

BOROUGH OF BARROW-IN-FURNESS

HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM

Meeting: Thursday 28th February, 2013
at 2.00 pm (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. Declarations of Interest

To receive declarations by Members and/or co-optees of interests in respect of items on this Agenda.

Members are reminded that, in accordance with the revised Code of Conduct, they are required to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests or other registrable interests which have not already been declared in the Council's Register of Interests. (It is a criminal offence not to declare a disclosable pecuniary interest either in the Register or at the meeting).

Members may however, also decide, in the interests of clarity and transparency, to declare at this point in the meeting, any such disclosable pecuniary interests which they have already declared in the Register, as well as any other registrable or other interests.

4. Confirmation of the Minutes of the meeting held on 17th January, 2013.

5. Apologies for Absence/Changes in Membership.

FOR DECISION

OPERATIONAL

(D) 6. ASB Action Ltd.

(D) 7. STAR Survey: Action Plan.

(D) 8. Decoration Allowance.

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

HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM MEMBERS:

Councillors: Hamilton (Chairman)
Barlow
Irwin
Johnston
Murray
Pointer
Richardson
Williams

Tenant Representatives: Mrs P. Charnley
Mr M. Burton
Mr N. Hird
Mr W McEwan
Ms C McFadyen
Mr A McIntosh
Mr W Ward
Mrs K Warne

For queries regarding this agenda, please contact:

Paula Westwood
Democratic Services Officer (Member Support)
Tel: 01229 876322
Email: pwestwood@barrowbc.gov.uk

Published: 20th February, 2013

HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM

Meeting: 17th January, 2013
at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT:- Councillors Hamilton (Chairman), Irwin, Murray, Pointer and Richardson.

Tenant Representatives:- Mrs P. Charnley, Mr W. McEwan, Mr A. McIntosh and Mr W. Ward.

22 – Minute Silence

The Chairman requested Members to stand and observe a minute silence as a mark of respect for former Councillors' Mr and Mrs Waiting's Son, Sean Waiting who had sadly passed away recently.

23 – Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 29th November, 2012 were taken as read and confirmed.

24 – Apologies for Absence/Changes in Membership

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors Barlow, Johnston and Williams and Tenants Representatives Mr M. Burton, Mrs C. McFadyen and Ms K. Warne.

25 – Housing Maintenance Investment Programme 2013/14

The Housing Manager submitted a report to agree the spend profile for 2013/14. The proposed profile and priorities had been based on the agreed Five-year Asset Management Strategy 2010. The report provided details of progress during the current year and had regard to operational issues that had emerged during the delivery of the on-going programme.

It was noted that the 2013/14 Investment Programme had been funded from the Housing Revenue Account. The principles adopted in drafting the programme continued with the previously agreed targets set out in the 2010 Asset Management Plan (AMP) and sought to ensure:-

- That the Council maintained the Decent Homes Standards;
- That the aspirations of Tenants were considered and incorporated within the Programme; and
- To work collaboratively with other housing providers and Contractors to improve delivery of planned and responsive repair services.

The plan also established the following targets:-

- (i) Increase % of Sedbuk A rated boilers from 44% to 75% by 2015
Actual boiler percentage increase forecast by 31/3/2013 = 81%;
- (ii) Increase % of bathrooms less than 15 years old from 40% to 60% by 2015
Actual bathroom percentage increase forecast by 31/3/2013 = 68%; and
- (iii) Increase % of kitchens less than 15 years old from 40% to 60% by 2015
Actual kitchen percentage increase forecast by 31/3/2013 = 91%.

The programme reflected the need to satisfy Decent Homes requirements and was based on the results from the independent Stock Condition Survey completed in March 2010.

Delivery of the investment in key components had progressed quicker than originally suggested in the AMP agreed in 2010. It would now be possible to complete the five-year plan in 2013/14 a year ahead of what was originally proposed.

Officers were currently reviewing the remaining properties to be completed in 2013/14 and would publish the areas to benefit from investment shortly.

1. Progress during the Current Year 2012/13

All planned investment works had generally progressed satisfactorily during the year. The re-pointing work on Walney was scheduled for completion by the end of March 2013. Due to the need to liaise with leaseholders, the planned roof replacement programme on the Griffin estate had fallen behind schedule however, a suitable Contractor had been appointed via the Cumbria Housing Partner (CHP) framework and work would commence this financial year.

Similarly the appointment of a Contractor to complete balcony repairs had also fallen behind schedule and works would not be completed by this year end.

Investment via CHP has continued to be an effective delivery method in terms of value for money, compared with historical costs. Additional efficiencies had been made through improved delivery by providing a streamlined approach to the management, administration and monitoring of the contracts.

Progress on delivery would continue to be reported to this Forum on a regular basis through the Information Report.

The table below provides an indication of the number of properties that have benefited from the more significant Investment Plans and would be updated where appropriate at year end.

Type of Work	No of Properties due for improvement in 2012/13	No of Properties estimated to be completed by 31/3/13
Kitchens	200	273
Bathrooms	100	158
Central Heating	160	240
Rewires	90	90

Painting	350	348
Minor Adaptations	100	101
Major Adaptations	100	69

It was normal practice when presenting this report to provide an update on the number of properties failing the decent homes standard. The assessment was based on information provided by the independent Stock Condition Surveys carried out in 2006 and 2010. The updated property records of the investment work completed since the survey indicated that the current position was:

	Number of properties failing the decent homes standard	Percentage of Stock
Baseline survey 20.6.2006	509	18%
as at 1.4.2009	6	Less than 1%
as at 7.6.2010	32	1%
as at 31.12.2012	0	0%

2. Suggested Investment Profiles for 2013/14

The Housing Manager submitted a proposed investment profile for 2013/14 which is attached at **Appendix A** to these Minutes

The profile followed the “sustainable” investment model identified in the 2010 AMP and built on existing priorities to upgrade kitchens, bathrooms, heating and electrical circuits.

The HRA baseline model allocation for 2013/14 was:-

Maintenance Allowance	(per property £1099.43)	£2,967,370
Other Planned works		£ 360,996
Major Repairs	(per property £705.79)	£1,904,924
Total		<u>£5,233,290</u>

With reference to the HRA report (Minute No. 28) a sum of £360,996 had also been included and was identified in the profile as Other Contractors Planned Works. These monies were as a result of the new self-financing arrangements. Whilst they have been shown in the profile, a further report would be brought to the Forum to consider options for the investment of those funds during the year and, in particular, following review of the STAR survey results.

Members had been requested to note that, within ‘Other Planned Maintenance’:

- Additional resources had been identified for ‘Void Major Improvement Works’. This had been identified to respond to the operational experiences of managing void property and to have the flexibility to consider completing additional investment whilst a property was vacant. A review of void standards would be progressed and a further report would be provided for consideration on this matter; and

- Resources had been identified to improve security at Raglan Court.

Members had also been requested to note that £300K and £50K had been identified in 2012/13 respectively to commence roof replacements and balcony repairs as referred to above. Due to the delays in progressing these contracts, the first phase would not be completed in the current year.

The resources identified which were not spent in this financial year would move into reserves. Members had therefore been requested to agree that monies from reserves be used in 2013/14 to ensure both contracts were completed in the year.

3. Progressing the Planned Investment Works

The majority of the planned works had been delivered through the Housing Service's arrangement with CHP.

A four-year framework had been established and in 2011 a series of 'mini-competitions' had been completed to appoint suitable CHP Contractors to undertake investment programmes. Officers recommended continuing with these arrangements. However, Members had been requested to note that as a 'customer' of CHP, it may be the case that the Council has to limit the value of work completed through the CHP framework in order not to compromise the 'mutual status' of CHP. Should that become an issue then the Housing Manager would report further at a later date with alternative delivery arrangements.

RECOMMENDED:- To agree the following:-

1. Note the progress on achieving and maintaining the Decent Homes Standard shown at point (1) of the report;
2. Agree the annual Investment Profile shown at Appendix C of the report;
3. Agree monies from reserves be made available to complete the Griffin roofing replacement and Hindpool balcony repairs in 2013/14; and
4. Agree continued delivery through Cumbria Housing Partners (CHP) but note consideration to delivery by other means should the value exceed the permitted level.

26 – STAR Survey Key Findings

The Housing Manager reported on the key findings following a recent Tenant Satisfaction Survey.

In early 2011, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) had signalled the end of the regulatory requirement to carry out the STATUS satisfaction survey on a prescribed basis. Under STATUS, housing providers had been required to compulsory survey their Tenants at least every three years.

Housemark, a leading provider of performance improvement services, had quickly identified that many housing providers wanted to continue to survey Tenants and Residents but on a voluntary basis and sought to provide a flexible survey based upon the main features of STATUS. Following a consultation involving 261 housing providers (including Barrow Borough Council), a new survey called STAR (Survey of Tenants and Residents) had been developed.

Despite there being no compulsory requirement to survey Tenants, it was seen as good practice to do so and the STAR survey had been adopted by many housing providers including, Local Authorities, Housing Associations and Arms-Length Management Organisations (ALMO's).

The last major Tenants' satisfaction survey that the Housing Service had undertaken was the compulsory STATUS Survey which had been commissioned in 2008. The National Housing Federation had undertaken the survey and the results had been pleasing.

As four years had passed, in June 2012, the Housing Service commissioned BMG Research to carry out the new STAR Tenant satisfaction survey, opting for a sample postal survey which had taken place between August and October 2012.

In total, 1,500 questionnaires and letters had been mailed out to Tenants across all Council housing estates with two full reminder mailings going out to those customers who did not or could not respond to the initial mailing.

In December 2012, BMG Research had given a presentation of their findings to senior Housing Service Officers, Councillors and Tenant Representatives. The full report had been uploaded onto the Council's website and the key findings and plans going forward would feature in the Tenants Housing Matters newsletter in March 2013.

Key Findings

The response rate from the survey had been 35% (527 responses) which produced a 95% accuracy rate and meant that the Council could be very confident that the results were representative of the wider Tenant population.

Below were some of the key findings obtained through the survey which had been compared to findings recorded in 2008. In addition, where applicable, satisfaction levels had been filed with Housemark which had enabled benchmarking against between 39 - 42 (depending on the survey question) other social housing providers who had also used the Housemark service to record their satisfaction levels across key service areas:-

- 87% of Tenants had been satisfied with the overall services provided. Satisfaction levels had remained static since 2008. Housemark benchmarking indicated that the Council's performance was in the second quartile and therefore ranked 16th out of 43 landlords;
- 88% of Tenants had been satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service. Satisfaction levels had remained static since 2008. Housemark benchmarking

indicated that the Council's performance was in the top quartile and therefore ranked 9th out of 40 landlords;

- 90% of Tenants had been satisfied with the quality of their home. Satisfaction levels had increased by 2% since 2008. Housemark benchmarking indicated that the Council's performance was in the top quartile and therefore ranked 5th out of 41 landlords;
- 85% of Tenants had found staff helpful. Satisfaction levels had reduced by 5% since 2008. This finding could not be benchmarked with Housemark;
- 89% of Tenants had been satisfied with the general condition of their homes. Satisfaction levels had increased by 3% since 2008. This finding could not be benchmarked with Housemark;
- 89% of Tenants felt they had obtained good value for money from their rent. Satisfaction levels had increased by 5% since 2008. Housemark benchmarking indicated that the Council's performance was in the top quartile and therefore ranked 4th out of 40 landlords;
- 84% of Tenants had been satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live. Satisfaction levels had increased by 3% since 2008. Housemark benchmarking indicated that the Council's performance was in the 3rd quartile and therefore ranked 24th out of 42 landlords;
- 80% of Tenants felt that Barrow Borough Council Housing Service had kept them informed. Satisfaction levels had increased by 1% since 2008. This finding could not be benchmarked with Housemark; and
- 79% of Tenants thought that their landlord had taken account of their views. Satisfaction levels had increased by 3% since 2008. Housemark benchmarking indicated that the Council's performance was in the top quartile and therefore ranked 7th out of 40 landlords.

Since the last survey in 2008, the Council had increased satisfaction levels with many of its services. However the Council also recognised that there were areas which required improvement. For example, there had been quite high dissatisfaction levels with the complaints service:

- Approximately, 12% of Tenants had made a complaint last year and of those, 45% had been dissatisfied with how their complaint had been handled and 47% had been dissatisfied with the final outcome of the complaint.
- In addition to this, there had been some higher than expected dissatisfaction scores on local services. 14% of Tenants had been dissatisfied with the appearance of their neighbourhood, 17% had been dissatisfied with grounds maintenance, 14% had been dissatisfied with internal cleaning and 21% had been dissatisfied with external cleaning.

In view of these dissatisfaction levels, the Council would be working with Tenant Representatives and Councillors to develop a plan of action, targeted at service improvement areas which had been identified through the STAR survey. This would be reported to Housing Management Forum in due course.

Members had been informed that the full copy of the survey was available to view on the Council's website.

It was noted that the Tenant Compact Working Party Group and Housing Services Management Group would examine the results of the survey with a view to planning service improvement and delivery where applicable.

RECOMMENDED:- To note the key findings of the STAR Survey as follows:-

- 87% of Tenants had been satisfied with the overall services provided;
- 88% of Tenants had been satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service;
- 90% of Tenants had been satisfied with the quality of their home;
- 85% of Tenants had found staff helpful;
- 89% of Tenants had been satisfied with the general condition of their homes;
- 89% of Tenants felt they had obtained good value for money from their rent;
- 84% of Tenants had been satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live;
- 80% of Tenants felt that Barrow Borough Council Housing Service had kept them informed;
- 79% of Tenants thought that their landlord had taken account of their views;
- Approximately 12% of Tenants had made a complaint last year and of those, 45% had been dissatisfied with how their complaint had been handled; and
- In respect of local services, 14% of Tenants had been dissatisfied with the appearance of their neighbourhood, 17% had been dissatisfied with grounds maintenance, 14% had been dissatisfied with internal cleaning and 21% had been dissatisfied with external cleaning.

27 – Performance Information Report

The Housing Manager submitted information relating to a selection of Local and National Performance Indicators and Best Value Performance Indicators. The information is attached at **Appendix B** to these Minutes.

RESOLVED:- To note the Performance Information report.

28 – Housing Revenue Account 2013/2014

The Business Support Manager submitted a report to agree a Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget for the financial year 2013/14. The report also provided an Expected Outturn Budget for the current year 2012/13 and information regarding balances. Full details of the expected outturn for 2012/13 as well as the proposed HRA Budget for 2013/14 had been appended to her report.

It was noted that under self-financing introduced last year, the Council had taken on additional borrowing of £17.089M. The Council were expected to service the cost of that debt and manage and maintain the Housing Stock to the Decent Homes Standard from the rents collected from Tenants.

It was noted that the Revised Business Plan (to take account of the actual loan profile and the comprehensive spending review) would indicate significant HRA surpluses in future, assuming that the management and maintenance costs remained stable. The Council would therefore need to review and agree prioritising the possible applications of any surpluses: (1) accelerated debt repayment, (2) increased investment in stock, (3) investment projects where the need or the return was clearly identifiable, (4) increased levels of management services to assist with the challenges imposed by the Welfare Reform, (5) a blend of all 4.

1. Expected Outturn Budget 2012/13

The outturn for the year forecasted net surplus of £49,640. Key factors were:-

- HRA Income would be higher than expected;
- Dwelling rents, other services and charge income were in line with budget;
- Right to Buy sales could be higher than budgeted due to this year’s raise in the discount available which had an effect on stock levels. A stock level of 2,696 was expected by 31st March, 2013;
- Tenancy terminations had increased by 13% in the last quarter which was mainly attributed to increases in deaths and transfers to the private sector;
- Management costs were marginally higher than budget; and
- Maintenance expenditure was in line with budget.

2. Balances on the Expected Outturn for 2012/13

The above was likely to result in the following movement in balances.

2.1 Balance on the Major Repair Reserve (MRR) as at 31st March, 2012 : £ 1,601

The above funds were expected to be spent in the year and therefore the balance on MRR at year end would be zero.

2.2 Balance on the Housing Revenue Account as at 31st March, 2012 : £ 1,521,771

2.3 Breakdown of Balance on Account

Balance on the Housing Revenue Account as at 31st March, 2012	:	£ 1,521,771
Forecast Surplus 2012/13	:	£ 49,640
Estimated Balance at year end	:	£ 1,571,411

3. Proposed HRA Budget 2013/14

In proposing the budget for 2013/14 the following factors had been taken into account:

- 3.1 The Settlements Payments Determination provided a budgetary and business planning framework for rental income and management, major repair and maintenance expenditure. Rents should increase by RPI + 0.5% however, rents were still expected to converge with those of a similar size, type and location by 2015/16, as they did under the Subsidy Determinations, by adding or subtracting a maximum of £2.00 per week to move the property to its 'target rent'. As a result dwelling rents increased by £354,540.
- 3.2 The Council faced many challenges with the introduction of the various Welfare Reforms, Universal Credit and loss of Direct Payments. The greatest risk was to our income collection which could reduce by as much as 2% unless sufficient resource could be provided to pursue non payers and provide assistance for those with difficulties. A risk based approach would be taken to debt cases which meant that debts which were escalating would be caught at the first opportunity and directed towards an experienced Case Officer. This meant that Officers would carry a smaller but more complex, challenging and time consuming caseload. In view of this the Business Support Manager recommended that an additional full time Income and Debt Recovery Officer be employed. Provision for this post may be sought from the proposed budget as well as increasing the bad debt provision by £114,300.
- 3.3 The Business Support Manager suggested that the Council carried out a General Needs Survey to establish future Housing Needs within the borough at an estimated cost of £30K.
- 3.4 The budget had allowed for an additional £200K Voluntary Repayment Provision and £390K for investment projects to be considered which would either address a need highlighted in the recent Tenants' STAR Survey to improve the appearance and safety of certain neighbourhoods or which would bring about a sustainable improvement in cost to Tenants/HRA.

4 Dwelling Rents

- 4.1 The effect for this Authority was as follows:

Calculation for 2013/14

RPI in September 2012= 2.6%

+ 0.5% = 3.1% increase to Barrow Borough Council rents

Plus or minus a maximum of £2.00 to move the property towards its individual target rent.

	52 Weeks	48 Weeks
2012/13	£68.65	£74.37
2013/14	£71.29	£77.23
+/-	£2.64	£2.86
Increase	3.85%	3.85%

Average Rent increase over 48 weeks

£2.86

Included in an Appendix to the report were further details of the resultant rents for different property types. Rents on an individual property basis would differ.

4.2 The housing Major Repairs and maintenance budget had been adjusted in line with guidelines and allowed a total of £1,807 per dwelling based on a stock level of 2,696.

5 Other Charges

5.1 Garage Charges

As it was normal practice to recommend that garage rents be increased in line with residential properties, the proposed budget included a 3.85% increase on garage charges which would generate £7,448. The effect on individual garage charges would be as follows:

	2012/13	+3.85%	+5%
Garage rate 1 (27)	£6.19	£6.43	£6.50
Garage rate 2 (459)	£8.55	£8.88	£8.98
Increase		£7,448	£9,672

There was a 160 strong waiting list for garages with few vacancies and the proposed new rent still appeared less than in the private sector.

The Business Support Manager therefore suggested that Members gave consideration to increasing current rents by 3.85%.

6 Business Improvement Initiatives

Initiatives for 2013/14 would include:

- Process improvements which streamlined and reduced costs on responsive repairs and voids and the effort of administrating and managing the contract;
- Looking at the staffing and management structure for Housing Officers which enabled more face to face contact with Tenants and their neighbourhoods by eliminating unnecessary admin tasks;
- Develop the Information Systems and Technology strategy to support the improvements and reduce IT costs; and
- Review rents and charges for supported and furnished tenancies and dispersed accommodation.

7 Summary

The proposed HRA budget for 2013/14 was in line with the Settlements Payments Determination and the budgetary and business planning framework it provided for rental income and management, major repair and maintenance expenditure.

RECOMMENDED:- That the Executive Committee agree the following:-

1. To note information at point (1) of the report;
2. To note the information regarding balances at point (2) of the report;
3. To note the information in point (3) of the report and agree the 2013/14 budget as shown at Appendix A of the report;
4. To agree an average increase of 3.85% in line with Rent Restructuring guidelines and note the effect on individual rents shown at Appendix B of the report;
5. To agree the increase of Garage charges of 3.85% as show at point (4.1) of the report; and
6. To note the information at point (4.2) of the report.

The meeting closed at 2.20 p.m.

ANNUAL INVESTMENT PROFILE : 2013/14

APPENDIX A

Total Budget £5,233,290

Routine Maintenance

£750,000	Fabric Repairs
£265,096	Preliminary Costs (Fabric)
£200,000	Void Repairs
£69,533	Preliminary Costs (Voids)
£15,000	EPC Surveys
£10,000	Security Shutters
£15,000	Tipping charges (Voids)

£1,324,629

Other Planned Maintenance

£10,000	Gas Building Works
£150,000	Gas Breakdown Repairs
£120,000	Gas Safety Tests and Servicing
£99,954	Preliminary Costs (Gas)
£200,000	Painting and Fabric repairs
£10,000	Community Centre Repairs
£20,000	Door Entry Maintenance
£15,000	Disrepair Claims
£25,000	Environmental Enhancements
£75,000	Electrical Testing & Smoke Alarms
£75,000	Decoration Vouchers
£5,000	Asbestos Removal
£25,000	Fencing and Environmental Imp
£189,163	Void Major Improvement Works
£35,000	Raglan Court Security Upgrade
£30,000	Consultancy Fees
£10,000	Shop Repairs/Upgrades
£50,000	Balcony upgrades (2 year plan)
£50,000	Fencing Replacements (Hindpool)
£148,624	Other Contractors Planned Works (Misc)
£300,000	Disabled Adaptations

£1,642,741

MRA

£227,120	Rewires (CHP)
£500,000	Heating and Insulation (CHP)
£300,000	Bathrooms (CHP)
£500,000	Kitchens (CHP)
£300,000	Re-Roofing Works (2 year plan)
£77,804	Misc Planned Investments
£360,996	Other Contractors Planned Works

CHP = Cumbria Housing Partners

£2,265,920

HOUSING MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT

APPENDIX B

Performance Indicator	Actual 2010/11	Actual 2011/12	Apr -Jun 2012	Apr -Sept 2012	Apr - Dec 2012	Target (Median)
£ Rents Collection						
£ Rent & Service Charges due		£9,228,558	£2,234,815	£4,589,411	£7,181,531	
£ Rent collected	£8,738,448	£9,134,875	£2,221,338	£4,544,226	£7,126,614	£ 8,855,938
Rent collected as % of rent due (inc ft)	103.47%	97.62%	99.40%	99.02%	99.24%	99%
£ Current Arrears (dwellings)	£155,726	£181,230	£207,455	£266,501	£257,781	£175,679
£ Former Arrears (dwellings)	£103,418	£92,499	£86,355	£92,012	£113,414	£128,081
Write Offs (Gross)	£114,706	£75,538	£24,910	£28,353	£35,360	£42,803
Tenants evicted for rent arrears	13	6	2	3	3	6
Current tenants arrears % of rent owed	1.79%	1.96%	2.34%	3.01%	3.55%	3.16%
Former tenants arrears % of rent owed	1.18%	1.02%	0.98%	1.04%	1.56%	1.29%
£ Rent arrears Garages	£3,289	£1,824	£4,144	£7,073	£6,834	£ 3,750
£ Rent Arrears Shops	£27,524	£16,602	£17,225	£18,137	£20,551	£ 25,000
Void management						
Tenancy Turnover %		10.3%	3.2%	4.9%	7.8%	8.05%
Total number of re-lets during the period benchmarked (inc Dispersed)	268	278	85	114	206	217
No. of Voids	264	227	76	114	187	218
Average relet time for dwellings (days)	28	37	38	42	33	28
£ rent loss through vacant dwellings	£85,909	£ 100,227	£ 25,119	£ 48,965	£ 75,643	£ 109,685
£ rent loss due to vacant garages	£4,907	£5,098	£1,019	£1,323	£1,964	£ 4,500
£ rent loss due to vacant shops	£4,844	£16,546	£1,999	£3,000	£4,000	£ 4,000
% properties accepted on first offer	73.9%	86.4%	72.0%	73.7%	75.1%	70%
Loss per Void (Rents, Repairs, Mgt & Arrears)	£ 2,556	£ 2,846	£ 2,640	£ 2,658	N/A	£2,000
Maintenance						
No. Repair Orders issued (Tenant Demand)	10,890	11,587	2,799	5,189	7,991	9,197
Responsive & Void repairs per property	4.2	4.3	1.0	1.9	3.0	3.4
P1 & P2 as a % of total repairs	50.5%	61.7%	52.5%	56.9%	61.0%	47.5%
% all responsive repairs completed on time	92.5%	87.3%	72.5%	72.8%	75.8%	96.3
P1 % emergency repairs completed on time	98.9%	94.6%	92.2%	93.5%	96.0%	96.7
P2 % urgent repairs completed on time	89.6%	78.9%	68.9%	79.4%	80.4%	94.6
Average end-to-end time for all reactive repairs (days)	12.6	12.25	12.33	21.1	19.6	8.2
Percentage of repairs completed 'Right First Time'	NA	78.5%	80.0%	74%	N/A	88.8
Appointments kept as a percentage of appointments made	97.13	77%	58%	64%	N/A	96.8
Appointments made as a percentage of repair orders (exc gas & voids)	100%	NA	100%	100%	N/A	94.1
Percentage of dwellings with a valid gas safety certificate	99.2%	99.89%	99.93%	99.80%	100.00%	99.8%
Percentage of homes that fail to meet the Decent Homes Standard	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%
*Average energy efficiency rating of dwellings (based on RD SAP 9.83)	68.3	69.2	69.2	69.2	69.2	68.90%
Equality & Diversity						
ASB cases reported	85	82	17	40	49	143
Percentage of closed ASB cases that were successfully resolved	72%	91%	100%	96%	98%	88%
% Diversity Information : Age	99.88%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Gender	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	98%
Ethnicity	94.70%	95%	73%	73%	76%	75%
Disability	44.59%	100%	100%	100%	100%	75%
Sexuality	41.70%	56%	38%	39%	44%	55%
Religion or belief	43.05%	57%	40%	40%	45%	55%
Percentage of Stage 1 complaints upheld	25%	22%	0%	0%	N/A	NA

HOUSING MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT

APPENDIX B

Performance Indicator	Actual 2008/09	Actual 2011/12	Actual 2012/13		Target (Median)
% Tenants Satisfied with:					
Landlord's services overall	87%		88%		83%
Repairs and maintenance	88%		87%		79%
Views are taken into account	76%		78%		64%
Quality of the home	NA		90%		N/A
Neighbourhood as a place to live	81%		84%		82%
Rent provides value for money	N/A		90%		N/A
Service charges provide value for money	N/A		81%		N/A
Value for Money -					
Direct Costs per property	Actual 2010/11	Actual 2011/12	Apr -Sept 2012	Apr - Dec 2012	Target (Median)
Overhead per property		£ 140			
Major & Cyclical works	£1,294	£ 1,256			£1,241
Responsive Repairs	£455	£ 480			£424
Void Repairs	£144	£ 167			£176
Rent Arrears & Collection	£53	£ 54			£71
Community Involvement	£27	£ 38			£46
Anti Social Behaviour	£29	£ 41			£38
Neighbourhood Mgt (Estates/Tenancy mgt.)	£34	£ 102			£66
Housing Options	£43	£ 36			£37
Leasehold	£50	£ 70			£136
Total staff turnover	10.3%	7.0%	2.0%	3.9%	8%
Ave. working days lost / sickness absence	22.3	14.0	4.1	9.0	10.5
Housing Property	2011-12	DISPERSED 2011-12	2012-13	DISPERSED 2012-13	
HSE	1290	0	1289	0	
FLATS	1258	11	1246	12	
BUNGALOWS	157	0	157	0	
TL DWELLINGS	2705	11	2687	12	
Community Centres			5		
LEASEHOLDS	202		203		
GARAGES	484		486		
SHOPS		20			
SOLD PROPERTIES	2011-12	SOLD 2011/12	2012-13	SOLD 2012/13	
HSE	148,500	3	211,150	5	
FLAT	27,000	1	22,000	1	
LAND	2,312	1	0	0	
TL	177,812	4	233,150	6	
HOMELESSNESS	Actual 2010/11	Actual 2011/12	Apr -Jun 2012	Apr-Sep 2012	Apr-Dec 2012
Homeless ave. days in temporary dispersed accommodation	46	59	53	71	56
Homeless ave. days in temporary B&B accommodation	31	20	26	21	27
Homeless Total Cases Closed	616	752	334	515	641
Homeless Advice	216	339	210	313	339
Homeless Prevention	174	114	42	59	87
Homeless Applications	226	185	36	78	120
Homeless Successful Preventions	146	85	38	52	71
Eligible Homeless (Owed a full duty)	27	29	8	13	24
HOUSING REGISTER	Actual 2010/11	Actual 2011/12	Apr -Jun 2012	Apr - Sept 2012	Apr-Dec 2012
Applicants on housing register	1700				
Active Direct Applicants			1508	1553	1601
Active Transfer Applicants			316	323	358
Cumbria Choice Register		1745	1824	1876	1959

HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM		(D) Agenda Item 6
Date of Meeting:	28th February 2013	
Reporting Officer:	Colin Garnett, Housing Manager	
<p>Title: ASB Action Ltd</p> <p>Summary and Conclusion:</p> <p>The purpose of this report is to provide Members with information on the Service Level Agreement 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 choose to live.</p> <p>ASB Action Ltd offer a specialised service which focuses on assisting social housing providers to deal with such issues.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <p>Members are recommended to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the information on the Service Level Agreement with ASB Action Ltd; and 2. Agree to progress a Service Level Agreement for a further 12 months with ASB Action Ltd. 		

Report

The Council has an obligation to the Residents in the local areas they manage to do all they reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in these areas. The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 also requires social landlords to review their policies for tackling anti-social behaviour annually and publish their policies and procedures for inspection.

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

The Core Service

The core service provided by ASB Action Ltd is the provision of anti-social behaviour and neighbour nuisance services. This will 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 this field.

The services provided by ASB Action Ltd include:

- Review cases referred and provide action points to the Estates Team within specified timescales to ensure prompt service to our customers;
- Where appropriate, collect evidence and construct witness statements to a standard required for Civil Court proceedings;
- Act as professional witness in court where required;
- Carry out audits/case reviews;
- Provide the Estates Team with the range of appropriate legislation which can be used to resolve specific cases and support strategic initiatives;
- Review the Housing Service's existing Anti-Social Behaviour Policies and Procedures and, where necessary, make recommendations to ensure service improvement;
- Provide Barrow Housing Service with a witness support service, including an out-of-hours telephone service to support the most vulnerable witness;
- Provide a coaching, training and mentoring service for the front line Officers and Managers of the Housing Service on the best practice for tackling and preventing anti-social behaviour; and
- ASB Action Ltd, in supporting Barrow Housing Service, will seek to provide a service which appears seamless to the complainant/witness.

Service Level Agreement

ASB Action Ltd offer a Service Level Agreement in which the Council's Housing Service can undertake to purchase 15 days to be used over a 12-month period. The 15 days can be used however our organisation feels would best suit the needs of the Estates Team i.e., training, mentoring, critical friend, case work reviews, etc. Time for telephone or e-mail advice is not deducted from the 15 days. Staff can ring through with problems and discuss options to help form a view on the course of action to take. The Housing Service will 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 has assisted the Housing Service to successfully obtain five Injunctions for anti-social behaviour.

The cost of 15 days Service Level Agreement including training is £7,068.75 plus VAT.

The Estates Team has now developed working arrangements with the organisation, and in recognition of the value derived from the Service Level Agreement I would suggest we renew the Service Level Agreement for a further 12 months.

Summary

Effective management of anti-social behaviour is a key component of the Housing Service achieving its aim to provide well-maintained homes and estates where people choose to live.

ASB Action Ltd offer a specialised service which focuses on assisting social housing providers to deal with such issues. I would recommend this Forum agree a further annual Service Level Agreement with ASB Action Ltd, and suspend the requirement to obtain alternative estimates.

(i) Legal Implications

The recommendation has no legal implications.

(ii) Risk Assessment

The recommendation has no significant implications.

(iii) Financial Implications

The cost of the Service Level Agreement is £7,068.75 for which monies are included in the HRA.

(iv) Health and Safety Implications

The recommendation has no significant implications.

(v) Equality and Diversity

The recommendation has no detrimental impact on service users showing any of the protected characteristics under current Equalities legislation.

(vi) Health and Well-being Implications

The recommendation has no adverse effect on the Health and Wellbeing of users of this service.

Background Papers

Nil

HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM		(D) Agenda Item 7
Date of Meeting:	28th February 2013	
Reporting Officer:	Colin Garnett, Housing Manager	
<p>Title: STAR Survey: Action Plan</p> <p>Summary and Conclusion:</p> <p>The purpose of this report is to consider the findings of the recently completed STAR Survey and agree an action plan to respond to the views received.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <p>Members are recommended to agree the actions identified.</p>		

Report

The STAR Survey is a means by which social landlords can gather information regarding the views of their Tenants in a structured manner. The Council agreed to carry out the survey last year and the headline information was reported to your meeting on 17th January 2013.

The information gathered in the survey is used to inform the service on Tenants' views on a range of issues. This information can then be used to identify areas of service which may require improvement.

In order to aid this process, BMG in presenting the information have also looked to identify those areas of the service Tenants identified as 'most important', or the 'key drivers' of overall satisfaction.

A copy of the diagram illustrating this information is included at **Appendix A**.

In this report I will comment on the findings generally but, in particular, will highlight areas of the survey where the service scored less well and a suggested response to the possible weaknesses.

The structure of the survey is based on a number of key service areas which are influenced by the Regulatory Standards but have also been reported with reference to five broad geographical management areas in the Borough, i.e. Central, Walney, Roosegate, Ormsgill and Dalton.

The structure of this report follows the structure of the STAR Survey for ease of understanding and reference to the results of the Survey.

As the Survey is a large document I have not attached it as an appendix but a hard copy has been placed in the Members' Room, it is also available on the Council's website – follow the links to Council Housing/Surveys.

Results show that there are generally good levels of satisfaction of the services provided:

- **Satisfaction with Services provided by Barrow**

Overall satisfaction resulted in similar scores as previous surveys. Dalton scored highest and Ormsgill lowest. In terms of the most dissatisfied, Walney scored highest at 10%

In considering the 'key drivers' identified by the survey:

Satisfaction or dissatisfaction with listening to and acting on Residents' views is the highest ranked for satisfaction. It would appear that those with a disability in their household are more likely to be dissatisfied (12%) their views are listened to and acted upon compared with just 4% of those without disability.

Repairs are rated as the second most important key driver. Satisfaction scores are generally good, but dissatisfaction is greatest (12%) between 16-34 age group, compared with 9% of those aged 33-54 and 5% aged 55+ and 6% of those aged 65+.

The third key driver is how the service deals with Resident enquiries. The results imply that Tenants' perception is strongly influenced by how staff deal with enquiries. Reassuringly, the high score of approaching nine in ten satisfied would suggest generally our model of delivery is in keeping with the expectation of Tenants.

- **Housing and Services**

This part of the Survey focuses on Tenants' views of their home.

It considers the key areas of Tenants' perceptions of the overall quality of the home, value for money/or rent, value for money for service charge and taking into account Tenants' views.

Nine-tenths of Residents are satisfied with the overall quality of their home. Generally, the difference in scores between the management areas is minimal, e.g. 88% - 90%, whilst Dalton scores 96%.

Interestingly, the Council's approach to investment and maintenance of its stock based on 'worst-first' and whilst Dalton scores highest, it is not because the properties have received investment over and above any other area which suggests other factors being an influence on the perception of Tenants in Dalton.

In terms of value for money and service charge, satisfaction is 89% and 81% respectively. Value for money for service charges is a new question so cannot be

compared with last time. With regards value for money, the indicator has improved from 84% in 2008 to 89%.

Of particular interest is Tenants' perception of "their views being taken into account". As mentioned earlier in this report "listening to Tenants' is a "key driver" identified by the survey and this indicator has increased from 76% previously to 79%. On this indicator Ormsgill stands out as an area with lowest satisfaction of 73% (against high in Dalton of 82%) and non-working age respondents are significantly more likely to be satisfied.

- **General Services**

This section of the Survey looks at the level of satisfaction of the condition of the home, whether Landlord treats them fairly and their awareness of published standard.

With regard to condition of home, scores have increased from 86% to 89%. Less satisfaction is expressed by Tenants under 65 than those over 65. Other than Dalton at 94% there is little difference between the other management areas scoring either 88% or 89%.

Opportunity to make views known is 76%. Tenants over 65 years of age are more satisfied than younger Tenants, with Central being most satisfied at 84%. The low is Ormsgill at 69%.

Percentage of Tenants being kept informed has remained static from the previous survey at around 80%. Again, older Residents (over 65) being more satisfied than those under 65. Dalton scores highly at 90% with a low of 74% on Ormsgill.

On the question of being "treat fairly" 87% are satisfied; 10% are ambivalent and 4% are dissatisfied. Dalton scores highest (95%) but interestingly those with a disability are significantly more likely to be dissatisfied.

On 'published standards' only 47% are aware. Understanding of how to challenge standards is low.

Interestingly, the question on gas servicing scores high at 94% of Tenants satisfied. BMG who completed the survey anecdotally state the scores for this are normally around 86%, so Barrow scores well above. I particularly highlight this as gas servicing is a key priority in our approach to keeping Tenants' homes safe, but is somewhat a contradiction when considering the difficulty our Contractor experiences in gaining access on a regular basis.

Tenants are asked to identify the 'three' most important services. Repairs and maintenance score the highest, quality of home and anti-social behaviour also being recorded. Other aspects of the service were noted by some Tenants but did not score so highly.

On the question of 'advice and support' 81% are satisfied with the assistance offered. Such services will obviously be important to help Tenants to respond to Welfare Reform and I would view this score as positive.

- **Contact with Services**

Information was gathered on the Tenants who have been in contact with the service over the last 12 months. 59% had been in contact, 41% had not. Of those that had 78% had found it easy to get the right person, 12% difficult and 10% had no comment either way. Both sets of figures show slight decrease on the previous survey.

The vast majority – 85% found the member of staff helpful which was down on the figure of 90% previously. Those Tenancies who had a person with a disability had less satisfaction.

In terms of ability of staff to deal with a problem, four-fifths expressed satisfaction and an equal number with the outcome.

On this occasion we asked Tenants about access to the internet. Only 39% have access. Conversely access to internet decreases as the age of Tenants increase. I understand from BMG from their research elsewhere that the score regarding access to the internet would be seen as average.

- **Neighbourhood**

Satisfaction levels with neighbourhood has slightly increased from last time from 81% to 84%. Four-fifths of Tenants are satisfied with the neighbourhood in which they live. Dalton were highest at 98%, with Ormsgill lowest at 79%.

Higher satisfaction ratings are linked with older Residents and those in houses and bungalows. Those living in ground- or upper-floor flats are lowest at 79%.

In considering these figures, it should be noted that many areas are now mixed tenure estates and whilst the Housing Service may have an impact to some degree in terms of exterior appearance of properties and the management services we provide Tenants, improving Tenants' perceptions agreeing possible action would be more difficult on such areas.

- **Repairs and Maintenance**

The perception of this area of our service is identified as a 'key driver' earlier in this Report and is highlighted by the research. It is, therefore, a good result that 88% of Tenants – nearly 9 out of 10, are satisfied with the service. This is a similar score to previously. The survey was carried out during the transition to a new Contractor during which performance has been affected adversely so there is a degree of reassurance this indicator did not, in fact, decrease.

Demographics do have an impact again; over 65 years of age are more likely to be satisfied as are female Tenants, whereas those under 65 or those Tenancies with a member who has a disability. Dalton scores highest at 98%, with Ormsgill lowest at 84%.

Satisfactions with different aspects of the process of completing a job are also good and score higher than comparable figure last time. This includes being told when a job will be done to attitude of workers.

- **Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)**

This was identified as a key area for the service to concentrate on during previous surveys.

All respondents were asked if they had reported ASB in the last 12 months. 12% reported they had. Residents in the Central area (21%) are more likely to have reported ASB, Roosegate was least likely (7%).

78% had found it easy to contact a member of staff but 15% said it was difficult and 8% found it neither difficult nor easy.

The relatively low number of respondents did not make it practical to look at demographic information.

Whilst the scores recorded on different aspects of the service are higher on satisfaction than dissatisfaction, there are scores of dissatisfaction on certain aspects such as 25% being very dissatisfied with the outcome, and notable dissatisfaction with advice, being kept updated etc.

It is, however, reassuring that four in five respondents would be willing to report on ASB in future, whilst 9% would be reluctant. Interestingly, Roosegate scores the highest at 89% against the average of 83%.

- **Complaints**

Tenants were asked about their awareness of the Council's Complaints Procedure. Similar numbers, around 52%, were, whilst 48% were not.

One in eight (12%) reported they had made a complaint in the last year. Central and Ormsgill were most likely at 14%.

Unfortunately, the number who said they had made a complaint was too low to draw a conclusion from the other follow-on question asked so I have not made reference to them.

However, on a general note, it does highlight an area that requires further consideration.

- **Local Service**

The final section looks at Residents' satisfaction with the appearance of their neighbourhood.

82% are satisfied. Dalton at 96%, Walney close behind at 94% are highest areas with Ormsgill lowest at 75%.

General maintenance scored a satisfaction of 75% which I understand from BMG is a fairly typical score.

Dalton Tenants score highest satisfaction (80%), Walney lowest at 68%, females (79%), compared to males (75) as do Tenants over 65.

Internal and external cleansing services scored satisfaction ratings of 62% and 66% respectively.

Overall, four-fifths or 79% are satisfied with estate services and three-quarters are satisfied with the value for money aspect.

Summary

In summarising the report it is clear the Council's services to Tenants generally scores well across most areas.

It is clear that the geographic area, age of Tenant, gender and where there is a Tenant with disability does have an influence on the score.

Whilst it could be argued all aspects of the Council's service are important, it is helpful in that the survey identifies what Tenants have said in terms of identifying the area of service which are the 'key drivers' to improving satisfaction and overall satisfaction. In the case of our service, the three top drivers are:

- (1) Listening to and acting upon Residents' views.
- (2) The repairs and maintenance service.
- (3) How we deal with Residents' enquiries.

In the case of (1) and (2) I would suggest this is about the culture, model of delivery and day-to-day experience of the contact between Tenants and the service. Clearly from the overall score the current approach achieves high levels of satisfaction, but some "groups" perception is of higher levels of dissatisfaction. In particular, the Survey highlights this as prevalent in households with a disability in their household.

Likewise in repairs, targeted action for younger people to promote service standards may be helpful to manage expectation levels.

Whilst not key drivers, I would suggest from the survey and discussions with colleagues, the perception of how complaints and anti-social behaviour are dealt with require further consideration.

Moving Forward and Action Plan

Finally, in considering the following information as a means of developing our services, it should be noted good scores are recorded across most areas of service provision.

I would suggest the model of delivery of services does currently meet the needs of the majority of Residents and requires only refinement in specific areas rather than a remodelling of services.

I would also suggest there are areas of service that can be developed at minimal cost, whereas others such as 'appearance of neighbourhood' may be more difficult to respond to in view of the mixed nature of our estates and cost implications.

I would suggest the practice of carrying out a general satisfaction survey (STAR) should be incorporated in the routine practice of the service on a three-yearly basis.

The information contained in the survey will be used to inform the service on any service developments that are progressed in the future and a benchmark to judge performance.

Finally, I would propose the following Action Plan to respond to the matters raised through the survey:

(1) Tenant Involvement and Influences in Services

To consider and progress options for ensuring Tenants such as those with a disability in their household are listened to and have the opportunity to express their views.

To consider and progress option for encouraging Tenants in the 16-34 age band have the opportunity to engage and participate in the provision of services.

(2) Anti-Social Behaviour

To carry out a review of the current procedures for dealing with anti-social behaviour.

(3) Complaints Procedure

To review and improve understanding of the Complaints Procedure.

(i) Legal Implications

The recommendation has no legal implications.

(ii) Risk Assessment

The recommendation has no significant implications.

(iii) Financial Implications

The recommendation has no financial implications.

(iv) Health and Safety Implications

The recommendation has no significant implications.

(v) Equality and Diversity

The recommendation has no detrimental impact on service users showing any of the protected characteristics under current Equalities legislation.

(vi) Health and Well-being Implications

The recommendation has no adverse effect on the Health and Wellbeing of users of this service.

Background Papers

Nil

HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM	(D) Agenda Item 8
Date of Meeting: 28th February 2013	
Reporting Officer: Colin Garnett, Housing Manager	
Title: Decoration Allowance	
Summary and Conclusion:	
The purpose of this report is to consider and agree an increase in Decoration Allowance paid to new Tenants when accepting a Tenancy.	
Recommendations:	
Members are recommended to agree the Decoration Allowance to be increased to £20 per room from the start of the next financial year.	

Report

The purpose of this report is to consider and agree an increase in Decoration Allowance paid to new Tenants when accepting a Tenancy.

It is common practice for social landlords to provide a Decoration Allowance to new Tenants.

Such allowance is provided as a 'contribution' towards redecorating a property which will be incurred by a new Tenant.

During the process of preparing a property for re-letting, Officers as part of the inspection process will make a judgement on the number of rooms that will require redecoration.

A new Tenant, when signing up for a Tenancy, is provided with a voucher to the agreed value that can be redeemed at a number of local shops for decoration materials.

The current allowance is £15 per room and has been at this level for many years.

Whilst it should be recognised as a 'contribution' towards the cost of redecoration, I would suggest it should be increased from the current level of £15 to £20 per room.

Budget provision of £75K has been included within the Maintenance Budget and at this time I would suggest the increase is met from this budget but will be monitored as this year progresses.

(i) Legal Implications

The recommendation has no legal implications.

(ii) Risk Assessment

The recommendation has no significant implications.

(iii) Financial Implications

A budget of £75K is available for this purpose. As the spend is determined by a number of voids becoming vacant and their condition, Officers will monitor spend as the year progresses.

(iv) Health and Safety Implications

The recommendation has no significant implications.

The recommendation has no detrimental impact the built environment or public realm.

(v) Equality and Diversity

The recommendation has no detrimental impact on service users showing any of the protected characteristics under current Equalities legislation.

(vi) Health and Well-being Implications

The recommendation has no adverse effect on the Health and Wellbeing of users of this service.

Background Papers

Nil

KEY DRIVERS OF OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH THE SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE HOUSING SERVICE



Note: A score of 1 = Average level of impact