of Representatives to Working Groups etc.

The Chief Executive reported that at the last meeting of the Housing Management Forum held on 26th June, 2008 Councillor Hammond, a Member of the Independent Group was appointed to the Tenant Compact Working Party and the Homelink Service Review Group. Councillor Hammond was mistakenly appointed as it had should have been a Member of the Barrow Borough Independent Group.

In order to maintain proportionality the Executive Committee on 16th July, 2008 agreed that Councillor Wood, a Member of the Barrow Borough Independent Group be appointed to the Tenant Compact Working Party and the Homelink Service Review Group and that the Housing Management Forum be informed accordingly.

RECOMMENDED:- That the change of appointment from Councillor Hammond to Councillor Wood to the Tenant Compact Working Party and the Homelink Service Review Group be noted.

22 – Homelink Equipment

The Housing Manager stated that the purpose of his report was to agree an approach to the upgrading of Homelink equipment to ensure it remained functional following the upgrade of BT landline services. At present Homelink provided services to approximately 489 tenants of this Council and 351 clients in the private sector.

BT were intending to upgrade their current networks through a programme called 21st Century Network (21CN). The purpose of the upgrade was to modernise the network to improve its functionality, efficiency of operation costs and enable a wider range of services to be offered. It had not been possible to clarify the timetable by which 21CN would be rolled out, other than it was forecast to start in the third quarter of 2008, when 115,000 lines would be converted each week resulting in the vast majority of the UK using 21CN by 2010 with the process completed by 2011.

The introduction of 21CN was an issue to Community Alarm providers as it may result in compatibility issues between the new network and the functionality of equipment. The Council's supplier, Tunstall had conducted a testing programme of their equipment. In short, the feedback on 'older' stand-alone equipment was that there were high levels of side tone generated intermittently, causing the user being able to hear their own voice echoing under certain operational conditions, thus causing potential for confusion or frustration. With regard to schemes where the equipment was hardwired and formed part of a group of properties, such systems demonstrated intermittent failure to open speech channels on alarm call activation. Although they were capable of raising a call, the monitoring centre may not be able to speak to the client to ascertain the reason for the call. In identifying these faults, Tunstall were recommending their systems and equipment should be upgraded prior to 21CN roll out. The Housing Manager noted that other than for six schemes on which the 'control' boxes were replaced or were changed to dispersed alarms in the last four years, the remaining equipment was now in the region of twenty years old.

He also reported that the Housing Service had always purchased all of its equipment through a joint procurement arrangement through the Northern Housing Consortium's Community Alarm Group. Whatever option was agreed, he suggested that the Council continued with this procurement method at the present time. He had obtained estimated costs for the work, as follows:-

1. Upgrade of Group Schemes £147,000 (31 schemes)

NB: Does not include smoke alarms in the property, but does include speech and pull cords in property.

It is only an estimated cost as additional work may be required for cabling which will be identified during installation.

Tunstall do offer a leasing arrangement which, based on the above quote, would be £57K per year over three years.

2.	<u>Partial Upgrade of Group Schemes</u>	£2,628.35 per scheme
	NB: This does not include updating any equipment in tenants' homes and is the minimum requirement to make a scheme 21CN compliant.	total 31 schemes: £81,478.35
3.	<u>Provision of Dispersed Alarms</u>	c.£250 per unit
	NB: This includes a mains powered radio trigger smoke alarm and installation by Tunstall.	340 units: £85,000

The above costs related only to equipment for which the Council was responsible. The Housing Manager would write to any private subscribers of the services to make them aware of the advice received from Tunstall and the option to purchase new equipment.

In considering the options and costs, the Housing Manager requested Members to have regard to the Housing Department's experience of operating the Homelink Service, for example:-

- The number of tenants on the scheme at its height was c.950. This has reduced to c.500, although this number has over recent years remained consistent.
- As a result of the above changing demand patterns, and right to buy, there are few areas in which Homelink remains a 'common' feature of property in the block or area (for example, Biggar Garth originally had 31 units but now has 15 units).

Maintenance of schemes with hard wired systems was problematic; cable runs were often long, sometimes across sold properties, and were expensive to repair; equipment in external boxes were subject to maintenance issues in that they were exposed to weather; and the Housing Service had to fund costs of telephones at each control box.

Alternatively the dispersed option was quicker to install, easy to maintain and offered greater flexibility in that it could be installed in most properties. In addition, he suggested with the development of services for older people generally, the emphasis would be around the needs of the person being the main focus and less linked with 'a property'. For those reasons he suggested that other than for when we have group schemes which were compliant, the Council should move to providing dispersed alarms at all other schemes.

This Forum has previously considered the issue of providing dispersed alarms in place of 'group' schemes where the number of connections was less than six. In doing so, it also gave approval to meet the cost of providing a telephone line for tenants where required to facilitate the process. He suggested a rolling out of this approach for further schemes, replacing the group scheme units with dispersed alarms with a pendant and radio triggered smoke alarm. Should this be agreed, the Housing Manager would take the opportunity for an audit of all properties in the area,

in particular properties previously disconnected, to be completed to ensure smoke alarms were installed at all properties.

Moving to dispersed alarms offered a number of potential advantages over group schemes, in terms of cost of installation, future maintenance problems and costs, and greater flexibility in operating the system. In considering the practicality of rolling out this approach, it would require more staff time input initially with regard to liaising with residents and completing a property audit, so he suggested that it would take the remainder of the financial year to complete.

One particular hurdle with installing dispersed alarms had been the tenant not having a landline. Whilst the Council had agreed to funding the cost of installation, he suggested that should a tenant not, as part of the process, be prepared to meet the ongoing rental costs, then the option of the Homelink Service would be withdrawn. There would be savings from the removal of BT line rental costs at each scheme and in the first two years all equipment would be under warranty and save on maintenance costs.

In summarising the options above, there may be additional costs involved in providing smoke alarms following an audit of all properties previously disconnected. However, this was common to all three options and the cost of providing such alarms would be met from the existing budget for electrical testing.

Only a relatively small number was identified in this year's budget for equipment. However, the Housing Manager suggested that it was important to start replacing equipment at the earliest opportunity. Having reviewed the maintenance budget, funds of £100K were included to start a rolling programme of door entry replacement in the current year. At the present time he was investigating the type of system available and establishing a programme. No expenditure had been committed therefore he suggested that a sum of £90K be vired from the maintenance budget to facilitate the replacement of Homelink equipment. This would leave a balance of £10K to start a rolling programme towards the end of the financial year to upgrade door entry systems.

RECOMMENDED:- That:-

- (i) The information and potential compatibility problem with existing Homelink equipment be noted;
- (ii) The Housing Manager commence a programme of replacing the identified schemes with dispersed alarm equipment;
- (iii) Should tenants not be prepared to take on the line rental changes the offer of Homelink Service be withdrawn;
- (iv) The Housing Manager purchase the equipment through the Northern Housing Consortium's joint procurement arrangements; and

- (v) Consideration be given to the need to upgrade the remaining five group schemes with a view to making budget provision for their upgrade during 2009/10.

Note: Councillor Hamezeian under 15.5 of the Council's Procedure Rules requested that his individual vote be recorded as follows:-

That he did not agree with recommendation (3) of the Housing Manager's report.

23 – Older Persons Strategic Review

The Housing Manager reported that following approval of the Review of Older Persons Services, the Supporting People Commissioning Body (SPCB) was seeking views on the options available for the future commissioning of services.

Comments were requested by 16th October, 2008 when the SPCB next met, in order that a way forward could be agreed.

By way of a reminder, the SPCB was responsible for commissioning and funding the provision of housing support, in this instance, on the services for older people. The Housing Service was 'contracted' for providing a range of services through its Homelink Service. The Paper, however, related to a range of services for older people which was relevant to some Council tenants.

He suggested therefore that Members may wish to comment on the Paper with regard to the direct provision of Homelink Services but may also choose to comment regarding the proposals with regard to services generally.

For ease of understanding, the services could be split into two broad areas:-

1. Accommodation based services, e.g. sheltered and extra-care housing; and
2. Non-accommodation based services, e.g. community alarms, floating support.

In considering the Options paper, the Housing Manager advised Members that the proposals had been drafted with regard to consultations with relevant users and providers over the last twelve months.

As the Paper showed, which was attached as an appendix to the Housing Manager's report, it was comprehensive and he summarised key points to help Members with their consideration of the matter.

Accommodation Based Services (Page 9 of the Paper)

Four options:

A - maintain the status quo

B - deliver support services to all teams

C - commission a community based service

D - commission floating support services countywide.

The SCB are suggesting option C and D be adopted.

Comment

The options being suggested will fundamentally change the historical approach to Sheltered Housing, moving away from the support service being 'directly' linked to a specific property.

With regard to the Council's own stock, much of what we have previously designated as 'sheltered accommodation's based on historical trends. As time has passed, demand for such property has changed, resulting in the Housing Service being more flexible in its approach to letting such property.

Conversely, I am aware that some older people have chosen not to move and we have offered them dispersed alarms. I would suggest, accepting a change to commissioning of such services is requested that, in principal, option C and D should be supported.

Non-Accommodation based services (Page 24 of the Paper)

Five options:

A - do nothing

B - single call continue monitoring only

C - no community alarm service

D - introduce new set price for community alarm monitoring only

E - introduce a first line mobile response service countywide.

The SPCB are suggesting option B be adopted.

Comment

The Housing Service has operated this service via a third party provider for some years without problem.

I would suggest there are errors in the Report, particularly with regard to first line response. Within our own service we operate a Mobile Warden Service. Whilst we operate a family and friends practice, this is often not a practical option for many.

To not offer the option of a first line of response would be detrimental to the services of this Borough and perhaps exclude some vulnerable individuals.

Secondly, often a response is required of a 'practical nature'. This is not 'housing support' as defined through Supporting People, but should be a consideration in the design of any community alarm service.

Having regard to the above comments, the Housing Manager suggested that the concept of the service being provided across tenures should be welcomed. The Homelink Service had traditionally provided services in the private sector, but for whom the clients could not access Supporting People funding.

By way of general comment about the proposals, the effect was to separate further the concept of provision of housing and housing support. Whilst on a strategic level these should be welcomed as it would make services available to people living in other houses, the Housing Manager suggested the transition should be made over a period of time, with protection to existing users.

Members comments were requested.

RECOMMENDED:- That Supporting People be asked to carry out further consultations with service users and organisations within the Borough. The results of the wider consultation should be reported to the next Housing Management Forum at which time the Committee would make their comments on the reports.

24 – Performance Information 7th April to 6th July, 2008

The Housing Manager submitted information relating to a selection of Local and National Performance Indicators and Best Value Performance Indicators. The information was as follows:-

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS							
Housemark/ BVPI / Local	Performance Indicator	Actual 2004/5	Actual 2005/6	Actual 2006/7	Actual 2007/8	Target 2008/9	April to June 2008
	Rent Arrears and Collection						
BV66a	% Rent Collected	98.3%	98.1%	97.88%	96.78%	98%	90.17%
BV66b	% Tenants with > 7 weeks arrears	N/A	5.76%	5.89%	6.82%	5.5%	6.01%
BV66c	% Tenants served with NOSP for arrears	N/A	33.37%	35.48%	29%	25%	18.6%
BV66d	% Tenants evicted for rent arrears	N/A	0.99%	1.05%	0.66%	0.5%	1.6%
Housemark	Current tenants arrears as % of rent roll	2.86%	2.9%	2.99%	2.96%	2.5%	3.05%
	Void management						
BV212	Average relet time for dwellings (in days)	40.8	34	28	35.9	28	37.8
Housemark	% rent loss through vacant dwellings	1.7%	1.19%	0.98%	1.41%	1%	1.5%
Local	% rent loss due to voids – garages	1.97%	3.6%	2.63%	2.81%	2%	3.2%
	Homelessness						
Housemark	Average stay in B & B for families with children or pregnant women (in days)	N/A	3.5	2	10	3	9
Housemark	% of homeless applications where decision made and notified within 33 days	70%	99%	98.5%	95.3%	99%	88.9%
Local	Average length of stay in B&B (in days)	N/A	24.5	22	14.4	12	13.9
Local	Average length of stay in dispersed (in days)	45	50	45	48	28	41
Local	Average length of stay in dispersed for families with children (in days)	52	61	34	41	28	30
Local	Average number of homeless households in dispersed accommodation	7.5	5.9	5.8	7.3	5	11.7

BV213	% of households whose situation was resolved by housing advice	NA	NA	NA	N/A	75%	NA
NI 156 <i>(new for 08/09)</i>	Number of households living in temporary accommodation	--	--	--	13	10	20
	Housing Applications						
Local	% Housing applications answered within 6 days	96%	99%	95%	52%	95%	34%
	Repairs						
Housemark	% urgent repairs completed within Government time limits	88.1%	85.7%	89.59%	78%	92%	84.07%
Housemark	% emergency repairs completed on time	97.4%	98.4%	93.6%	84.36%	94%	84.09%
Housemark	% routine repairs completed on time	83.4%	92.9%	92.3%	77.26%	93%	76.79%
Housemark	% urgent repairs completed on time	81.6%	93.2%	78.7%	74.86%	90%	75.71%
NI 158 <i>(was BV184a)</i>	Proportion of homes which are non-decent	--	--	17.8%	2%	1.75%	2%
Local	Average time taken to complete non-urgent repairs (in days)	9.7	7.6	10	13.7	8	10.3
	General Management						
NI 160 <i>(new for 08/09)</i>	Local authority's tenants' satisfaction with landlord's services	--	--	--	--	82%	

RENT ARREARS as at week ending 6th July 2008

Area	Current £	% Gross Debit	Former Tenants £	% Gross Debit
Central	74,219.19	4.38	29,207.03	1.72
Dalton	15,235.99	2.27	7,944.91	1.18
Roosegate	61,721.15	2.83	27,422.94	1.26
Ormsgill	57,716.87	2.93	80,063.66	4.07
Walney	23,196.65	1.95	10,320.02	0.87
Miscellaneous	2,492.07	12.63	0.00	0.00
Dwellings total	234,581.92	3.04	154,958.56	2.01
Garages	3,717.86	2.29	2,107.43	1.30
Homeless	5,271.31	10.08	18,812.00	35.98
Total	243,571.09	3.07	175,877.99	2.21
Grand Total		£419,449.08	5.28%	

FORMER TENANT ARREARS

Former tenants arrears written off in period April 2008–June 2008 = £46,521.32

VOIDS						
from 7th April 2008 to 6th July 2008						
	Central	Dalton	Ormsgill	Roosegate	Walney	Total
1 Bedroom						
Ground-floor flat	1	0	15	7	0	23
Upper-floor flat	9	1	7	1	4	22
Bungalow	1	1	2	1	0	5
Sub total	11	2	24	9	4	50
2 Bedrooms						
Ground-floor flat	0	0	1	1	0	2
Upper-floor flat	0	0	6	1	1	8
Bungalow	0	0	0	0	0	0
House	5	0	1	2	1	9
Sub-total	5	0	8	4	2	19
3 Bedrooms						
Ground-floor flat	1	0	0	0	0	1
Upper-floor flat	0	0	0	1	0	1
Bungalow	0	0	0	0	0	0
House	1	2	2	5	4	14
Sub-total	2	2	2	6	4	16
4 Bedrooms						
House	0	0	0	1	0	1
5 Bedrooms						
House	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	18	4	34	20	10	86

OFFERS OF ACCOMMODATION								
made and refused between 7th April 2008 to 6th July 2008								
Area	Property Details	Area	Condition	Personal circumstances	No reply to offer	Other reasons	Withdrawn	Total
Central	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	4
Dalton	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	3
Ormsgill	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Roosegate	3	3	1	1	0	0	0	8
Walney	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total	4	7	4	2	0	1	0	18

NEW TENANCIES
7th April 2008 to 6th July 2008

<i>Applicant Type</i>	<i>No.</i>
Housing Register	53
Transfers:	19
General Management	1
Management	2
Medical	7
Under/over Occupancy	9
Homeless (monitored from October 2004)	11
Mutual Exchanges	4
Total Relets	87

HOUSING PROPERTY AS AT 30th June 2008

TYPE OF PROPERTY	NO. OF BEDS.	CENTRAL	DALTON	ORMSGILL	ROOSE	SHOPS	DISPERSED	WALNEY	TOTAL
BUNGALOWS	1	13	35	27	14			54	143
	2		5						5
	3			4	4				8
FLATS	1	326	30	210	243		7	146	962
	2	62	12	160	51		6	16	307
	3	3	1		1		2	1	8
HOUSES	2	80	19	66	145			77	387
	3	133	114	220	252			119	838
	4	9	4	7	51			4	75
	5				5				5
SUB-TOTAL		626	220	694	766		15	417	2,738
SHOPS	0					18			18
	2					4			4
	3					0			0
	4					1			1
HOSTEL FLATLETS	1						0		0
	2						0		0
GRAND TOTAL		626	220	694	766	23	15	417	2,761
GARAGES		207	45	68				167	487

SOLD PROPERTIES

7th April 2008 to 6th July 2008

AREA	PROPERTY TYPE	BEDROOMS	TOTAL
Abbotsmead	House	3	1
TOTAL			1

The Committee referred to the Routine and Urgent Repairs Performance Indicators and requested that a clear message be sent to the Core Management Team that the Housing Management Forum were unhappy with the level of performance.

RESOLVED:- (i) To note the information on the Performance Information Report; and
(ii) That a clear message be sent to the Core Management Team that the Housing Management Forum were unhappy with the level of performance with regards to Routine and Urgent Repairs Performance Indicators.

25 – Planned Maintenance Programme 2008/09

The Housing Manager reported information relating to the progress of the Planned Maintenance programme for 2008/09. The information is attached at **Appendix (i)** to these Minutes.

RESOLVED:- To note the information.

26 – Request for Adaptations to a Council Property – 8 Stackwood Avenue, Barrow-in-Furness

The Housing Manager submitted a report to consider a request for adaptations to be carried out at 8 Stackwood Avenue, Barrow-in-Furness costing approximately £6,000. Members instructions were requested.

RECOMMENDED:- That the request for disabled adaptations to be carried out at 8 Stackwood Avenue, Barrow-in-Furness be approved.

REFERRED ITEMS

THE FOLLOWING MATTER WAS REFERRED TO COUNCIL FOR DECISION

27 – Changes to Housing Department Establishment

The Housing Manager submitted a report which sought changes to the Housing Department's establishment to reflect operational requirements and maintain delivery of front line services.

Comments from the Union on the report were tabled along with an advisory note from the Head of Paid Service.

RECOMMENDED:- That this item be referred to the Executive Committee for consideration without recommendation.

The meeting closed at 2.53 p.m.

PLANNED MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME 2008/09

SCHEME	CONTRACTOR OR SUPPLIER	AVAILABLE BUDGET	COMMITTED	INVOICES RECEIVED	START DATE	ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE	CONTRACTOR	TARGET PRICE	DATE	COMMENTS
REWIRES	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	£250,000		£180,925	Apr-08	Feb-09	KEITH WILSON	£190,000	15.8.2008	80% COMPLETE
BATHROOMS I	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	£150,000		£47,188	Jun-08	Dec-08	AB MITCHELL	£150,000	15.8.2008	37% COMPLETE
BATHROOMS II	INTEGRAL	£100,000		£2,755	Jun-08	Dec-08	INTEGRAL	£100,000	15.8.2008	2% COMPLETE
KITCHENS I	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	£275,000		£164,291	Apr-08	Dec-08	AB MITCHELL	£275,000	15.8.2008	49% COMPLETE
KITCHENS II	INTEGRAL	£225,000		£33,319	May-08	Dec-08	INTEGRAL	£225,000	15.8.2008	70% COMPLETE
HEATING I	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	£475,000		£261,939	Apr-08	Dec-08	AB MITCHELL	£475,000	15.8.2008	66% COMPLETE
HEATING II	INTEGRAL	£375,000		£122,320	Jun-08	Dec-08	INTEGRAL	£375,000	15.8.2008	66% COMPLETE
DIGITAL TV	N/A	£60,000		£26,957	Apr-08	Sep-08	AERIALEK	£60,000	15.8.2008	75% COMPLETE
ROOFING	May-08	£88,000		£18,857	23.6.2008	Nov-08	CUMBRIA ROOFING	£62,000	15.8.2008	75% COMPLETE
PAINTING (Ormsgill)	NEGOTIATED	£200,000		£99,011	May-08	Jan-09	B MONCUR	£200,000	15.8.2008	75% COMPLETE

HOUSING MAINTENANCE ESTIMATED EXPENDITURE 2008/09 @ 14.8.2008

	Funding Available 2007/08	Gross Exp. To	Weekly Available	Gross Exp. as a % funds available
Tenant Demand Repairs	£900,000.00	£151,526.00	£17,307.69	17%
Voids	£175,000.00	£35,668.00	£3,365.38	20%
Gas Servicing	£425,000.00	£72,872.00	£8,173.08	17%
Decoration Vouchers	£35,000.00	£16,145.00	£673.08	46%
Disrepair Claims	£25,000.00	£30.00	£480.77	0%
Environmental Impmts	£50,000.00	£25,908.00	£961.54	52%
Disabled Adaptations	£250,000.00	£23,853.00	£4,807.69	10%
Door Entry	£100,000.00	£0.00	£1,923.08	0%

HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM	(D) Agenda 6
Date of Meeting: 27th November 2008	
Reporting Officer: Colin Garnett, Housing Manager	
<p>Title: Equality Impact Assessments</p> <p>Summary and Conclusion:</p> <p>The purpose of this report is to give Members background to the Equality Impact Assessment process and note progress made to date.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <p>Members of the Forum are recommended to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. note the information on Equality Impact Assessments; and 2. endorse action taken by Housing Service. 	

Report

Background

In line with the Council's key priorities to achieve Level 2 of the Equalities Standard this financial year, Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) must be carried out on our services. The aim is to improve our work by making sure we do not discriminate in the way we provide services and, where possible, we provide equality and diversity and good relations between different groups.

As part of our commitment, we have carried out an initial generic EIA of the Housing Service, and drafted an Action Plan to carry out EIAs on specific service areas, within the next six months.

Attached at **Appendix A** is a generic EIA of the Housing Service.

Introduction

An EIA is a way to make sure that individual teams within the Housing Service think about the impact of policies, procedures, strategies, functions and services to identify any unmet needs and to provide a basis for action to improve services where appropriate.

The process systematically assesses and records the actual potential or likely impact of a service, policy or project – or a significant change in a service, policy or project – on different groups of people. The consequences of policies and projects are analysed and any possible negative consequences eliminated or minimised and opportunities for ensuring equality is maximised.

Following completion of the generic EIA on the Housing Service, key issues have emerged:

- An essential part of the process is to understand our client group.
- Build on information we currently hold on how best to communicate with our customers.
- Gain a more indepth understanding of practical issues, e.g. customer requires caller to knock loud and wait to give them chance to answer the door.

The Housing Service have developed a questionnaire "*Knowing our Customers to Improve our Services*" which has recently been sent out to all our current tenants. The questionnaire covers the six strands of Equality and Diversity along with questions on language/communication. The Housing Service has also updated the housing application and transfer application forms to capture this information with an aim to improve our service to all our customers.

The EIA incorporates the relevant Key Line of Enquiry – KLOE No. 31 Diversity.

In addition to the above actions, and to aid the completion of future EIAs, an Awareness Event has been provided to all Housing colleagues since the start of the financial year.

Recommendations

Members of the Forum are asked to:

1. note the information on Equality Impact Assessments; and
2. endorse action taken by Housing Service.

Legal Implications

No significant issue

Financial Implications

No significant issue

Health and Safety Implications

No significant issue

Key Priorities or Corporate Aims

A key priority of the Council is to achieve Level 2 of the Equalities Standard. This falls in line with 'Key Priority 3 - Improving Access to Services.

Risk Assessment

N/A

Equal Opportunities

Enhances and promotes compliance with the Council's equal opportunities policy.

Background Papers

HMF Minute No 14, Agenda Item 15, 26 June 2008, Housing Services Delivery Plan 2008/09.

Equality Impact Assessment Proforma

An Equality Impact Assessment is an equality and diversity review of the Borough Council's functions, strategies, policies and procedures.

Please Note: The term policy will be used in this proforma from now on. This is purely as shorthand for a function, strategy, policy or procedure that you may be assessing.

The aim is for you to highlight the examples of good practice and the areas of disadvantage that need to be addressed. There are six strands to the Barrow Equality Scheme:

- Ethnicity
- Religion/belief
- Gender
- Disability
- Sexuality
- Age

As a Local Authority we have a legal obligation to carry out Equality Impact Assessments of all policies.

Date: March 2008
Directorate: Regeneration and Community services
Unit: Housing Department
Policy: Council Tenant Services

Equality Impact Assessment Proforma

Associated policies and procedures (list if relevant)

Name of service: Housing Service	Has this policy had an Equality Impact Assessment?
Services for potential or existing Council Tenants.	No

Phase 1: Gathering Information

Table 1: Aims of the Service being assessed

Purpose of the Service	To provide sustainable, well maintained estates where people choose to live.
Does the Service support a Council Plan objective, or BVPI indicator? (please state)	<p>Meets the housing needs of the Borough and make housing more accessible.</p> <p>BVPI Commission For Racial Equality for Social Landlords</p> <p>The Service's Vision is to "provide sustainable, well maintained estates where people choose to live"</p> <p>Government Legislation: requires particular attention to various areas of the work of social housing including the allocation of tenancies, health and wellbeing, social inclusion and support to vulnerable</p>

Equality Impact Assessment Proforma

Who is intended to benefit from the Service?	<p>residents</p> <p>Existing tenants, potential tenants and other residents who live within the boundaries of "traditional" Councils estates.</p>
Scope of Service	<p>All elements of the service are managed by a comprehensive Housing Department.</p> <p>They are primarily delivered or managed by directly employed staff.</p> <p>Some elements involve delivery of the actual services as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -completion of Maintenance or investment work to properties -provision of Community Alarm Monitoring services -assessment of medical factors for certain applications

Table 2: Background information on the Service

List examples of background information that you think is relevant. This may include official statistics such as Census or Household Survey information, or data held by the organisation, such as service uptake, workforce or complaints data. Information from focus groups and consultation should also be included where you think it is relevant.

Type of information	Findings
<p>-tenant details collected at sign up or from application forms, includes family composition and ages, Ethnic origin, disability, religion and belief, gender & sexuality</p> <p>-status survey reports(2006)</p> <p>-information on complaints recorded as</p>	<p>Status report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -41% of households are single tenants aged 60 or over or couples with at least one member aged 60 or over -24% of households are families with children -32% of households are either younger single tenants under 60 or couples both under 60. -3% of households consist of three or more adults -58% of the principle tenant are females -51% of principle tenants are aged between 25 and 59

Equality Impact Assessment Proforma

<p>-operational information collected on activities completed</p> <p>-information held on tenant records</p>	<p>-6% of the principle tenants are aged under 25</p> <p>-92% of tenants are White British</p> <p>-7% of tenants are White Irish</p> <p>-1% are BME (largest group being Bangladeshi)</p> <p>-33% of tenants are permanently sick/disabled</p> <p>-4% think there is a problem with racial harassment</p> <p>(NB Status survey based on sample survey with a confidence level of +/-3.2%</p> <p>Housing register information @March 2008:</p> <p>-Ethnic monitoring:</p> <p>Total applicants 1622</p> <p>No. identifying other ethnic origin 46 (2.8%)</p> <p>No. were not known 394 (24.2%)</p>
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Phase 2 Screening the Service

From the evidence you have seen, please indicate where you think the Services disadvantages a particular group. Please also indicate where you think the policy is having a good impact in promoting equality and diversity.

Wherever possible use monitoring data to support the issue.
You should also rate the policy for relevance:

- High: Affects most of the group and has a major impact.
- Medium: Affects some of the group and has a variable impact.
- Low: Affect few people in the group and has a minimal impact.

Table 5: Screening for Issues

Ethnicity: All ethnic groups recognised under the Race Relations Act including Asian. Black, East Asian and White minority ethnic groups, including Eastern Europeans, Irish people and Gypsy Travellers.

Equality Impact Assessment Proforma

Area	Relevance High Medium Low	Positive Impact	Negative Impact
All	Low	<p>No working practices which either include or seeks to exclude tenants or applicants of any religious denomination from accessing the Service</p> <p>Most up to date Status survey demonstrated that the tenants of Barrow are very happy with their homes and with services provided by their landlord.</p> <p>Procedures for dealing with anti-social behaviour have been reviewed and a "fast track" process agreed to ensure any incidents due to hate/racial incidents are responded to within 24 hours (non-recorded so not practical to assess effectiveness)</p> <p>Agreed to participate with the Police Service to act as a "reporting centre" for the community to report hate crimes</p>	<p>It is recognised that information is only provided in English which may be a barrier to non-English speakers. Translation services are available on request.</p>

Equality Impact Assessment Proforma

Disability: All forms of disability recognised under the Disability Discrimination Act including sensory impairment, mental health, learning disabilities, mobility related conditions, conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, asthma.

Area	Relevance High Medium Low	Positive Impact	Negative Impact
Disability	Medium	<p>Recently agreed as priority by Tenants Forum.</p> <p>New Forum for Tenants with a Disability established in recognition of the importance of this issue.</p> <p>The new Forum have recently completed review of departments approach to requests for Adaptations which was agreed by Housing Management Forum on the 30th August 2008</p> <p>New contract arrangements in place to deliver adaptations to tenants homes once agreed.</p> <p>Providing accommodation to applicants on the housing register can have a significant impact on their well being. The present Allocation Policy provides flexibility to ensure within the priority system certain properties are allocated to applicants with specific needs which would be best met by the particular property. For example a</p>	<p>Failure to progress requests from tenants who require adaptations to their homes can have a detrimental influence on their quality of life and well being. It is important the service ensures that such requests are monitored and the quality measures agreed are scrutinised.</p> <p>Inappropriate allocation of properties does not make best use of resources available. It is intended to review the Housing Register and Allocations Policy which will provide an opportunity to ensure specific regard is given to this and the other strands of the Equality scheme</p>

Equality Impact Assessment Proforma

property suitable for a wheelchair user would be allocated in conjunction with the opinion of Occupational Therapists to ensure "best use" of the property.

Specifications for upgrading bathrooms recently amended in consultation with residents to include a low level shower tray in all properties where a tenant request a shower, but will particularly improve access for people with mobility impairment.

Information is provided to tenants with sight impairment in a larger text format eg. Tenants newsletter

There are various elements of the service that are specific to particular groups due to health impairment for whom the Service provides additional support, eg supported tenancies, garden maintenance services.

The provision of such has been agreed with the tenants forum and information regarding eligibility and access to services is communicated to all clients.

A "communication screen" is maintained and publicised on which a tenant can request for information to be recorded for Council Officers or their agents visiting them, eg to request for more time than would be normal to answer the door because of a mobility problem, or sight impairment, etc

Equality Impact Assessment Proforma

Gender: including men, women and transgender people.

Area	Relevance High Medium Low	Positive Impact	Negative Impact
Gender	low	<p>No working practices which either seek to include or exclude tenants or applicants because of gender.</p> <p>No known instances of customers citing this as a problem</p>	<p>Although we record gender details the information is not available on all applicants/tenants and what management information is available is not analysed to establish if there are trends which may indicate glass barriers to some service users</p>

Sexuality: including heterosexual, gay, lesbian and bisexual people

Area	Relevance High Medium Low	Positive Impact	Negative Impact
Sexuality	low	<p>No working practices which either seek to include or exclude tenants or applicants because of Sexuality.</p>	<p>Although we record these details the information is not available on all applicants/tenants and what management information is available is not analysed to establish if there are trends which may indicate glass barriers</p>

Equality Impact Assessment Proforma

Age: All age groups

Area	Relevance High Medium Low	Positive Impact	Negative Impact
Age	medium	<p>Status survey suggests contacting the Service proves largely to be a positive experience for the vast majority of tenants. This is particularly the case for older tenants.(81%).</p> <p>Working practices do dictate that certain properties are designated for older people or tenants with a disability by virtue of their design or additional support services available.</p>	<p>Satisfaction does vary depending on age and family composition.</p> <p>For example families are less likely to be less satisfied with the service, eg one-parent families (69% as against 81% overall)</p> <p>This will by implication exclude certain applicants from accessing certain types of accommodation or areas.</p>

Equality Impact Assessment Proforma

Religion/belief: all faiths including Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and non religious beliefs such as Humanism.

Area	Relevance High Medium Low	Positive Impact	Negative Impact
Religion/Belief	Low	No working practices either seek to include or exclude applicants or tenants because of their religion or beliefs	No available evidence of negative impact as a result of current working practices.

Equality Impact Assessment Proforma

Phase 3: Full Impact Assessment

Detail areas for change before completing the action relating to each issue

Table 7: Action Plan

Negative Impact	Actions proposed	Lead Officer	When	Outcome
No Equality Impact Assessment's completed for specific functions within the service	<p>Complete training for all staff, Councillors and tenant Representatives</p> <p>Adopt revised proforma to complete EIAs. Will be completed in conjunction with the Tenant Compact Working Party and relevant advisory bodies as necessary.</p> <p>Order as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -arrears and income recovery -tenant participation 	<p>Caroline Wagstaff</p> <p>Caroline Wagstaff</p> <p>Graham Smith</p> <p>Josie Garnett</p>	<p>April 2008</p> <p>For above training event</p> <p>July 2008</p> <p>July 2008</p>	<p>Awareness of incorporating Equality and Diversity principles in the functions of the Housing Service</p> <p>Completed EIA's for identified functions</p>

Equality Impact Assessment Proforma

<p>and community development</p> <p>-estate management</p> <p>Agreed proforma to be used when progressing any revised policies or procedures</p> <p>Produce monitoring system for the technical delivery of the service and to obtain "quality of life" feedback from tenants to be developed by The Forum for tenants with a Disability</p> <p>Review properties currently limited to older applicants or applicants with a disability</p> <p>Review management information available and agree how it can be compiled to monitor the six key factors</p>	<p>Failure to deliver new adaptations policy</p> <p>Exclusion of age groups from particular areas or types of accommodation due to restrictions on letting property</p> <p>Incomplete information in our management information systems needs reviewing to ensure it is</p>	<p>Graham Smith</p> <p>Les Davies</p> <p>Janice Sharp</p> <p>Caroline Wagstaff</p>	<p>September 2008</p> <p>By June 2008</p> <p>September 2008</p> <p>September 2008</p>	<p>Robust system to assess effectiveness of service in meeting the needs of service users</p> <p>Report to Tenant Compact Working Party to confirm appropriate use of stock</p> <p>Additional Information based on the six factors available for presentation at Housing Management Forum within the Information report.</p>
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Equality Impact Assessment Proforma

Documents appended to the Equality Impact Assessment:

Date completed	March 2008
Signature	
Printed	Colin Garnett

HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM	(D) Agenda 7
Date of Meeting: 27th November 2008	
Reporting Officer: Janice Sharp, Customer Services Manager	
<p>Title: Sub Regional Choice Based Lettings Scheme</p> <p>Summary and Conclusion:</p> <p>The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress of the sub regional choice based lettings scheme. It seeks agreement for the Housing Service to agree in principle the Housing Managers stance to support the sub regional choice based lettings bid.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <p>Members are asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the information on sub regional choice based lettings scheme. 2. Endorse Housing Managers stance and agree to participate in principle in the Cumbria scheme. 	

Report

The purpose of this report is to update you on the progress of the sub regional choice based lettings scheme.

It seeks agreement for the Housing Service to support the Regional Choice Based bid to the Communities and Local Government (CLG).

In 2007, the Customer Services Manager presented a report and was agreed by the Forum for the Housing Service to monitor the progress of Sub Regional Choice Based Lettings Scheme and report further at an appropriate time.

The Government's policy objective is for Choice Based Lettings Schemes to develop on a sub regional and/or regional basis. The aim is to involve a partnership of housing authorities and registered social landlords - working together with private landlords whenever possible – are the best way to achieve the greatest choice and flexibility in meeting tenants housing needs.

There are likely to be a number of benefits from sub regional schemes which span housing authority boundaries.

- They bring together a larger pool of available housing, giving tenants more choice.
- They break down artificial boundaries.
- They enable greater mobility.
- Be more transparent and simpler to understand for applicants, particularly those seeking to move between local authority districts.

Communities and Local Government (CLG) is committed to ensuring that social housing tenants have more choice and control over where they live. The aim is to build communities that are stable, viable and inclusive.

CLG is providing funding to Local Authorities to support the development of new sub regional and regional choice based letting schemes. This will enable Local Authorities to be part of a sub regional or regional choice based letting by 2010. The sub regional Choice Based Lettings Group has submitted a

bid to CLG. The outcome of the bid is due in December 2008. If the sub regional bid is successful the funding will be released end of December 2008.

The Housing Service seek approval to support the bid in principle and continue to attend future meetings to work with the group and monitor progress.

Recommendations

Members of the Forum are asked to:

1. Note the information on the sub regional choice based scheme.
2. Endorse the Housing Managers stance and agree to participate in principle in the Cumbria scheme.

Legal Implications

N/A

Financial Implications

N/A

Health and Safety Implications

N/A

Key Priorities or Corporate Aims

N/A

Risk Assessment

N/A

Equal Opportunities

N/A

Background Papers

N/A

HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM	(D) Agenda 8
Date of Meeting: 27th November 2008	
Reporting Officer: Colin Garnett, Housing Manager	
<p>Title: Stackwood Avenue Community Centre</p> <p>Summary and Conclusion:</p> <p>The purpose of this report is to seek approval to progress conversion of the community centre into accommodation.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <p>Members of the Forum are recommended to agree production of details plans and appointment of Capita to project manage conversion of the Stackwood Avenue Community Centre into a two-bedroomed bungalow.</p>	

Report

Introduction

This Community Centre has had very limited use for some time.

I wish to advise you that the community group using the centre have now re-located to St. Aidan's Church.

This Forum previously agreed to consider the conversion of a Community Centre into residential accommodation. A sum of £50K was identified in the HRA for this purpose.

I have already obtained outline plans from Capita with an estimated cost of £43K in order to convert the property into a two-bedroomed bungalow.

Recommendation

Members of the Forum are recommended to agree production of details plans and appointment of Capita to project manage conversion of the Stackwood Avenue Community Centre into a two-bedroomed bungalow.

Legal Implications

N/A

Financial Implications

Budget provision of £50K has been identified.

Health and Safety Implications

N/A

Key Priorities or Corporate Aims

N/A

Risk Assessment

N/A

Equal Opportunities

N/A

Background Papers

N/A

HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM	(D) Agenda 9
Date of Meeting: 27th November 2008	
Reporting Officer: Colin Garnett, Housing Manager	
Title: Ocean Wave Community Centre	
Summary and Conclusion:	
The purpose of this report is to update Members on usage of the community centre and to seek approval to continue management of the centre by Ocean Wave Group and request further upgrading of the building.	
Recommendations:	
Members of the Forum are recommended to agree:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. alterations be carried out to the toilet facilities in order to meet the Disability Discrimination Act at a cost of approx. £5,000 ; and2. Ocean Wave group manage the centre on a day-to-day basis and meet all outgoings.	

Report

Introduction

As you will be aware from your meeting held on 28th February, 2008, it was agreed to enter into a Management Agreement for the above community centre with a group called Ocean Wave, for a twelve month period. The purpose of this report is to seek your approval to continue this arrangement on a longer-term basis.

The group have now established themselves and the centre is being regularly used by a wide range of different groups on a regular basis, including weekly sessions of bingo, Slimming World and stress therapy group as well as children's parties.

They have clearly demonstrated over the last nine months that they have turned the centre into a more sustainable proposition and of benefit to the community in the area.

Recommendations

Members of the Forum are recommended to agree:

1. alterations be carried out to the toilet facilities in order to meet the Disability Discrimination Act at a cost of approx. £5,000 ; and
2. Ocean Wave group manage the centre on a day-to-day basis and meet all outgoings.

Legal Implications

No significant issue

Financial Implications

Funding for alterations will be met from previously agreed budget for Community Centre Maintenance.

Health and Safety Implications

The user group will arrange appropriate insurance for the use of the centre. The Housing Service will complete regular risk assessments of the building to ensure its safe usage and oversee the activities carried out at the centre.

Key Priorities or Corporate Aims

N/A

Risk Assessment

N/A

Equal Opportunities

N/A

Background Papers

N/A

HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM	(D) Agenda 10
Date of Meeting: 27th November 2008	
Reporting Officer: Colin Garnett, Housing Manager	
<p>Title: Mediation Services</p> <p>Summary and Conclusion:</p> <p>The purpose of this report is to seek your approval to pursue alternative arrangements for the provision of mediation services.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <p>Members are asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Advise Resolve of our intention to stop funding their services 2. Instruct the Housing Manager to enter into arrangements for mediation services with CADAS 	

Report

Introduction

As Members are aware, the Housing Service supports mediation services by providing an annual cash grant to Resolve Mediation.

Funding is to provide youth mediation services to avoid homelessness amongst young people and also mediation services to help resolve neighbour disputes within our own housing stock.

More recently we have had concerns about the provision of these services locally. In discussion with other Cumbria authorities, there appears to be similar concerns elsewhere regarding capacity and delivery of mediation services by Resolve. Two authorities have already ended their arrangements with Resolve and entered into alternative arrangements with CADAS.

I have had some initial discussions with CADAS to discuss offering these services in the Barrow Borough Council area, which they are interested in doing. I have already made Resolve aware of this.

From my discussions with CADAS and the feedback I am getting from other Cumbria authorities I would suggest that CADAS is in a better position to provide these services on our behalf. I would therefore recommend that the Forum agree to me serving notice on Resolve and entering into an alternative arrangement with CADAS as soon as is practical.

Recommendations

Members of the Forum are asked to:

1. Advise Resolve of our intention to stop funding their services
2. Instruct the Housing Manager to enter into arrangements for mediation services with CADAS

Legal Implications

No significant issue.

Financial Implications

Health and Safety Implications

No significant issue.

Key Priorities or Corporate Aims

Risk Assessment

N/A

Equal Opportunities

N/A

Background Papers

N/A

HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM	(D) Agenda 11
Date of Meeting: 27th November 2008	
Reporting Officer: Colin Garnett, Housing Manager	
<p>Title: Financial Inclusion: Development of Credit Union</p> <p>Summary and Conclusion:</p> <p>The purpose of this report is to advise you of the progress so far in considering the options for establishing a new Credit Union in Barrow.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <p>Members of the Forum are recommended to give support to the creation of a Credit Union in principle and to work with the organisations mentioned below to develop a proposal for further consideration.</p>	

Report

Introduction

The principles of Financial Inclusion are seen as key issues which social landlords should engage with. By way of definition, the concept of Financial Inclusion includes:

1. ensuring individuals save money to cover future contingencies
2. tenants insuring their homes against loss
3. tenants are encouraged to use electronic forms of banking.

Within your Housing Services Development Plan for 2008/09, it was agreed that the Housing Service consider what assistance it can offer to promote a Credit Union within the Borough.

A small group of individuals, including representatives from the Tenants Forum, have now formed a project group in order to take this forward. The group is chaired by CAB but has a Housing Service representative attending.

More recently I have met with representatives of a number of organisations who may be able to offer assistance, including DWP (Department of Work and Pensions). Within Cumbria, Derwent and Solway Housing Association have taken the lead in attempting to develop a Credit Union strategy. They have established a project group referred to as DRAMA to take forward the development of any new Credit Unions within the county.

The DWP is also looking to appoint a Financial Inclusion Champion within the next couple of months to assist in taking these organisations forward.

In meeting the above organisations it would appear there may be a number of options for Barrow to pursue the creation of a Credit Union in conjunction with DRAMA and other groups within the County.

It would appear appropriate to accept their assistance in this role as they have greater experience and knowledge of the process required to set up a Credit Union.

I would therefore ask Members of this Forum to recommend that the Council gives support to the creation of a Credit Union in principle and to work with the organisations mentioned above to develop a proposal for further consideration.

Recommendation

Members of the Forum are recommended to give support to the creation of a Credit Union in principle and to work with the organisations mentioned above to develop a proposal for further consideration.

Legal Implications

No significant issue

Financial Implications

No significant issue

Health and Safety Implications

No significant issue

Key Priorities or Corporate Aims

Risk Assessment

N/A

Equal Opportunities

Background Papers

HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM	(D) Agenda 12
Date of Meeting: 27 th November 2008	
Reporting Officer: Colin Garnett, Housing Manager	
<p>Title: Status Survey</p> <p>Summary and Conclusion:</p> <p>The purpose of this report is to provide you with initial information from our recently completed Status Survey.</p> <p>I am pleased to report that overall satisfaction with landlord services has increased from 81% to 87%. The report provides further information on other key information collected in the survey.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <p>Members are recommended to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. note the information shown in the Report 2. agree the Tenant Participation Compact Working Party consider the results in more detail and use the information to influence the development of future Service Delivery Plans. 	

Report

Introduction

The purpose of this Report is to provide you with initial information from our recently completed Status Survey.

I have only just received the draft Report and have not yet had time to study it. I have, however, attached at **Appendix B** a copy of the Executive Summary.

Background

By way of background, the Survey was carried out in July and August 2008. The Survey was sent to 1400 tenants and a response rate of 48% (677) was achieved. Based on the return rate the results are accurate to within +/-3.3% confidence level.

The Status Survey covers a range of issues, including:

- Information about the household
- Housing and services
- Contact with landlord
- Repairs and maintenance
- Communication and information
- Antisocial behaviour

It, therefore, provides important information of tenants' views on a range of issues and is useful in shaping future policy or service improvement reviews.

You will see from the Executive Summary, information has been provided on comparative figures from earlier surveys carried out and also against comparative landlords.

Below is a table which gives headline information you may find useful.

Indicator	2003	2006	2008	% Change
Overall satisfaction with landlord	82%	81%	87%	+6%
Rent good value for money	79%	82%	84%	+2%
Satisfaction with accommodation	85%	84%	88%	+4%
Satisfaction with the general condition of the property	82%	79%	86%	+7%
Satisfaction with the area	80%	77%	81%	+4%
Getting hold of the right person easily	81%	80%	82%	+2%
Staff helpful	90%	88%	90%	+2%
Satisfaction with repairs and maintenance	84%	82%	88%	+6%
Tenants being kept informed	83%	85%	79%	-6%
Account take of tenants views	72%	73%	76%	+3%

I am pleased to report that headline figures show an improvement across most areas. In particular, I would draw your attention to the 'overall satisfaction' with landlord services which has increased to 87%.

You will see from the Executive Summary, feedback does appear to be influenced by the 'age' of tenants, and in doing so there is a relationship with areas.

Further work is required to study this information and I would suggest the Tenant Participation Compact Working Party be asked to study it and report further.

Recommendation

Members are recommended to:

1. note the information shown in the Report
2. agree the Tenant Participation Compact Working Party consider the results in more detail and use the information to influence the development of future Service Delivery Plans.

Legal Implications

No significant issue

Financial Implications

No significant issue

Health and Safety Implications

No significant issue

Key Priorities or Corporate Aims

N/A

Risk Assessment

N/A

Equal Opportunities

N/A

Background Papers

N/A

Executive Summary

1. Context

In 2008 Barrow BC commissioned the National Housing Federation's Feedback service to carry out a STATUS survey. A survey of 1,400 tenants took place between July and August 2008.

Postal surveys are an important way of gauging how satisfied tenants are with service delivery. They provide a snapshot of tenant views at a particular time. The advantage of using the STATUS questionnaire used by the Feedback service is that the survey can be repeated and results compared over a period of time. Tenant satisfaction at Barrow BC can also be compared with satisfaction levels at other landlords that have used the STATUS survey.

2. Overall Results

Barrow BC tenants are pleased with their homes and the services provided by their landlord. 48% of tenants responded to the survey and the levels of satisfaction are demonstrated in the following key findings:

- 90% find staff helpful.
- 88% are satisfied with the overall repairs and maintenance service.
- 88% are satisfied with the quality of their home.
- 87% are satisfied with the services provided by their landlord.
- 86% are satisfied with the general condition of their homes.
- 84% feel they obtain good value for money from their rent.
- All aspects of the actual repair work were rated as "good" or "very good"* by 82% or more of tenants.
- 81% are satisfied with the neighbourhood as a place to live.
- 79% feel that Barrow BC keeps them informed.
- 76% think that their landlord takes account of their views.

3. Tenant Profile

Key findings:-

- In terms of household size, the average number of people living in a household is 1.9 – with an average child density (under 16) of 0.4 per household and a density of 0.5 people per household aged over 60.
- Barrow BC tenant population is composed of a mixture of older

tenants (37%), adult households (39%) and families (23%).

- Over two-thirds of households have at least one member who has a long-term illness (68%) and 9% have a member who uses a wheelchair.
- The majority of Barrow BC tenants are White British (97%), with 1% Other White and 1% White Irish.
- Less than one fifth of principal tenants are in employment (19%) and over a quarter of partners or spouses are working (27%). 29% of principal tenants are retired, with 24% of partners also retired. Unemployment is running at 9% for principal tenants and 4% for partners. A significant number of principal tenants are outside employment (30% permanently sick or disabled and 11% at home looking after family).
- The majority of households have incomes below £300 per week (93%).
- 67% of tenants are Christians, with less than 1% are of other religions listed in the survey and 1% from "other" religions. 26% had no religion and 6% preferred not to say.

4. Issues which impact on satisfaction levels

Although the results of the survey represent tenants' views, it is important to recognise that views on quality of service delivery are affected significantly by the profile of the tenant group and by problems in the areas where tenants live. For example, a landlord with a large proportion of older tenants will always get significantly higher satisfaction levels than a landlord with a high proportion of families and single person households (37% of Barrow BC's tenants are older tenants, which is a relatively high number).

Demographic differences

The survey shows that certain groups of tenants are more satisfied than other groups. Older tenants (both single tenants and couples over 60 years), retired tenants, those who have been tenants for under 1 year tenants are often more satisfied than families, employed tenants and medium-term tenants (3 to 10 years). Other tenants such as single adults awarded mixed ratings. Although this is not always the case for every aspect of the home and service provided by Barrow BC the findings are similar to those of other landlords who have used the STATUS survey.

5. Comparison with previous survey

Over the past two years there have been some changes in tenant ratings of the overall services provided to Barrow BC tenants. The latest survey found that tenant satisfaction has increased in most areas, including the overall rating for landlord services (87%) which is 6% higher than in 2006 (81%). Many of the ratings are the highest they have been since the first survey in 2001. The most significant increases were for the account taken of views (up 12%), general condition of the property (up 7%) and satisfaction with repairs and maintenance (up 5%). There were also some areas where satisfaction has stayed the same and two main areas where satisfaction has fallen (keeping tenants informed fell by 6% and ease of getting hold of the right person fell by 2%).

6. Comparison with other landlords

The results of key satisfaction questions in the Barrow BC survey have been compared with eight other landlords that have undertaken the STATUS survey in the last three years. The landlords in the peer group were selected to match Barrow BC profile as closely as possible, consisting of similar size local authorities and housing associations in northern England.

When the results of the survey were compared with the other landlords who have used STATUS, Barrow BC performance has a very good set of results with most ratings above average, others close to average and some below average in the peer group. Overall, the ratings of Barrow BC were generally above the average found in the National Housing Federation's database of landlords who have used the STATUS survey.

- Barrow BC performance was above average in the peer group for all of the key satisfaction ratings, plus ratings for contact, repairs and account taken of views.
- Barrow BC performance was close to average in the peer group for satisfaction with the neighbourhood.
- Barrow BC performance was below average in the peer group for being kept informed and the extent of local problems.

7. Management areas

The results show some differences in satisfaction between the eight subgroups. There are significant differences between the demographic make up of the areas, which may affect the satisfaction levels. There are more older households in Griffin and Devonshire Road (59%) and less in Roosegate (21%). When looking at the key satisfaction levels, the

demographic factors do appear to make a difference, with Griffin and Devonshire Road tenants the most satisfied and Roosegate tenants the least satisfied. It is the same pattern for local problems, with Roosegate having the highest level of local problems. When contacting Barrow BC, Ormsgill tenants find it easier to make contact. Other aspects of contact show high levels of satisfaction for Walney and Barrow Island, Central and Griffin and Devonshire Road. Satisfaction with repairs and maintenance is high for all areas, with Griffin and Devonshire Road again being the most satisfied.

8. Conclusion and recommendations

The results from the survey demonstrate that tenants believe that Barrow BC is providing a good housing service. 87% of tenants are satisfied with the overall landlord services and this rating is backed up by high ratings for the quality of the home, condition of the property, value for money of rent paid and neighbourhood. Reading through the open comments from the survey reveals that many tenants are highly satisfied with the homes and services provided by Barrow BC; however they also give an important insight as to why some tenants are dissatisfied.

Comparing the results with previous surveys reveals that tenant satisfaction has increased in most key areas (overall services, overall quality of the home, neighbourhood, value for money, condition of property, overall repairs service and some aspects of contacting Barrow BC). The latest survey did find some areas where satisfaction had fallen (some aspects of contact and being kept informed). When the ratings are compared with tenants at similar social landlords Barrow BC tenants had ratings mainly above the average. A significant proportion of Barrow BC tenants are older tenants, which is more than many landlords and would therefore expect higher ratings compared with many other landlords. Barrow BC has however seen an increase in the extent of local problems and there are significant differences in satisfaction between different household types and between subgroup areas.

Recommendations

It is clear that the majority of tenants are satisfied with their landlord and the overall services. There are some areas and opportunities where performance and service delivery can be improved further and Barrow BC should use the results of the survey to refine service enhancements further and promote Barrow BC.

■ Customer contact

The number of tenants contacting Barrow BC is higher than in the previous years and has risen 8% in the last two years. The trend also shows that more are using the phone (62%, which is up 5%) and less using the office (6%, down).

Although satisfaction levels with the contact are still high for getting hold of the right person (82%), staff helpful (91%) and staff able to deal with the problem (86%), the results were similar to the 2006 survey. Satisfaction with the final outcome shows a 2% rise, up to 77% and 16% were dissatisfied.

When further analysis of the method of contact and the satisfaction levels is made, it shows some significant differences. Satisfaction levels are highest from those who phoned (79%-89%) and those visiting the office (78%-93%). As these are the most popular methods of contact, it is encouraging that the satisfaction levels are higher than those who wrote (43%-74%). Although the numbers are lower, those who choose to write are generally less satisfied and this is an area to review.

The reason for contact also highlights differences in satisfaction, with tenants being very satisfied with enquiries regarding rent or housing benefit (88%-99%) or repairs (80%-90%), but less so for transfer or exchange rent or housing (28%-68%) and neighbours or neighbourhood issues (57%-86%). In particular staff able to deal with the problem and satisfaction with the final outcome was low. It is acknowledged that these areas are difficult to deal with, however the results show tenants are less satisfied when contacting Barrow BC for these reasons.

■ **Repairs and maintenance service**

87% of tenants were satisfied with the overall repairs and maintenance service. The repairs service is the key service, affecting overall satisfaction and 77% of tenants said it was one of the three most important services. The overall rating has increased in the last three years (5% higher) and reflects higher ratings with all of the individual aspects of the service.

There has been an increase in the number of repairs completed in the last year and it is a credit to the service that satisfaction has increased. When analysing the subgroups, satisfaction is consistently high although Abbotsmead and Newbarns, Greengate and Risedale and Roosegate tenants were not as satisfied with the time taken before work started.

When looking at the satisfaction levels between the different demographic groups, it shows significant differences. Younger tenants (under 34 years) are less satisfied than older tenants with the repairs

service. Also, those in full-time employment, at home looking after family and permanently sick/disabled tenants are also less satisfied than other groups.

Efforts should therefore be made to find out why different groups are less satisfied than others and taking steps to deal with the findings.

■ **Tenant communication**

Satisfaction with being kept informed is an area where satisfaction has fallen by 6%, with 79% of tenants being satisfied (down from 85%). When looking at the breakdown of the results, Ormsgill and Roosegate tenants are least satisfied. The analysis by different groups also shows that those in full-time employment and tenants under 34 years are less satisfied. Engaging with these groups and considering the best way to keep them informed should be a priority.

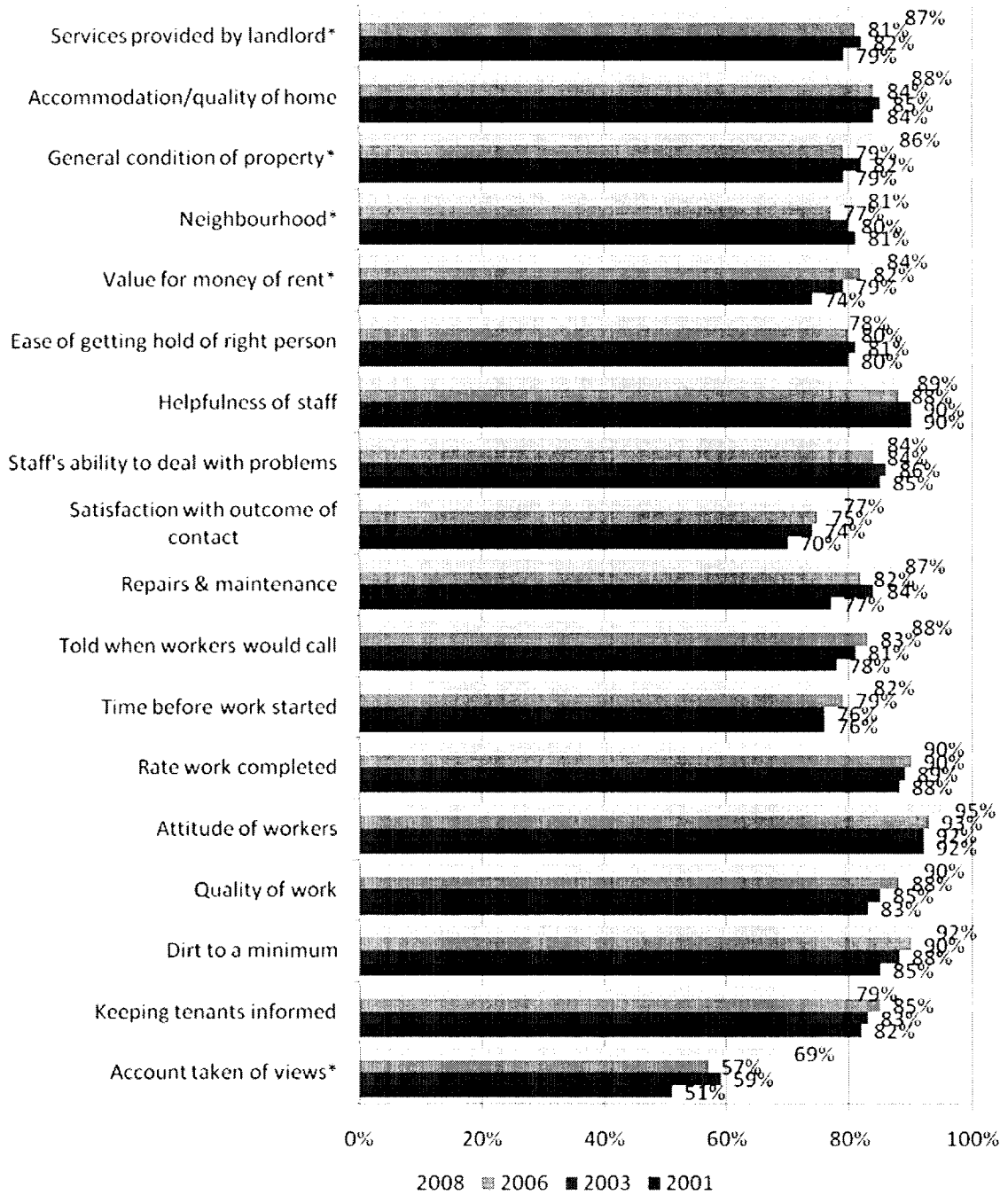
■ **Neighbourhood**

Satisfaction with the neighbourhood is high at Barrow BC (81%), however over half of tenants replied saying that there was a problem with rubbish and litter (73%), disruptive children/teenagers (64%), noisy neighbours (62%), drunk or rowdy behaviour (55%), car parking (53%) and pets and animals (52%). Although overall satisfaction with the neighbourhood has gone up in the last two years, there are still some serious concerns about local issues. Tenants in Ormsgill and Roosegate appeared to suffer more problems than other areas. Working with tenants and other partners should be a priority to reduce the level of problems experienced in local areas.

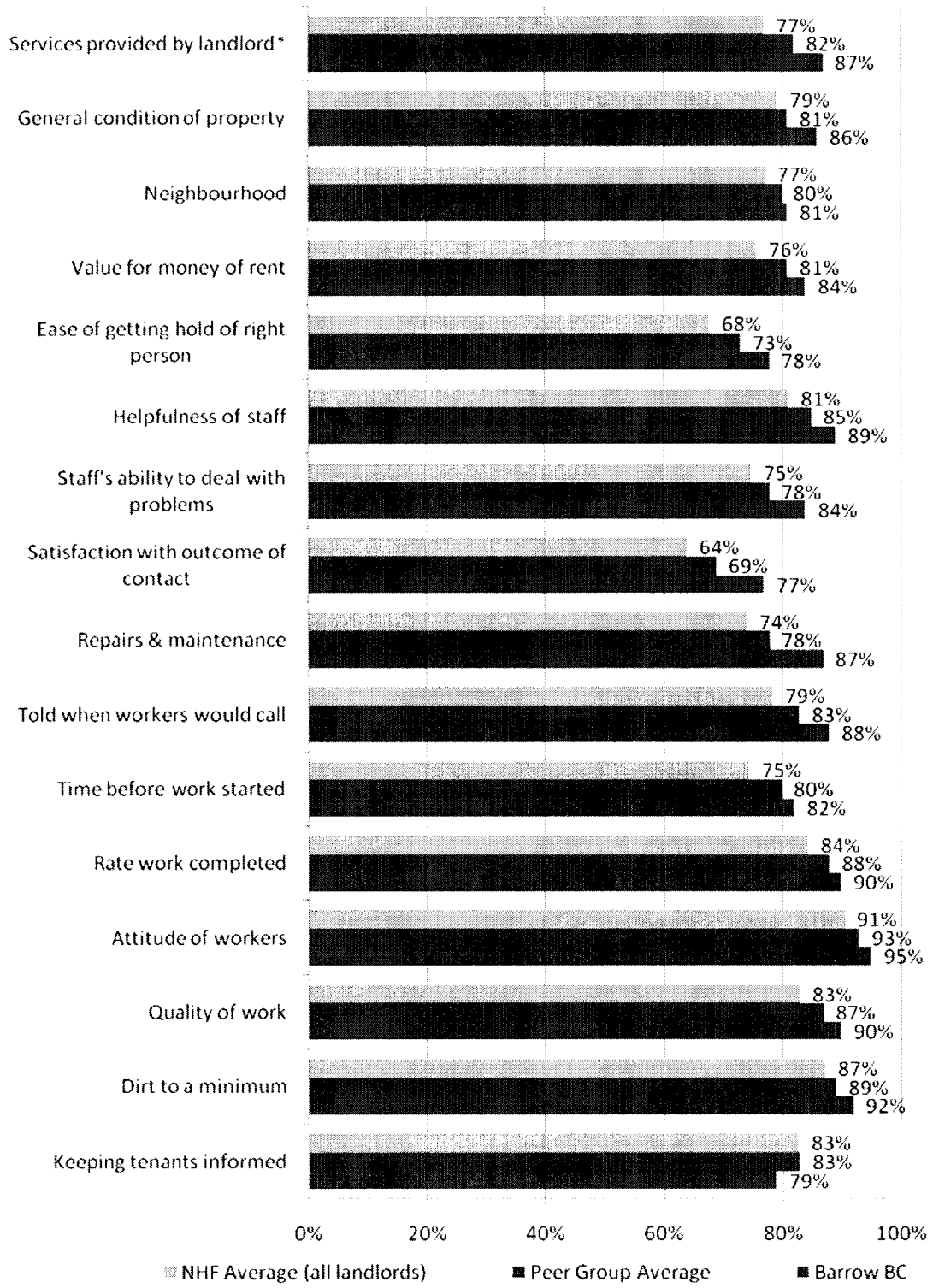
■ **Tackling anti-social behaviour**

Despite an increase in local problems, only 14% of tenants had reported anti-social behaviour to Barrow BC in the last 12 months. The survey found that not all tenants found it easy to contact the right person (21% found it difficult) or found them able to deal with their problem (32% found staff unable to deal with the problem). The survey identified which aspects of the process tenants were least satisfied with and these findings should be used to review the service to tenants. There were also differences in satisfaction between management areas and household groups. A review of current practices may help to inform Barrow BC strategies for dealing with anti-social behaviour.

Executive Summary Chart 1 - Changes over time for standard satisfaction questions - percentage of tenants saying they were satisfied/good



Executive Summary Chart 2 - Comparison with other landlords - Standard satisfaction questions - percentage of tenants saying they were satisfied/good



PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Housemark/ BVPI / Local	Performance Indicator	Actual 2004/5	Actual 2005/6	Actual 2006/7	Actual 2007/8	Target 2008/9	April to June 2008	To 5 Oct 2008
	Rent Arrears and Collection							
BV66a	% Rent Collected	98.3%	98.1%	97.88%	96.78%	98%	90.17%	93.32%
BV66b	% Tenants with > 7 weeks arrears	N/A	5.76%	5.89%	6.82%	5.5%	6.01%	7.18%
BV66c	% Tenants served with NOSP for arrears	N/A	33.37%	35.48%	29%	25%	18.6%	24.2%
BV66d	% Tenants evicted for rent arrears	N/A	0.99%	1.05%	0.66%	0.5%	1.6%	1.2%
Housemark	Current tenants arrears as % of rent roll	2.86%	2.9%	2.99%	2.96%	2.5%	3.05%	3.31%
	Void management							
BV212	Average relet time for dwellings (in days)	40.8	34	28	35.9	28	37.8	35.8
Housemark	% rent loss through vacant dwellings	1.7%	1.19%	0.98%	1.41%	1%	1.5%	1.4%
Local	% rent loss due to voids – garages	1.97%	3.6%	2.63%	2.81%	2%	3.2%	2.99%
	Homelessness							
Housemark	Average stay in B & B for families with children or pregnant women (in days)	N/A	3.5	2	10	3	9	6
Housemark	% of homeless applications where decision made and notified within 33 days	70%	99%	98.5%	95.3%	99%	88.9%	88.2%
Local	Average length of stay in B&B (in days)	N/A	24.5	22	14.4	12	13.9	17.9
Local	Average length of stay in dispersed (in days)	45	50	45	48	28	41	49
Local	Average length of stay in dispersed for families with children (in days)	52	61	34	41	28	30	45
Local	Average number of homeless households in dispersed accommodation	7.5	5.9	5.8	7.3	5	11.7	10.8
BV213	% of households whose situation was resolved by housing advice	NA	NA	NA	N/A	75%	NA	NA
NI 156 (new for 08/09)	Number of households living in temporary accommodation	--	--	--	13	10	20	10
	Housing Applications							
Local	% Housing applications answered within 6 days	96%	99%	95%	52%	95%	34%	61%
	Repairs							
Housemark	% urgent repairs completed within Government time limits	88.1%	85.7%	89.59%	78%	92%	84.07%	87.22%
Housemark	% emergency repairs completed on time	97.4%	98.4%	93.6%	84.36%	94%	84.09%	92.45%
Housemark	% routine repairs completed on time	83.4%	92.9%	92.3%	77.26%	93%	76.79%	89.91%
Housemark	% urgent repairs completed on time	81.6%	93.2%	78.7%	74.86%	90%	75.71%	81.65%
NI 158 (was BV184a)	Proportion of homes which are non-decent	--	--	17.8%	2%	1.75%	2%	NA
Local	Average time taken to complete non-urgent repairs (in days)	9.7	7.6	10	13.7	8	10.3	13.8%
	General Management							
NI 160 (new for 08/09)	Local authority's tenants' satisfaction with landlord's services	--	--	--	--	82%		

RENT ARREARS as at week ending 5th October 2008

Area	Current £	% Gross Debit	Former Tenants £	% Gross Debit
Central	83,614.31	4.93	26,923.51	1.59
Dalton	19,449.10	2.90	4,341.36	0.65
Roosegate	73,188.24	3.36	24,748.50	1.13
Ormsgill	62,404.27	3.17	66,324.48	3.37
Walney	27,137.46	2.28	3,367.29	0.28
Miscellaneous	1,658.81	8.40	0.00	0.00
Dwellings total	267,452.19	3.46	125,705.14	1.63
Garages	6,190.00	3.82	1,646.82	1.02
Homeless	1,881.79	3.60	25,034.70	47.88
Total	275,523.98	3.47	152,386.66	1.92
Grand Total	£427,910.64 5.39%			

FORMER TENANT ARREARS

Former tenants arrears written off in period April 2008–June 2008 = £105,242.35

VOIDS from 7th April 2008 to 5th October 2008

	Central	Dalton	Ormsgill	Roosegate	Walney	Total
1 Bedroom						
Ground-floor flat	6	1	17	12	2	38
Upper-floor flat	18	1	12	4	6	41
Bungalow	1	1	3	2	2	9
Sub total	25	3	32	18	10	88
2 Bedrooms						
Ground-floor flat	0	1	3	2	0	6
Upper-floor flat	6	0	10	3	1	20
Bungalow	0	0	0	0	0	0
House	8	0	2	5	2	17
Sub-total	14	1	15	10	3	43
3 Bedrooms						
Ground-floor flat	1	0	0	0	0	1
Upper-floor flat	0	0	0	1	0	1
Bungalow	0	0	0	0	0	0
House	3	2	6	9	5	25
Sub-total	4	2	6	10	5	27
4 Bedrooms						
House	0	0	0	1	0	1
5 Bedrooms		0				
House	0		0	0	0	0
Total	43	6	53	39	18	159

OFFERS OF ACCOMMODATION
made and refused between 7th April 2008 to 5th October 2008

Area	Property Details	Area	Condition	Personal circumstances	No reply to offer	Other reasons	Withdrawn	Total
Central	3	3	2	0	0	0	0	8
Dalton	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	3
Ormsgill	0	5	0	1	0	1	0	7
Roosegate	5	4	1	1	0	1	0	12
Walney	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	4
Total	9	12	5	5	0	3	0	34

NEW TENANCIES
7th April 2008 to 5th October 2008

<i>Applicant Type</i>	<i>No.</i>
Housing Register	107
Transfers:	40
General Management	2
Management	8
Medical	12
Under/over Occupancy	18
Homeless (monitored from October 2004)	24
Mutual Exchanges	6
Total Relets	177

HOUSING PROPERTY AS AT 30th September 2008

TYPE OF PROPERTY	NO. OF BEDS.	CENTRAL	DALTON	ORMSGILL	ROOSE	SHOPS	DISPERSED	WALNEY	TOTAL
BUNGALOWS	1	13	35	27	14			54	143
	2		5						5
	3			4	4				8
FLATS	1	326	30	211	243		6	146	962
	2	62	12	161	51		5	16	307
	3	3	1		1		2	1	8
HOUSES	2	80	19	66	144			76	385
	3	133	114	220	252			119	838
	4	9	4	7	51			4	75
	5				5				5
SUB-TOTAL		626	220	696	765		13	416	2,736
SHOPS	0					17			17
	2					4			4
	3					0			0
	4					1			1
HOSTEL FLATLETS	1						0		0
	2						0		0
GRAND TOTAL		626	220	696	765	22	13	416	2,758
GARAGES		207	45	68				167	487

SOLD PROPERTIES**7th April 2008 to 5th October 2008**

AREA	PROPERTY TYPE	BEDROOMS	TOTAL
Abbotsmead	House	3	1
Greengate South	House	2	1
Tummerhill	House	2	1
TOTAL			3

SCHEME	CONTRACTOR OR SUPPLIER	CONTRACTOR	AVAILABLE BUDGET	NO OF DWELLINGS COMPLETED	INVOICES RECEIVED	COMMENTS
REWIRES	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	KEITH WILSON	£250,000.00	65	£219,084.00	95% COMPLETE
ONE OFF REWIRES	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	KEITH WILSON	£0.00	14	£33,427.51	100% COMPLETE
ELECTRICAL TESTING	HOUSING MAINTENANCE CONTRACT	INTEGRAL	£175,000.00	400	£7,468.00	50% COMPLETE
BATHROOMS II	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	AB MITCHELL	£150,000.00	47	£92,090.00	100% COMPLETE
BATHROOMS II	HOUSING MAINTENANCE CONTRACT	INTEGRAL	£100,000.00	30	£88,000.00	60% COMPLETE
KITCHENS I	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	AB MITCHELL	£275,000.00	100	£207,314.00	95% COMPLETE
KITCHENS II	HOUSING MAINTENANCE CONTRACT	INTEGRAL	£225,000.00	36	£115,580.00	100% COMPLETE
ONE OFF KITCHENS	HOUSING MAINTENANCE CONTRACT	INTEGRAL	£0.00	55	£1,591.00	100% COMPLETE
HEATING I	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	AB MITCHELL	£375,000.00	106	£365,339.00	80% COMPLETE
HEATING II	HOUSING MAINTENANCE CONTRACT	INTEGRAL	£375,000.00	85	£324,628.00	97% COMPLETE
ONE OFF HEATING	HOUSING MAINTENANCE CONTRACT	INTEGRAL	£50,000.00	8	£23,919.00	100% COMPLETE
ONE OFF HEATING	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	AB MITCHELL	£50,000.00	8	£13,059.00	100% COMPLETE
DIGITAL TV	NEGOTIATED	AERIALEK	£60,000.00	190	£37,070.00	100% COMPLETE
ROOFING	TENDERED	CUMBRIA ROOFING	£88,000.00	16	£57,098.00	100% COMPLETE
DISABLED ADAPTATIONS	TENDERED	AB MITCHELL	£250,000.00	50	£118,329.00	NA
PAINTING (Central)	NEGOTIATED	B MONCUR	£130,000.00	490	£138,769.00	95% COMPLETE
PAINTING (07/08 Committed)	NEGOTIATED	B MONCUR	£70,000.00		£34,420.00	100% COMPLETE

HOUSING MAINTENANCE EXPENDITURE 2008/09

Date 18/11/2008

	Funding Available 2008/09	Gross Exp to date	Weekly Available	Gross Exp as a % funds available
Tenant Demand Repairs	£900,000.00	£256,655.00	£17,307.69	29%
Voids	£175,000.00	£119,405.00	£3,365.38	68%
Door Entry Maintenance	£30,000.00	£3,378.00	£576.92	11%
Associated Building Works	£75,000.00	£8,998.00	£1,442.31	12%
Gas Servicing	£350,000.00	£106,040.00	£6,730.77	30%
Decoration Vouchers	£35,000.00	£23,323.00	£673.08	67%
Disrepair Claims	£25,000.00	£1,516.00	£480.77	6%
Environmental Enh	£50,000.00	£36,565.00	£961.54	73%
Fencing and Env Imp	£100,000.00	£0.00	£1,923.08	0%
Security Shutters	£10,000.00	£0.00	£192.31	0%
Tipping Charges	£15,000.00	£6,251.00	£288.46	42%
Community Centres	£20,000.00	£4,625.00	£384.62	23%
Asbestos Surveys	£50,000.00	£0.00	£961.54	0%
Consultancy Fees	£60,000.00	£5,000.00	£1,153.85	8%
Door Entry Replacements	£100,000.00	£0.00	£1,923.08	0%
Re-insulation	£30,000.00	£0.00	£576.92	0%
Other Contractors	£157,250.00	£82,989.00	£3,024.04	53%

HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM	(D) URGENT ITEM
Date of Meeting: 27th November 2008	
Reporting Officer: Colin Garnett, Housing Manager	
Title: Supporting People: Older People Strategic Review	
Summary and Conclusion:	
The purpose of this report is to consider the suggested changes to the way older persons services are provided through Supporting People. This further report is provided following receipt of additional information from the Supporting People Commissioning Team.	
Recommendations:	
Members of the Forum are asked to:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Endorse the proposals of the Strategic Review 2. Accept the Supporting People Team's offer to complete a Workshop in Barrow 3. Make a Member nomination for this purpose 	

Report

At your meeting on 28th August 2008 you considered the recently completed Supporting People review of Older Persons Services. The review was suggesting the need for changes in the way Older Persons Services are commissioned and a full copy of the report was provided.

In summary, they were suggesting that the following changes are progressed:

- **For accommodation based services:**
Option C - commission a community based service (chargeable)
and
Option D - commission a floating support service countywide (non chargeable)
- **For non-accommodation based services - Community Alarms Service:**
Option B - Single call centre monitoring (chargeable)

At your meeting on 28th August 2008 Members were unable to come to a conclusion as to whether to support a review and recommended "That Supporting People be asked to carry out further consultations with service users and organisations within the Borough. The results of the wider consultation should be reported to the next Housing Management Forum at which time the Committee would make their comments on the reports." *[HMF 28 August 2008]*.

With regard to the consultation with customers, I have received the following information:

For Barrow, the following numbers of people were consulted and invited to attend the workshops was as follows:

Accommodation Based Services	255
Community alarms for those who receive Supporting People Subsidy	464
Total consulted and invited to attend workshop	719

The number of people who attended the workshop in the Barrow area	8
The number of people who completed the questionnaire	6

The outcome from the questionnaire:

The number that said they understood what we were doing and why:	4 Yes
	1 No
	1 Don't know

Number that agreed with the changes

1 Agreed
5 Don't know

Number who thought the model was right

1 Yes
5 Don't know

Asked if they needed more information

2 Yes
2 No
2 Don't know

Additional information comments:

Any information is always welcome

In addition, the Chair of the Executive Committee also wrote to the Supporting People Team expressing concerns about changes to the service and I attach a copy of their response for your information.

As you will see, the letter provides an explanation as to the reason for changes being proposed and also offers to set up a two day workshop in January specifically to draft an Implementation Plan for the Borough.

I would, therefore, ask Members to give further consideration to the proposals contained within the Strategic Review of Older People, a copy of which has been placed in the Members' Room. As this was provided in full for the last meeting I have not attached a second copy to this Agenda.

In considering the proposals I would suggest to Members that the options being suggested within the review would seem an appropriate way of moving forward the approach to ensuring Housing Support Services are available across all tenures and across all properties.

I would, therefore, recommend you endorse the proposals of the Strategic Review and accept the Supporting People Team's offer to complete the Workshop in Barrow. I would suggest that this Forum may wish to make a Member nomination for this purpose.

Recommendations

Members of the Forum are asked to:

1. Endorse the proposals of the Strategic Review
2. Accept the Supporting People Team's offer to complete the Workshop in Barrow
3. Make a Member nomination for this purpose.

Legal Implications

Financial Implications

Health and Safety Implications

Key Priorities or Corporate Aims

Risk Assessment

Equal Opportunities

Background Papers

3 November 2008

Ray Guselli
Chair of Executive Committee
Barrow Borough Council
Cavendish House
78 Duke Street
Barrow-In-Furness
LA14 1RR

Dear Ray Guselli

Re: Older Persons Strategic Review

Thank you for your comments regarding the older persons' strategic review that I received by email on 14th October 2008.

In response to your email, I aim to address the issues you have raised and provide the assurances you seek regarding the recommendations outlined in the recent report to Commissioning Body in July 2008. I would also like to offer my time to you and your colleagues to explore together how the preferred options could be implemented in Barrow to provide the practical detail you need to make a decision.

Regarding the provision of the warden service. Our aim is to commission a range of housing related support services to vulnerable older adults living in the Barrow area. To do this effectively we need to look at how the delivery of current services need to change to reflect the changing aspirations of older people.

As you know older people move into sheltered housing schemes for many different reasons, some because they need support, others because they want to live in a safe and secure environment, others might seek friendship. Throughout my consultation with service users many felt that when they move into a sheltered housing scheme they should have a choice as to whether housing related support or a community alarm is provided to them. They also felt that the type of housing related support provided by wardens should be available to people living in their own homes in order that their independence could be maintained without the need to move. At one of our earlier user consultation events I can recall an older couple that came forward to recount their experience of living in a bungalow provided by a registered social landlord. The wife of the couple was becoming more vulnerable and in need of some low level housing related support however the registered social landlord informed the couple that in order to receive any support from a warden they would have to move to one of their sheltered accommodation units. The couple were totally dismayed by this, as they did not want to leave their home or community which they had been a part of for a number of years. It was stories like this and the experience of individuals using the services that helped the Commissioning Body to determine the options for the future commissioning of older people services.

I am sure you will be familiar with the Government's White Paper "Our Health, Our Care, Our Say", a new direction for community services; it's vision for the future direction of Social care for all adults of all age groups in England, which includes,

- Improving the health and well-being of older people;
- Arranging more health and social care services in local communities that are closer to people's homes;
- Local authorities to give service users greater control over how services are provided and how their needs are assessed;
- A move away from traditional models of care with greater investment in preventative services, which promote and maintain independence; and
- The expectations that councils will enable disabled people to access the services everyone else enjoys

To meet the vision set out in the paper identified above services need to transform. At present, housing support providers are not giving your citizens a "choice" or the right access to services. Our new model will give service users that "choice" and provide much-needed housing related support services to all the vulnerable older people living in the Barrow area. Getting this right as early as possible will ensure that services funded by Supporting People and provided by housing partners will meet the future need of a rising older adult population.

The model proposed by the Commissioning Body is seeking to establish Community Based Support Teams to provide a broad range of housing related support services to older people where there is a need. The team will continue to provide services to sheltered housing, as well as work in the community with those who are living more independently, in the private sector and those who own their own homes. It is my expectation that the teams delivering this support will be the existing housing support providers within your area i.e. Barrow Borough Council, Accent Housing and Anchor Trust. All of these housing support providers are experts in the delivery of older persons services, and the aim is to continue working with them as part of this new model.

In recognition of the issues that you have raised, Supporting People would like to offer our support to the district Council and support providers in your area and set up a 2-day workshop in January 2009. The purpose of this would be to develop a draft implementation plan for Barrow, which I hope will assist you and the Executive Committee to be clear about how these options will potentially change services in your area and help you reach a decision. If you would like to take me up on this offer please contact me on the above telephone number.

Yours sincerely



Paul L. Atimer
Supporting People
Lead Officer