

BOROUGH OF BARROW-IN-FURNESS

HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM

Meeting: Thursday, 29th August, 2013
at 2.00 pm (Committee Room No. 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 13th June, 2013.

5. Apologies for Absence/Changes in Membership.

FOR DECISION

OPERATIONAL

(D) 6. Sense of Place

(D) 7. Accommodation for 16/17 Year Old Applicants

(D) 8. Adelphi Court Flats

- (D) 9. Void Properties
- (R) 10. Furnished Tenancies
- (D) 11. Housing Maintenance Policy
- (D) 12. Reconsideration of Request for Vehicle Crossing on land in front of 6-24 Middleton Avenue
- (D) 13. Housing Management Performance 2013/14

FOR INFORMATION

- 14. Planned Investment and Planned Maintenance 2013/14 Year-End Expenditure

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

HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM MEMBERS:

Councillors: K Hamilton (Chairman)
D Barlow
M Irwin
A. Johnston
F G Murray
R J Pointer
J Richardson
K Williams

Tenant Representatives: Mr M Burton
Mr A McIntosh
Mr W Ward
Mrs K Warne
Mrs. G. Giddings (substitute)

HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM

Meeting: Thursday 13th June, 2013
at 2.00 p.m.

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

Tenant Representatives:- Mr M. Burton and Mr A. McIntosh.

1 – Death of Former Councillor

The Chairman announced that a former Councillor and Chairman of the Environmental Health and Housing Committee, Ted Hillman had recently passed away. The Forum held a minutes silence in memory of Mr Hillman.

2 – Declarations of Interest

Councillor Hamilton declared an other registrable interest in Agenda Item No. 14 – Barrow and District Credit Union (Minute No. 14) as he was a Cumbria County Council Member.

Councillor Pointer declared an other registrable interest in Agenda Item No. 14 – Barrow and District Credit Union (Minute No. 14) as he was a Member of the Credit Union.

3 – Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28th February, 2013 were taken as read and confirmed.

4 – Apologies for Absence/Changes in Membership

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Williams and from Tenant Representative, Mr W. Ward.

5 – Appointment of Representatives to Working Groups etc.

The Executive Director reported that at the Annual Council meeting on 14th May, 2013 the allocation of seats in respect of Forums, Panels, Working Groups etc. had been agreed.

The Housing Management Forum were requested to nominate Members and Tenant Representatives to the Tenant Compact Working Group and the Homelessness Funding Working Group for 2013/2014.

Three Member representatives by proportionality indicated in the report and three Tenant representatives were required for the Tenant Compact Working Group and two Member representatives by proportionality indicated in the report and two

Tenant representatives were required for the Homelessness Funding Working Group.

RECOMMENDED:- That the Memberships for 2013/14 be agreed as follows:-

Tenant Compact Working Group

Council Representatives (2:1) Councillors Barlow, Hamilton and Williams.

Tenant Representatives – Mrs P. Charnley, Mr W. McEwan and Mr A. McIntosh.

Homelessness Funding Working Group

Council Representatives (2:0) Councillors Hamilton and Pointer.

Tenant Representatives – Mrs P. Charnley and Mr A. McIntosh.

6 – Housing Services Delivery Plan 2013/14

The purpose of the Housing Manager's report was to agree the Housing Service's Key Tasks for 2013/14 which were attached as an appendix to his report.

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

The Key Tasks table included reference to 'tasks' referred to elsewhere on this and previous HMF agendas but, in doing, so sought to bring them together in one document.

Members were asked to comment, in particular regarding the areas of service to be subject to scrutiny by the Tenant Participation Compact Working Party.

RECOMMENDED:- To agree the Key Tasks and Service Delivery Plan for 2013/14 as follows:-

1. Establish scrutiny role for Tenant Participation Compact Working Party and progress the service reviews. Possible options: Anti-Social Behaviour (STAR), Tenancy Agreement and Tenant's Handbook;
2. Consider approach to engaging with under-represented tenants;
3. Review and update 30-year Business Plan;
4. Continue to develop approach to mitigate risks of Welfare Reform; and
5. Review of rents and service charges for supported and furnished tenancies and dispersed accommodation with particular reference to changes in Housing Benefit arrangements.

7 – Housing Complaints – ‘Designated Person’

The Housing Manager reported that the Council’s approach to the future handling of complaints with regard the provision of housing management services needed to be considered. His report proposed the establishment of a designated Tenant Panel, based on sample terms of reference as developed by the National Tenant Organisation.

From April 2013 the Local Government Ombudsman Service had changed. In future a Housing Ombudsman will take over responsibility for investigating complaints about the landlord functions of local authorities.

The new arrangements included the proposal to appoint a ‘designated person’ within the Landlord’s Complaints Procedure. A ‘designated person’ could be an MP, a local councillor or a designated tenant panel.

The general role of the designated person was to assist in resolving tenant complaints and issues locally.

Should a complaint be unable to be resolved through the existing landlord’s complaints procedure, the complainant would have the option to ask the ‘designated person’ to help resolve the complaint. Should this not be possible, there remained the option to refer the complaint to the Housing Ombudsman.

Should a tenant not wish to take the option of the ‘designated person’ being involved, they would have to wait eight weeks before pursuing the option to ask the Housing Ombudsman to take up the complaint.

In considering the options for appointing a ‘designated person’ the Housing Manager suggested the most appropriate arrangement would be to establish a Tenant Complaints Panel (the Panel) for the purpose. A copy of a draft Sample Terms of Reference developed by the National Tenant Organisation was attached as an appendix to his report which could be adapted for this Council’s purposes.

Should a complaint not be resolved through the normal Council’s Complaint Procedure, the tenant would be given the option to have the matter considered by the Panel.

The most appropriate approach to the Panel would be to have membership that was not involved in the routine decision-making process of the Tenants’ Forum and Housing Management Forum. However, due to the small number of tenants involved in the process, he suggested it would be difficult to recruit individuals that either had the understanding of the services of the Housing Department and good practice within the field to sit on the Panel. He suggested therefore in the first instance the Panel consist of the Chairman of Housing Management Forum and two tenants nominated by the Tenants’ Forum.

The Housing Manager would report back to the Housing Management Forum anonymously through the Performance Indicator Report regarding the number of complaints made and upheld.

RECOMMENDED:-

1. To agree the establishment of a Tenants' Complaints Panel to act as the 'designated person' using the terms of reference developed by the National Tenant Organisation; and
2. Agree that the membership of the Tenants' Complaints Panel consists of the Chairman of the Housing Management Forum and two tenants who represent tenants on the HMF.

8 – Changes to Tenant Participation Arrangements

The purpose of the Housing Manager's report was to consider and progress initial changes to the tenant participation arrangements following the agreement of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee reviewing the arrangements.

The Housing Service's approach to tenant participation was contained within the Community Involvement Strategy 2011-13, which would be reviewed and updated by the next meeting. The Housing Manager's report suggested changes that were necessary with regard to the Tenants' Forum Constitution and with regard to the arrangements for the Tenant Participation Compact Working Party as a result of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee review and subsequent decision of the Executive Committee on 20th March, 2013.

Tenants' Forum Constitution

Attached as an appendix to the Housing Manager's report was a copy of a revised Tenants' Forum Constitution for Members' consideration and agreement. The changes had been highlighted and reflected the decision of the Executive Committee on 20th March, 2013 following the review by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Tenant Participation Compact Working Party

It had been agreed the role of the Group should be to carry out a 'scrutiny' role.

Current arrangements for the Tenant Participation Compact Working Party were that there was equal attendance of Councillors and tenant representation. The Working Party met by agreement and as necessary.

By going forward, the Housing Manager suggested the following:-

Title: To reflect the change in its role it be retitled the Tenants' Scrutiny Working Party (TSWP).

Membership: To remain as per current arrangement.

Remit: To agree, in conjunction with the Tenants' Forum an 'Annual Plan' to identify service areas to be scrutinised. This will normally be two areas of service, but may be more depending on service areas selected and resources required to complete.

Purpose: To scrutinise agreed identified service areas, to consider the current arrangements for delivery and progress changes as thought appropriate in achieving the 'vision' for the Housing Service.

Operation:

- Council officers will be identified to assist the TSWP carry out the review (normally the responsible manager).
- Meetings will be chaired by a tenant representative in acknowledgement that the process should be tenant-led.
- Meetings will be agreed as necessary and on a meeting-by-meeting basis as necessary to complete the particular review.
- The outcome of the review will be agreed by the Tenants' Forum and then Housing Management Forum to agree or action as necessary.

RECOMMENDED:-

1. That the contents of the report be noted;
2. Agree amended Tenants' Forum Constitution; and
3. Agree amended Terms of Reference for the Tenant Participation Compact Working Party and it be renamed Tenant Scrutiny Working Party.

9 – Housing Maintenance Investment Programme

The Housing Manager reported that the introduction of 'Self-Financing' had resulted in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) generating additional funding for investment in the housing stock which would be on-going. The purpose of his report was to agree in principle how these resources should be incorporated within existing plans.

The Housing Services Investment Programme was directed by the Asset Management Strategy 2010-15, a copy of which was available in the Members' Room and on the website.

The purpose of the Strategy was to set out the long-term approach to managing the Council's housing assets to ensure the present and future needs of the community were met. This was achieved by:-

- Effective business planning: to assess the financial integrity of our plans;
- Effective investment planning: to ensure investments deliver value for money; and
- Effective option appraisal: to assess management and delivery opportunities.

For Members' information, the Housing Manager attached as an appendix the previously agreed 'Vision' and 'Aims' of the Strategy.

The Strategy was backed up by a largely financial-based 30-year Business Plan which was updated following the completion of stock condition surveys, consideration of operational experiences, including complaints and tenants' feedback via various means.

Having regard to the above, the approach to delivery of investment in tenants' homes had been based on component replacements, the plans for which were agreed on an annual basis when agreeing the Housing Revenue Account.

In setting the HRA budget for 2013/14 it was agreed a sum of £360,996 be included in the Maintenance Budget and a further report to be provided to consider how this could be utilised, in particular following review of the STAR survey results.

In considering the options for making best use of these resources, the Housing Manager made various comment.

He also drew Members attention to the practicalities of delivering increased investment and the capacity of the Maintenance Team to deliver it. To deliver increased investment may require additional project support in some instances.

Proposals for Additional Investment

The Housing Manager suggested the following possible options:

Option 1: Invest the c.£360K to accelerate the agreed programme of component replacement.

Option 2: Use a proportion of the c.£360K to accelerate the component programme but also a proportion to carry out investment in areas of the service it had not been practical to do so previously.

Should Option 2 be the preferred option, he suggested the resources be invested as follows:-

Accelerate component replacement, kitchen, bathroom, and rewire programme by: (Currently agreed in 2013/14 Investment Profile: £500K; £330K and £227,120 respectively)	£150K
Commence a programme of upgrading garages, I would suggest on an area-by-area basis that would be on-going. (No resources currently identified).	£75K
Increase resources for fencing (Currently agreed in 2013/14 Investment Profile: £25K)	£60K
Public realm investment, in particular communal door security and access paths on estates (Currently agreed in 2013/14 Investment Profile: £20K)	£80K

The Housing Manager stated that should Option 2 be agreed, it may not be practical for the Maintenance Team to deliver the schemes. He requested should it not be possible to manage the schemes in their entirety in-house, Members note that additional support would be commissioned on a scheme-by-scheme basis, the cost of which would be met from the allocated costs for each project.

Secondly, on a practical level, the nature of estates of mixed ownership did add difficulty to the delivery of fencing schemes. In the first instance, the Housing Manager would look to target areas in which to upgrade fencing would have both a benefit to the resident, but also the community and which had been subject to planned improvements previously. When it was involving owner-occupiers, they would be offered the opportunity to pay and have the fencing upgrade as part of the larger scheme, but if they chose not to, their property would be omitted from the scheme.

RECOMMENDED:-

(i) That Option 2 be agreed as follows:-

Use a proportion of the c.£360K to accelerate to component programme but also a proportion to carry out investment in areas of the service it has not been practical to do so previously; and

(ii) That the resources be invested as follows:-

Accelerate component replacement, kitchen, bathroom, and rewire programme by:	£150K
Commence a programme of upgrading garages	£75K
Increase resources for fencing	£60K
Public realm investment, in particular communal door security and access paths on estates	£80K

10 – Welfare Reform Action Plan

The purpose of the Housing Manager's report was to update Members on the delivery of the agreed Action Plan including details of engagement with tenants and proposals for targeting resources as we move forward.

The Six-point Action Plan was considered at the Housing Management Forum on 14th June, 2012 and agreed by the Executive Committee on 20th June, 2012.

The Welfare Reform changes involved a number of changes to welfare benefits. For the purpose of this report, the Housing Manager concentrated on those changes which would have the most significant impact on the relationship between tenants and the Council.

A summary of the implications of such changes were as follows:

Under-occupation (from April 2013)

- Total number of tenants identified who were under-occupying - 326
 - Under-occupying by one bedroom (-14%) - 249
 - Under-occupying by two bedrooms (-25%) - 77
- All tenants had been contacted by letter, telephone or visited. Contact had still not made contact with 21 tenants to date.

Benefit Cap (from introduction of Universal Credit)

- 7 tenants had now been identified by the DWP who would be affected by the introduction of a benefits cap.

Disability Living Allowance to Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in progress

- No issues had been raised with Housing to date.

Universal Credit

- Awaiting confirmation of date for introduction.

Although it had been the Council's intention to carry out a series of consultation events, this had not been progressed. From experience so far, in contacting tenants regarding under-occupation it was clear the majority of tenants were aware of the Welfare Reform agenda and the likely effect on them. In consideration of the need to make best use of resources, Members may be minded to this perhaps being necessary in the future and have agreed to attend events organised by other organisations to promote this issue and to ensure the newsletter included regular updates and information.

The Housing Manager also reported that two additional officers had now been recruited within the Income and Debt Recovery Team. This included an officer funded through the arrangement to collect water rates and who would focus on a range of support systems to assist tenants with financial inclusion matters and household budgeting.

In addition, and following the approval of a revised Housing Income Policy on 3rd March, 2011 new processes were being introduced to ensure officers were able to invest time in assisting tenants as appropriately as possible to manage their household finances. This had included the Business Support Team dealing with low level arrears or residual arrears.

He reported that it was recognised one option for tenants who were under-occupying was to move to a smaller property. To assist in this process, it was agreed to introduce a Downsizing Incentive Scheme. A figure of £26K was agreed and the option was being promoted. To date eleven applications had been received; five of which had been agreed and six which were currently under consideration. The

Choice-Based Lettings Scheme had also been revised to assist tenants who wished to move due to financial hardship.

Within the housing sector it was expected that rent arrears would increase and may have an impact on business plans. The Council were looking to develop processes to help manage the changes as referred to above.

Rent arrears always tended to go through cycles – increasing and decreasing throughout the year. However, below was an example of a comparison with arrears at year end compared to the same period last year for Members information:-

	Current Tenant Arrears	% of Rent Due
• 1st April, 2013	£203,623	2.12%
• 2nd April, 2012	£181,230	1.96%

With regard to tenants who were under-occupying, details were as follows:-

• Number of potential under-occupiers:	326
• Not receiving housing benefit:	47
• Tenants with no arrears:	48
• Tenants not having made payment since 1 April 2013:	119
• Tenants of who have made full or partial payment:	64%

Progressing our Services to Tenants

A number of measures had now been put in place to enable the service to offer assistance and respond to tenants experiencing difficulty.

Such assistance would be based on ‘case work’ and resources had been increased and processes changed to help increase the time available to develop this work.

In moving forward, it must be recognised the Housing Service must collect the rent due, whilst assisting as far as was practical to those tenants experiencing difficulty.

There were many ‘personal challenges’ individual tenants were going to have to adopt to move forward, and whilst the changes in rules on under-occupation were significant, the introduction of Universal Credit would have to be prepared for as it would signal the end of direct payments to landlords of a tenant’s housing costs.

This would increase the number of tenants in difficulty. Whilst the aim would be to offer assistance to all tenants, the Housing Department would also look to target staff resources to ensure they engage with those groups of tenants who were at greatest risk of their tenancy failing. This would also include looking for ‘opportunities’ to engage with tenants to mitigate the risks concerned, for instance, forming relationships with new tenants through the new ‘tenancy visiting procedures’.

RECOMMENDED:-

1. That the information contained in the report be noted; and
2. Agree the approach of identifying tenants at greatest risk of tenancy failure due to the reforms and amend procedures for new tenancy visits to take the opportunity to mitigate risks of tenancy failure as far as is practical.

11 – 6-24 Middleton Avenue, Barrow – Vehicle Crossing

The Housing Manager reported that he had received a request from a resident to construct a vehicle crossing over land owned by the Council. The Housing Manager attached a plan showing the layout of properties as an appendix to his report.

The land between 6 -24 Middleton Avenue was a 'green area' between the frontage of the properties, the pavement and road. The green area was in the ownership of the Council.

The Housing Manager had advised the resident that he would not agree the request. He did so on the basis that he made reference to parking commercial vehicles, loss of green area, it would change the street scene of the area and there are no existing crossings.

The resident did not accept the Housing Manager's refusal and asked for it to be reconsidered. He advised him that he would bring it to the attention of this Forum.

The Housing Manager suggested that it was understandable as to why the request had been made. Many Council estates were constructed at a time when vehicle ownership was not prevalent. The layout of estates and access roads had, over the years, become more congested.

It was not uncommon for residents to apply for vehicle access to allow in-curtilage parking. In most instances, such accesses involved 'pavement' crossings and were dealt with by the Highways Authority, the County Council. Many properties in Middleton Avenue did have such crossings. There was no doubt this helped ease the congestion where it was possible. In view of the impact on the appearance of the area and loss of green area, the Housing Manager had written to residents who either faced the green area or whose properties adjoined it to obtain their views (19 in total).

12 responses were received.

In considering the responses, a resident had raised the question of providing additional parking facilities for general use by residents. Whilst a reasonable suggestion, the problem of congestion was common throughout Council estates and it would make it impractical to respond in a way that would be replicated elsewhere.

Whilst recognising the benefit of enabling off-street parking, in this instance the benefits would have to be considered alongside the loss of green area on the avenue.

RECOMMENDED:- That the request to construct a vehicle crossing over the land be refused due to the preservation of green areas.

12 – Housing Management Performance 2012/13

The Housing Manager submitted information relating to the Housing Management End of Year Performance Information for 2012/13 and Best Value Performance Indicators. The information is attached at **Appendix A** to these Minutes. He provided a brief commentary to assist Members in their understanding of the key trends.

The Customer Satisfaction section had been updated following the 2012 'STAR' autumn survey.

The significant factor which may have adversely impacted on the performances this year was the continuing performance problems with the repairs contractor.

Strengths

- Current Arrears have risen at a slightly lower rate than last year when considered as a percentage of the rent owed which is a good performance against the general economic background.
- Rent loss on garage and shop voids has reduced.
- Former tenant arrears need to be considered together with the Write Offs which again has decreased in terms of percentage from 1.82% to 1.79%. This is as a result of taking their recovery in house and adopting new working practices.
- Gas Safety, Decent Homes and SAP rating measures have all performed well again this year and are better than target.
- The figure for re-lets now excludes Dispersed as these properties are now used exclusively for Homeless accommodation. The underlying figure is consistent with previous years.
- The number of voids has increased but this is primarily due the worsening condition of void properties and a slowdown by the contractor in turning them around at year end which meant we had double the number of empty properties than at the previous year end. The adjusted Re-let times have improved from 37 days to 32.
- Customer satisfaction measured through the 'STAR' survey is very positive and show improvements on the last survey of 2008/09. 88% are satisfied with overall service and 87% remain satisfied with the repairs service specifically.
- The Homelessness Team have been very effective in doubling the number of successful preventions so that the number of eligible homeless has not increased despite a significant increase in presentations.

Weaknesses

The Responsive and Void repair performances were again down significantly on the previous year which was attributed to Contractor management and their IT systems:

- Average time to repair has risen from 12 days to 20
- Overall % of repairs completed on time is down by almost 10%
- Repair orders have decreased yet the average ratio of emergency/urgent repairs (64% v 47%) to all Tenant Demand repairs has increased.

RECOMMENDED:-

1. That Members agree to see through the current sanctions with the repair contractor VINCI and closely monitor their performance; and
2. Note the information outlined in the report.

13 – Planned Maintenance Programme 2012/13 – Year End Expenditure

The Housing Manager reported information relating to the Planned Maintenance Programme for 2012/13 and the Year End Expenditure. The information is attached at **Appendix B** to these Minutes.

RESOLVED:- To note the information.

REFERRED ITEMS

THE FOLLOWING MATTERS ARE REFERRED TO COUNCIL FOR DECISION

14 – Barrow and District Credit Union

The Housing Manager submitted a report requesting Members to consider offering an opportunity to encourage new tenants to become members of the recently established Barrow and District Credit Union (BDCU).

The BDCU was established and had been operating from premises in The Mall since 28th February, 2013.

The Council and Tenants' Forum supported the development of a new Credit Union as it was recognised as an important option to be available to residents who may not engage with high street banks or have difficulty accessing loan facilities at an affordable rate of interest.

The Council recognised the introduction of Welfare Reform would be challenging for tenants and the Housing Service. A six-point plan was agreed by this Forum on 14th June, 2012 in order to direct the resources of the Housing Service to assist tenants as far as was practical to do so.

Action 2 involved working in partnership with organisations as appropriate to ensure tenants had access to financial services, including 'affordable credit'.

The Housing Manager suggested at the present time there was an opportunity to progress this action point by encouraging all new tenants to become members of the Credit Union by making a contribution towards their membership of the Credit Union of £2 together with £3 to commence a savings plan. To then assist tenants who engage with a savings plan to contribute a further £5 after saving for 10 weeks.

The BDCU were already operating a similar scheme funded by the County Council and targeted at schools in the inner wards.

If the proposal was agreed, it would be appropriate to adopt a similar administrative approach to establish the Housing Department's scheme.

The opportunity to become a member would be shared with a new tenant at the time of sign-up, with interested tenants being referred to the BDCU for further information and to establish their membership.

Should the proposal be agreed, the Housing Manager suggested it be reviewed during the budget process for 2014/15 and if it was of positive benefit to be incorporated in the HRA budget.

At this time the Housing Manager was specifically suggesting that new tenants only be targeted. This was based on the approach of targeting resources to assist as far as was practical and a new tenant establishing a successful tenancy.

He suggested that Members may also, wish to consider:

1. Making the option available to all tenants. (NB: The process would have to be phased to ensure it was delivered appropriately based on the potential number of applicants); and
2. Defer making a decision until the outcome of the targeting of new tenants had been established.

RECOMMENDED:-

1. Agree that the Housing Service offer a contribution of £5 to all tenants to become a member of BDCU.
2. Subject to the tenant becoming a regular saver, after 10 weeks of membership a further contribution of £5 be made.

The meeting closed at 2.35 p.m.

HOUSING MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT APPENDIX A

Performance Indicator	Actual 2010/11	Actual 2011/12	Actual 2012/13	Target (Median)
£ Rents Collection				
£ Rent & Service Charges due		£9,228,558	9,728,187	
£ Rent collected	8,738,448	9,134,875	9,604,739	8,855,938
Rent collected as % of rent due (inc ft)	103.47%	97.62%	98.85%	99%
£ Current Arrears (dwellings)	£155,726	£181,230	£203,623	£175,679
£ Former Arrears (dwellings)	£103,418	£92,499	£135,745	£128,081
Write Offs (Gross)	£114,706	£75,538	£38,573	£42,803
Tenants evicted for rent arrears	13	6	5	6
Current tenants arrears % of rent owed	1.79%	1.96%	2.12%	3.16%
Former tenants arrears % of rent owed	1.18%	1.02%	1.41%	1.29%
£ Rent arrears Garages	£3,289	£1,824	£1,452	£3,750
£ Rent Arrears Shops	£27,524	£16,602	£22,146	£25,000
Void Management				
Tenancy Turnover %		10.3%	10.4%	8.05%
Total number of re-lets during the period benchmarked (inc Dispersed)	268	278	245	217
No. of Voids	264	227	277	218
Average relet time for dwellings (days)	28	37	32	28
£ rent loss through vacant dwellings	£85,909	£100,227	£111,607	£109,685
£ rent loss due to vacant garages	£4,907	£5,098	£2,290	£4,500
£ rent loss due to vacant shops	£4,844	£16,546	£5,000	£4,000
% properties accepted on first offer	73.9%	86.4%	78.4%	70%
Loss per Void (Rents, Repairs, Mgt & Arrears)	£2,556	£2,846	£2,684	£2,000
Maintenance				
No. Repair Orders issued (Tenant Demand)	10,890	11,587	10,109	9,197
Responsive & Void repairs per property	4.2	4.3	3.7	3.4
P1 & P2 as a % of total repairs	50.5%	61.7%	63.8%	47.5%
% all responsive repairs completed on time	92.5%	87.3%	77.1%	96.3
P1 % emergency repairs completed on time	98.9%	94.6%	94.6%	96.7
P2 % urgent repairs completed on time	89.6%	78.9%	77.3%	94.6
Average end-to-end time for all reactive repairs (days)	12.6	12.25	19.78	8.2
Percentage of repairs completed 'Right First Time'	NA	78.5%	79.79	88.8
Appointments kept as a percentage of appointments made	97.13	77%	61%	96.8
Appointments made as a percentage of repair orders (exc gas & voids)	100%	NA	100%	94.1
Percentage of dwellings with a valid gas safety certificate	99.2%	99.89%	100%	99.8%
Percentage of homes that fail to meet the Decent Homes Standard	0.0%	0%	0%	0.2%
*Average energy efficiency rating of dwellings (based on RD SAP 9.83)	68.3	69.2	69.2	68.90%
Tenancy Management				
ASB cases reported	85	82	72	143
Percentage ASB cases successfully resolved	72%	91%	99%	88%
% Diversity Information: Age	99.88%	100%	100%	100%
% Diversity Information: Gender	100%	100%	100%	98%
% Diversity Information: Ethnicity	94.70%	95%	82%	75%
% Diversity Information: Disability	44.59%	100%	100%	75%
% Diversity Information: Sexuality	41.70%	56%	52%	55%
% Diversity Information: Religion or belief	43.05%	57%	53%	55%
Percentage of Stage 1 complaints upheld	25%	22%	40%	NA

HOUSING MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT APPENDIX A

Performance Indicator	Actual 08/09	Actual 12/13	Target (Median)	
Satisfaction				
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the landlord's services overall	87%	88%	83%	
Percentage of tenants satisfied with repairs and maintenance	88%	87%	79%	
Percentage of tenants satisfied that their views are taken into account	76%	78%	64%	
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the quality of the home	NA	90	N/A	
Percentage of residents satisfied with the neighbourhood as a place to live	81%	84%	82%	
Percentage of tenants satisfied that their rent provides value for money	N/A	90%	N/A	
Percentage of tenants satisfied that their service charges provide value for money	N/A	81%	N/A	
Value for Money -Direct Costs per property	Actual 2010/11	Actual 2011/12	Actual 2012/13	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%	5.9%	8%
Ave. working days lost / sickness absence	22.3	14.0	18.9	10.5

Housing Property	Normal 11/12	Dispersed 11/12	Normal 11/12	Dispersed 11/12
Houses	1290	0	1284	0
Flats	1258	11	1256	10
Bungalows	157	0	157	0
Total Dwellings	2705	11	2697	10
Community Centres			5	
Leaseholds	202		204	
Garages	484		486	
Shops	20		20	

Sold Properties	Stock 11/12	Sold 11/12	Stock 12/13	Sold 12/13
Houses	148,500	3	252,750	6
Flats	27,000	1	42,160	2
Land	2,312	1	0	0
Total Sales	177,812	4	294,910	8

Homelessness	Actual 2010/11	Actual 2011/12	Actual 2012/13
Homeless ave. days in temporary dispersed accommodation	46	59	57
Homeless ave. days in temporary B&B accommodation	31	20	27
Homeless Total Cases Closed	616	752	903
Homeless Advice	216	339	408
Homeless Prevention	174	114	170
Homeless Applications	226	185	147
Homeless Successful Preventions	146	85	148
Eligible Homeless (Owed a full duty)	27	29	30

Housing Register	Actual 2010/11	Actual 2011/12	Actual 12/13
Applicants on housing register	1700		
Active Direct Applicants			1471
Active Transfer Applicants			346
Cumbria Choice Register		1745	1817

APPENDIX B

PLANNED INVESTMENTS 2012-13: YEAR END EXPENDITURE

SCHEME	CONTRACTOR OR SUPPLIER	AVAILABLE BUDGET	NO OF PROPERTIES	EXPENDITURE TO DATE	START DATE	ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE	CONTRACTOR	COMMENTS	Leasholders affected?
RE-ROOFING WORKS (GRIFFIN)	DLP Roofing	£300,000	183	£ -	Apr-12	Dec-13	DLP SERVICES	COMMENCED WORKS APRIL 2013	Yes
BALCONY REPAIRS	CUMBRIA ROOFING	£29,879	52	£ -	May-13	Oct-13	CUMBRIA ROOFING	WORK COMMENCING MAY 2013	Yes
FENCING WORKS (HINDPOOL)	AB Mitchell Ltd	£57,779	69	£ 17,000	4.2.2012	30.4.13	A B Mitchell	95% COMPLETE	Yes
REWIRES	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	£254,000	120	£ 233,733	1.4.2012	31.3.13	K WILSON	100 COMPLETE	No
BATHROOMS	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	£300,000	200	£ 248,663	1.4.2012	25.3.13	AB MITCHELL	100 COMPLETE	No
KITCHENS	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	£800,000	300	£ 771,076	1.4.2012	25.3.14	AB MITCHELL	100 COMPLETE	No
HEATING	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	£575,000	200	£ 633,850	1.4.2012	15.3.13	AB MITCHELL INTEGRAL	100 COMPLETE	No
RE-POINTING	CUMBRIA ROOFING	£150,000	66	£ 156,052	1.4.2012	1.7.2013	CUMBRIA ROOFING	80% COMPLETE	Yes
PAINTING	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	£200,000	500	£ 173,320	1.4.2012	15.1.13	GH JONES	100 COMPLETE	Yes

HOUSING MAINTENANCE COMMITMENTS 2012-13: YEAR END EXPENDITURE

	Funding Available 2011-12	EXPENDITURE TO DATE	Weekly Available	Gross Comm. as a % funds available
Tenant Demand Repairs	£ 500,326	£ 205,926	£ 9,622	41%
Preliminary Cost	£ 399,674	£ 264,000	£ 7,686	66%
Voids	£ 200,000	£ 158,831	£ 3,846	79%
Gas Servicing	£ 280,000	£ 134,531	£ 5,385	48%
Decoration Vouchers	£ 35,000	£ 22,105	£ 673	63%
Disrepair Claims	£ 25,000	£ 1,656	£ 481	7%
Environmental Impmts	£ 25,000	£ 20,550	£ 481	82%
Disabled Adaptations	£ 300,000	£ 147,142	£ 5,769	49%
Electrical Testing	£ 75,000	£ 50,471	£ 1,442	67%
Door Entry Maintenance	£ 20,000	£ 21,144	£ 385	106%
Total	£1,935,000.00	£1,026,356.00	£35,769.23	

HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM	(D) Agenda Item 6
Date of Meeting: 29th August, 2013	
Reporting Officer: Colin Garnett, Housing Manager	
<p>Title: Sense of Place</p> <p>Summary and Conclusion:</p> <p>The purpose of this report is to consider and agree support of potential schemes to bid for funding through Cumbria Housing Partners “Sense of Place” fund.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <p>Members are requested to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Support applications from Four Groves and Griffin Community Centre. 2) Agree in principle to support the North Walney scheme when alternative funding is available to contribute towards the actual cost of the scheme and subject to the Council’s Housing Service being able to demonstrate joint funding. 	

Report

The purpose of this Report is to consider and agree support of potential schemes to bid for funding through Cumbria Housing Partners Sense of Place Fund (SofP).

The SofP fund is managed by Cumbria Housing Partners (CHP). Resources for the fund accrue from a small percentage of a landlord’s fees for operating through the Cumbria Housing Partner arrangement.

The money that has now accrued and applicable to this area is in the region of c£39K. The fund increases by in the region of £15/20K per year.

As you are aware, the Fund contributed to the refurbishment of the old Library building on Ormsgill which is now run successfully by a voluntary committee providing activities for young people.

All applications for SofP are considered on their individual merits by the Board of CHP. A key consideration is that any proposal has the potential to deliver a positive contribution to their locality and creates a “legacy” for the area.

There are a number of other criteria to be demonstrated but include in summary, the project must be in a neighbourhood where landlord investment is already taking place, should be initiated by the community, should have a significant construction element and be able to demonstrate match funding.

Following discussion with a number of community groups I am aware of a number of potential schemes being developed where it may be appropriate to support a bid for SofP funding.

Details of the schemes are as follows;

- **Four Groves Community Association**

The Association is based in offices and community rooms at Suffolk Street. The premises are owned and leased from the adjoining shop keeper. Through their centre they offer a range of activities for the local community.

The Association is currently considering taking over the adjoining shop and operating it as a “community shop”. It will be staffed by volunteers and will sell food produced on the Four Groves' community allotments, clothing and small furniture.

The aim is to provide funding to support the Association and its operations and provide the opportunity for skills training within the shop.

At present the Association has approximately eighteen months remaining on their lease of the premises they currently occupy, but the landlord has agreed to extend the existing lease for a further ten years should the shop project be successful.

The Association has made application to the Scott Trust and have been successful in securing £15K of funding.

The potential bid to SofP would be up to the value of £15K.

- **Griffin Community Centre**

The Centre is owned by the Council but all activities are managed by a voluntary committee. For some time the Committee has been concerned about the running costs of the centre. Whilst the central heating has been checked and serviced it is old and not as efficient as more modern systems. In addition, any consideration of upgrading heating should be considered alongside improving the energy efficiency of the centre generally.

The Committee have started to raise funds to contribute towards the upgrade of the heating system. In discussion with Cumbria Housing Partners it may be appropriate to consider assisting the Management Committee to make a bid to the SofP fund to contribute to the necessary heating and energy efficiency works and to ensure the viability of the centre to continue to operate.

The potential bid to SofP would be to the value of £25K.

- **North Walney Residents' Association**

The Association is developing a proposal for a Children's Activity Park to be located next to the skate park on Mill Lane/West Shore Park.

Estimates have been obtained for the scheme which would be to the value of approximately £60K. The development of such a scheme in that particular location would reflect the Council's Strategy for Playgrounds and it may be appropriate for it to be maintained by the Council in the longer term.

At the present time the Association is considering their options in terms of other funding opportunities to contribute to the cost of the actual scheme and any potential funding that may be available from the SofP fund.

Without the availability of any alternative funding, to progress at the present time would require SofP to fund the full cost of the scheme of in the region of £60K.

In summary, I would suggest all three possible schemes have merit and would, should they satisfy all the criteria required, provide a legacy that would be a valued resource to their communities.

The Four Groves project has already received financial support and appears to meet the criteria required to be a successful application.

The Griffin Community Centre scheme is in its infancy and discussions are arranged with SofP to discuss how this can be progressed to the point of being a successful application.

The North Walney scheme is also in its infancy. The total value of the scheme would represent a number of years' contributions to SofP by the Council in terms of landlord's contribution to the SofP fund. Whilst the Association intend to pursue further the options for funding to contribute towards the scheme, further work is required on the potential funding.

In considering the above proposals, I would suggest it is appropriate for the Council to endeavour to support schemes across the Borough as far as is practical. To agree to support a scheme that would take up a number of years' contributions would deter the opportunity to do so and I would suggest although each scheme should be considered on its own merits, for future guidance, I would suggest schemes should only be supported where funding of SofP represents approximately one year of landlord's contribution.

With regards the above three schemes, I would therefore suggest the Council supports an application by the Four Groves and Griffin Community Centre to be progressed as soon as practical, and agree to support in principle the North Walney scheme once alternative funding schemes can be identified to contribute towards or provide match funding, to the value of half the currently estimated cost.

(i) Legal Implications

The recommendation has no legal implications.

(ii) Risk Assessment

The recommendation has no significant implications.

(iii) Financial Implications

Each landlord pays fees as part of the cost of delivering Investment Works through Cumbria Housing Partners. A small percentage supports regeneration initiatives including the Sense of Place Fund. At present the level of monies accrued in the SofP attributable to the Council as a landlord is £39K. On annual basis the level of monies accrued by the Council is in the region of £15/20K depending on the level of Investment.

A successful SofP application would require the landlord to be able to demonstrate 'joint funding'. This could be an improvement programme in the area.

(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: 29th August, 2013	
Reporting Officer: Colin Garnett, Housing Manager	
<p>Title: Accommodation for 16/17 year old applicants</p> <p>Summary and Conclusion:</p> <p>The purpose of this Report is to consider and seek approval to make a two bedroom property available for the purpose of providing interim accommodation for 16/17 year olds. The purpose would be to assist in the development of services for this age group in conjunction with ongoing work involving a number of agencies to improve the housing options for this age group.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <p>Members are requested to agree the Housing Manager seek to identify a suitable two bedroom property in the Council's Housing Stock for the purpose of providing interim accommodation for 16/17 year olds subject to appropriate financial, management and support services being put in place.</p>	

Report

The purpose of this Report is to consider and seek approval to make a two bedroom property available for the purpose of providing interim accommodation for 16/17 year olds. The purpose would be to assist in the development of services for this age group in conjunction with ongoing work involving a number of agencies to improve the housing options for this age group.

Under the Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) Order 2002, this Council may have responsibility for homeless 16/17 year olds. It is also the case that some young people may be the responsibility of Children's Services. It is acknowledged that a homeless 16/17 year old is likely to have multiple issues that need consideration and each young person needs to be assessed accordingly.

Over the last twelve months there has been an ongoing dialogue between various agencies, including Children's Services, Inspira, other district councils, etc. regarding accommodation for 16/17 year old people.

The work has been progressed at two levels, at County level, with the objective of agreeing a Young Persons' Protocol for the County, to include the principles of how various agencies will work together, and to include an action plan for each local council area to reflect resources and facilities available in their area.

On a second level, a working group in Barrow has been considering a process for agencies to work together for the benefit of the young people having regard to the accommodation resources available in the Borough.

At both County and local level, the work focuses on working towards a “pathways model” to ensure the response to young people is consistent and each agency understands their respective roles.

In Barrow the group have recognised the need for a wider range of housing options to respond appropriately to young people. Impact Housing association have secured funding to progress the opportunities for developing a Foyer in Barrow and have established a working group specifically for this purpose.

However, there is no one solution to the problem of ensuring the appropriate housing offer for all young people. A Protocol based on a pathways model will provide a framework to assist in the process but a range of housing solutions will be required to reflect the range of requirements of young people. The County’s Children’s Services are leading on a range of possible solutions to this.

At the present time many young people are accommodated by agencies such as Project John and at Silverdale Street. Both agencies provide additional support and training opportunities and when they assess the individual as having the skills to maintain a tenancy of their own, assist them to find suitable accommodation, that can quite often be a Council tenancy.

One of the options being considered is to supplement the Silverdale Street facility by providing a “shared tenancy” for residents to move on into where it was assessed as being a suitable option for the young person. It is envisaged the young person would at the appropriate time move on to their own permanent tenancy.

There are various models previously used by social landlords to facilitate shared tenancies.

At the present time an operational plan is under consideration as to how such a scheme could be operated that would ensure suitable support, supervision, management and financial arrangements could be established to operate a property on this basis.

In order to progress the matter further I would ask members to support this proposal and for a property to be made available for this purpose subject to the Housing Manager being satisfied the necessary arrangements are in place.

(i) Legal Implications

Consideration will be given to the most appropriate arrangement for the use of the property, which could be either rent the property to a third party or offer a ‘joint tenancy’ to occupiers.

(ii) Risk Assessment

A risk assessment will be completed on any potential property to ensure it is appropriate for the purpose and the necessary support, supervision and management arrangements are in place.

(iii) Financial Implications

The model adopted will ensure the Housing Service maintains the appropriate rental income for the property.

(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: 29th August, 2013	
Reporting Officer: Colin Garnett, Housing Manager	
<p>Title: Adelphi Court Flats</p> <p>Summary and Conclusion:</p> <p>The purpose of this Report is to consider suspending the letting of vacant flats at Adelphi Court in order to consider and Report further on the future use of the e properties.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <p>Members are requested to agree:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Suspension of lettings of the vacant flats at Adelphi Court. 2. The Housing Manager to consider options for the future use of the properties and report back to the Housing Management Forum as soon as practical to ensure a longer term decision is reached before the end of the financial year. 	

Report

Adelphi Court is a three-storey block of deck access flats with a communal entrance. All flats have one bedroom.

The property is situated on Storey Square and is a single building situated within an area of predominantly private accommodation.

For some time the flats have been the focus of anti-social behaviour and have posed significant management issues. More recently a number of occupiers have vacated the property and seven of the 12 flats are now vacant. A further flat will become vacant in the next few weeks.

Over the last few years the turnover of flats has been high with the length of tenancies being relatively short. For example, excluding one tenancy of seven years, the average length of tenancy was seven months. Seven vacancies represents a turnover of 65% against a norm of 10% in all stock.

Identifying potential new tenants for the flats which are available has been progressed through the Choice Based Lettings process but it has been the case no bids have been received.

Officers could consider making offers to applicants by using the option of “direct lets” and approach applicants on the waiting list without the normal advertising process. It is clear, however, these flats are not popular and to make direct lets may result in them not being an applicant’s preferred choice and perhaps add to the problems that have developed in this particular block.

As you will be aware the Housing Service’s agreed vision is “to provide well maintained homes and estates where people choose to live”. Whilst Adelphi Court has received various upgrading over the recent past unfortunately the popularity of the flats in their current format has declined.

I would, therefore, suggest in view of the number of vacancies it would be appropriate to consider the future use of these properties and not to take further action to let the vacancies until the Council has had the opportunity to consider the matter further.

(i) Legal Implications

The recommendation has no legal implications.

(ii) Risk Assessment

Action will be taken to secure all vacant flats until a decision is made on their future.

(iii) Financial Implications

Rent loss is being incurred for the flats already vacant. The rent loss on the seven flats already vacant for the remainder of the year will be approximately £12.5K.

(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 9
Date of Meeting: 29th August, 2013	
Reporting Officer: Colin Garnett, Housing Manager	
<p>Title: Void Properties</p> <p>Summary and Conclusion:</p> <p>The purpose of this Report is to bring to your attention the level of voids that have arisen since the start of this financial year and to propose additional action to manage them to ensure they are available for letting as soon as it is practical to do so.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <p>Members are requested to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the information contained within the Report. 2. Agree the Housing Manager continue to deliver void repairs through our primary Contractor, but progress the appointment of a secondary contractor to complete void repairs should and when the need arises. 	

Report

The purpose of this Report is to bring to your attention the level of voids that have arisen since the start of this financial year and to propose additional action to manage them to ensure they are available for letting as soon as it is practical to do so.

Since April we have seen an increase in the number of vacant properties arising.

As you will see from the Performance report, the number of voids during April and June this year was 94, compared with the same period last year of 76. The rate of voids on a weekly basis can fluctuate throughout the financial year.

However since June, the experience for July and August has been similar with a higher than normal level of properties becoming vacant. Based on the first three months of the financial year, should the trend continue at the same rate this could result in a total void figure of 376, against a total of 277 in 2012/13.

Whilst this Report is about seeking agreement to ensure vacant properties are managed effectively, it is worth considering why the rate of vacancies has increased and whether it is a short term situation or may become the norm. For

your information, attached at **Appendix A** is a table providing details of why vacancies have arisen since the start of the year.

As you are aware, we have assisted a number of tenants to downsize within the housing stock to reflect the changes in Housing Benefit. This accounts for 9 of the properties becoming vacant. There are a significant number who have also moved to private rented and a number who have moved in with family. It may be the case a number of these could be as a result of the Housing Benefit changes.

At the present time, I would like to suggest the increase in the rate of vacancies may be in part be attributable to the Housing Benefit changes since April. The trend may be for a "short time" until tenants have relocated to smaller properties where it is possible to do so. Of course the properties they leave tend to be larger properties and potentially more expensive to repair. Officers will continue to monitor the trend.

On a practical level, however, the increased number of voids has an impact on resources, both financial and from a practical management approach for both the Housing Service and our principal contractor, Vinci.

Internally, over the last few months, Officers have reviewed and amended where necessary our void management in conjunction with our principal Contractor to ensure the process is appropriate and meets our purposes.

Whilst our conclusion is that the internal management arrangements are appropriate, this does deal with the matter of the increased number of voids.

At the present time, our principal Contractor is resorting to sub-contractors to deliver the void repairs required. It has been the case the Maintenance Team have also resorted to using a third party Contractor on an odd occasion over the last few months with particularly problematic void property. This can, in turn, be time consuming to appoint a Contractor on a job-by-job basis.

In view of the current situation, I would suggest it appropriate for a secondary Contractor to be appointed to complete voids on an "as and when necessary basis". Not to do so would continue to place greater than expected work levels on the principal contractor and our efforts to improve delivery of all repair services generally.

From a financial perspective, the greater the number of voids, and the longer they are vacant, will impact on the income of the Service. In the current HRA budget a figure of c£200K was agreed for such properties. Also an additional c£190K was made available to progress upgrading of properties were appropriate whilst a property was vacant.

Since April the committed expenditure is £78,204.22. It would appear the monies allocated will be appropriate to meet the likely cost of voids and, again, Officers will continue to closely monitor expenditure. It will be the case, however, proposals to upgrade property whilst vacant will have to be delayed until the longer term position becomes clear.

(i) Legal Implications

The recommendation has no legal implications.

(ii) Risk Assessment

The recommendation has no, minor or significant implications.

(iii) Financial Implications

At the present time it is expected with the additional resources made available this year the cost of void repairs can be met. Officers will, however, monitor the situation as the year progresses.

(iv) Health and Safety Implications

The recommendation has no 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	(R) Agenda Item 10
Date of Meeting: 29th August, 2013	
Reporting Officer: Colin Garnett, Housing Manager	
<p>Title: Furnished Tenancies</p> <p>Summary and Conclusion:</p> <p>The purpose of this Report is to consider making additional resources available from HRA reserves to increase the number of “furnished tenancies” available within the Housing Stock.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <p>Members are requested to agree a figure of £24K be made available from HRA reserves to increase the number of furnished tenancies available by 12.</p>	

Report

The purpose of this Report is to consider making additional resources available from HRA reserves to increase the number of “furnished tenancies” available within the Housing Stock.

The Housing Service offers potential tenants property on the basis they are unfurnished. However, for some years we have also provided a small number of furnished tenancies. They are typically one or two bedroomed flats. At the present time there are 24 such properties.

The process of offering a potential tenant a furnished tenancy is made on a case by case basis. The option is often most appropriate when the applicant is being rehoused from interim accommodation or has particular additional support needs and the provision of a “basic” furniture pack helps ensure the tenancy is set up appropriately. The pack includes floor coverings.

An additional charge of £21.70 per week (average – slightly different rates between one and two bedroomed property) is collected in the rent towards the cost of the furniture pack and is eligible charge for Housing Benefit purposes. On this basis, the additional cost to the Housing Service is recovered in approximately two years.

In discussion with colleagues, the provision of furnished tenancies has been a positive option in considering what help we can offer new tenants and we have appropriate arrangements for managing such tenancies.

The majority of new tenants benefiting from the service are in receipt of benefits. As Welfare Reform is progressed and Housing Benefit arrangements will change and to operate this scheme may not be appropriate in the longer term.

However, on the basis that the Housing Service will normally recover the cost of the furniture provided within two years, I would suggest consideration be given to recommending a figure of £25K be made available from HRA reserves to establish up to 12 further furnished tenancies.

(i) Legal Implications

The tenancy agreement is varied in respect of the provision of furniture.

(ii) Risk Assessment

The recommendation has no significant implications.

(iii) Financial Implications

No budget is available to create additional furnished tenancies and therefore it is suggested £25K be made available from Reserves. Each property costs approximately £2K to set up and we look to recover costs over two years by including a service charge.

(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 11
Date of Meeting: 29th August, 2013	
Reporting Officer: Colin Garnett, Housing Manager	
<p>Title: Housing Maintenance Policy</p> <p>Summary and Conclusion:</p> <p>The Council has recently agreed additional resources be made available for Garages, Fencing and public realm improvements. The purpose of this report is to agree the Council's Policy in these areas of investment to assist Officers target the resources appropriately and include proposals within your annual Investment Plan and agree a number of schemes to be progressed this year.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <p>Members are requested to agree:</p> <p>Garages: work be completed on Griffin and Lord Street, Dalton and the principle of works in the future should be based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work to be progressed on a block-by-block basis. • Priority should be afforded to blocks based on a combination of their condition and where any improvements will have the greatest impact on the 'visual' appearance of surrounding area. • Work at each area will be based on 'what is required' rather than a pre-determined work plan. For example, doors will only be replaced 'if required' not as a matter of course. • No progress will be made on any blocks where their future 'lettability' is in doubt. <p>Fencing: Work be completed on the rear of Vulcan Road and commence on the Roosegate estate and the principle of works in the future should be based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain fencing in areas subject to previous environmental scheme. • Maintain boundary fences with public spaces, in particular along footpaths and flats with communal areas. <p>Public Realm: Work to be completed to reinstate drying areas on Ormsgill to help resolve problem with bin stores and works in the future should be based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flats with communal entrances and shared areas. • Work to focus on security and appearance of communal areas on a property-by-property basis. 	

Report

The Council has recently agreed additional resources be made available for Garages, Fencing and public realm improvements. The purpose of this report is to agree the Council's Policy in these areas of investment to assist Officers target the resources appropriately and include proposals within your annual Investment Plan and agree a number of schemes to be progressed this year.

The Housing Service has a previously agreed policy and practice to direct Investment in the housing stock based on a number of principles, for example worst first in terms of component replacement.

It would be appropriate to agree a Policy for these areas of work to enable Officers to identify future investment proposals for agreement in your annual Investment Plan.

The matter was discussed and considered at a recent Tenants' Forum meeting. The outcome of the discussion was as follows:

Garages (£75k available this year)

The Housing Service manages 486 garages throughout the Borough.

It is many years since any form of planned investment has been carried out. It is our practice to respond to requests for repairs as they arise from residents.

Generally, demand for garages remains buoyant with few vacancies. They represent an important income stream to the HRA.

The construction of garages throughout the Borough is generally uniform with some variation of roof and door types.

Common problems with garages include:

- Leaking roofs and damaged rainwater.
- Water ingress because of land 'banked' up against walls (often this is where the garage backs on to land in private ownership and the most practical solution is to 'tank' the garage.
- 'Old doors' that are reaching the end of their practical life.
- Deteriorating state of hard-standing in garage forecourts.
- Poor appearance of garage areas.

I would suggest essential repairs and upgrading required will vary from block to block and, in some cases, garages to garages because of the nature of the issue and the manner in which repairs have been completed over an extended period.

Whilst a basic principle of any maintenance programme is to protect the fabric of a building, the 'appearance' and 'visual' impact should also be considered in any planning process. This was highlighted in the STAR Survey.

In considering how resources should be targeted I would propose we target two particular areas;

1. Griffin estate

There are 51 garages on Griffin. There are no vacancies and demand is buoyant for the garages.

A feature of the estate is that the garages are very 'visible' and their condition can impact on the overall appearance of the estate.

As you are aware, we are in the process of replacing roof coverings on the estate which will have a significant impact. A number of garages suffer with water ingress due to the land banking, but the adjoining land is in the Council's ownership.

I would suggest the completion of essential repairs will help complement the roof replacement in terms of improving the appearance of the estate.

2. Dalton: Lord Street Area

There are 21 garages in the area and none are vacant.

Appearance and general condition of these garages is poor and requires attention.

It would be incorrect for me to say these are the garages in most poor condition throughout the Borough, but in terms of commencing a programme which will be ongoing, they are particularly poor compared to many.

With regard to developing an ongoing plan for garages, I would propose the following principles be agreed:

- Work to be progressed on a block-by-block basis.
- Priority should be afforded to blocks based on a combination of their condition and where any improvements will have the greatest impact on the 'visual' appearance of surrounding area.
- Work at each area will be based on 'what is required' rather than a pre-determined work plan. For example, doors will only be replaced 'if required' not as a matter of course.
- No progress will be made on any blocks where their future 'lettability' is in doubt.

Fencing : £60K

We do not currently have a planned replacement programme for fencing. Such work is generally carried out as follows:

- Through a Community Payback arrangement with Cumbria Probation.
- Through the Environmental Enhancement Budget managed by the Tenants' Forum.
- Ad hoc repairs deemed to be a Health and Safety risk.

Fencing is a topic raised on a regular basis at various forums and by tenants individually and I would suggest there could be many calls on this funding throughout the Borough.

In order to start an ongoing programme, I would suggest we adopt the following principle:

1. Maintain and replace fencing in areas subject to previous environmental schemes. e.g. Many years ago the Council received area based grant to carry out environmental enhancements at Roosegate, Vulcan, Ormsgill and part of North Walney.

This work included providing brick walls, fencing and off-street car parking facilities. With the passage of time the timber fencing has in some cases reached the end of its life and needs replacing.

2. Maintain boundary fences with public spaces, e.g.

Footpaths: I would suggest it is important to “ensure fencing on footpaths is secure and safe”. This has a particular impact on the appearance of estates.

‘Flats’: Many flats have communal areas and the condition of fencing can help residents feel more secure and improve appearance of the blocks.

3. Individual Gardens

Generally, the only work completed at present is through Community Payback. To commence an ongoing programme requires further consideration, as due to the mixed nature of our estates will require time-consuming consultation with owners. I would therefore suggest we leave this until 1. and 2. are established.

Based on the above principles, I would propose the following starting point.

1. Provide fencing to the rear of properties on Vulcan Road that back on to the cleared allotment site and future dock development.
2. Start a programme of upgrading fencing on Roosegate estate.

Public Realm (Communal Doors, Security, Access, Paths on Estates): £80K

You have already agreed resources to replace door entry systems at Raglan Court which is being progressed.

In considering use of these resources I would, as a one-off, focus on an ongoing issue on the Ormsgill estate.

Officers in the Housing Service and Streetcare Team spend a disproportionate amount of time dealing with and resolving problems of fly-tipping.

I would suggest in the first year of these resources, a proportion be used to try and stop these problems.

Following discussions with officers, I think this would go some way to do this by removing some of the bin stores by re-instating 'drying areas' closer to the flats they serve, providing individual bins and then removing the communal bin stores.

Discussion is ongoing with the relevant stakeholders but I would suggest this should be the 'first call' on this money this year.

Moving on, I suggested the term 'public realm' as it can be interpreted flexibly, but in essence is about improving the appearance and public spaces on estates, where the issue is the responsibility of the Housing Service. As you will be aware, the importance of this was highlighted in the STAR Survey.

In many areas of the Borough the mixed nature of the tenure makes environmental schemes problematic. To assist officers to develop further proposals, I would suggest the following principles be agreed:

1. To focus on flats and, in particular, those with communal entrances and shared areas.
2. Proposed work to be developed to protect the security and appearance of communal areas on a property-by-property basis.

(i) Legal Implications

The recommendation has no legal implications.

(ii) Risk Assessment

The recommendation has no significant implications.

(iii) Financial Implications

Resources have been made available previously as outlined in the Report.

(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 12
Date of Meeting: 29th August 2013	
Reporting Officer: Colin Garnett, Housing Manager	
<p>Title: Reconsideration of Request for Vehicle Crossing on Land in front of 6-24 Middleton Avenue</p> <p>Summary and Conclusion:</p> <p>This report is being presented to reconsider a request from a resident to create a vehicle crossing to allow parking of vehicles within the curtilage of his property.</p> <p>This matter was considered by HMF on 13th June, 2013 when the request was turned down. Through a local Elected Representative, the applicant has asked the matter be reconsidered.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <p>Members' instructions are requested.</p>	

Report

This report is being presented to reconsider a request from a resident to create a vehicle crossing to allow parking of vehicles within the curtilage of his property.

This matter was considered by HMF on 13th June, 2013 when the request was turned down. Through a local Elected Representative, the applicant has asked the matter be reconsidered.

Attached at **Appendix B** is a plan showing the layout of properties. As can be seen, between 6 -24 Middleton Avenue is a 'green area' between the frontage of the properties, the pavement and road. The green area is in the ownership of the Council.

I advised the resident I would not agree the request. I did so on the basis he made reference to parking commercial vehicles, loss of green area, it would change the street scene of the area and there are no existing crossings.

The resident did not accept my refusal and asked for it to be reconsidered. I advised him I would bring it to the attention of this Forum.

I would suggest it is understandable why the request has been made. Many Council estates were constructed at a time when vehicle ownership was not prevalent. The layout of estates and access roads has, over the years, become more congested.

It is not uncommon that residents apply for vehicle access to allow in-curtilage parking. In most instances, such accesses involve 'pavement' crossings and are dealt with by the Highways Authority, the County Council. Many properties in Middleton Avenue do have such crossings. There is no doubt this helps ease the congestion where it is possible. In view of the impact on the appearance of the area and loss of green area, I have written to residents who either face the green area or whose properties adjoin it to obtain their views – 19 in total.

The responses received were:

- 3 - In favour
- 6 - Against
- 2 - Did not agree one way or the other but one wanted various assurances before commenting, which I am unable to provide.
- 1 - Suggested alternative arrangements

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In considering the responses, a resident has raised the question of providing additional parking facilities for general use by residents. Whilst a reasonable suggestion, the problem of congestion is common throughout Council estates and it would make it impractical to respond in a way that would be replicated elsewhere.

In summary, whilst recognising the benefit of enabling off-street parking, in this instance the benefits would have to be considered alongside the loss of green area on the avenue.

Members' instructions are requested.

(i) Legal Implications

The recommendation has no legal implications.

(ii) Risk Assessment

The recommendation has no, minor or significant implications.

(iii) Financial Implications

The recommendation has no financial implications.

(iv) Health and Safety Implications

The recommendation has no, minor or 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

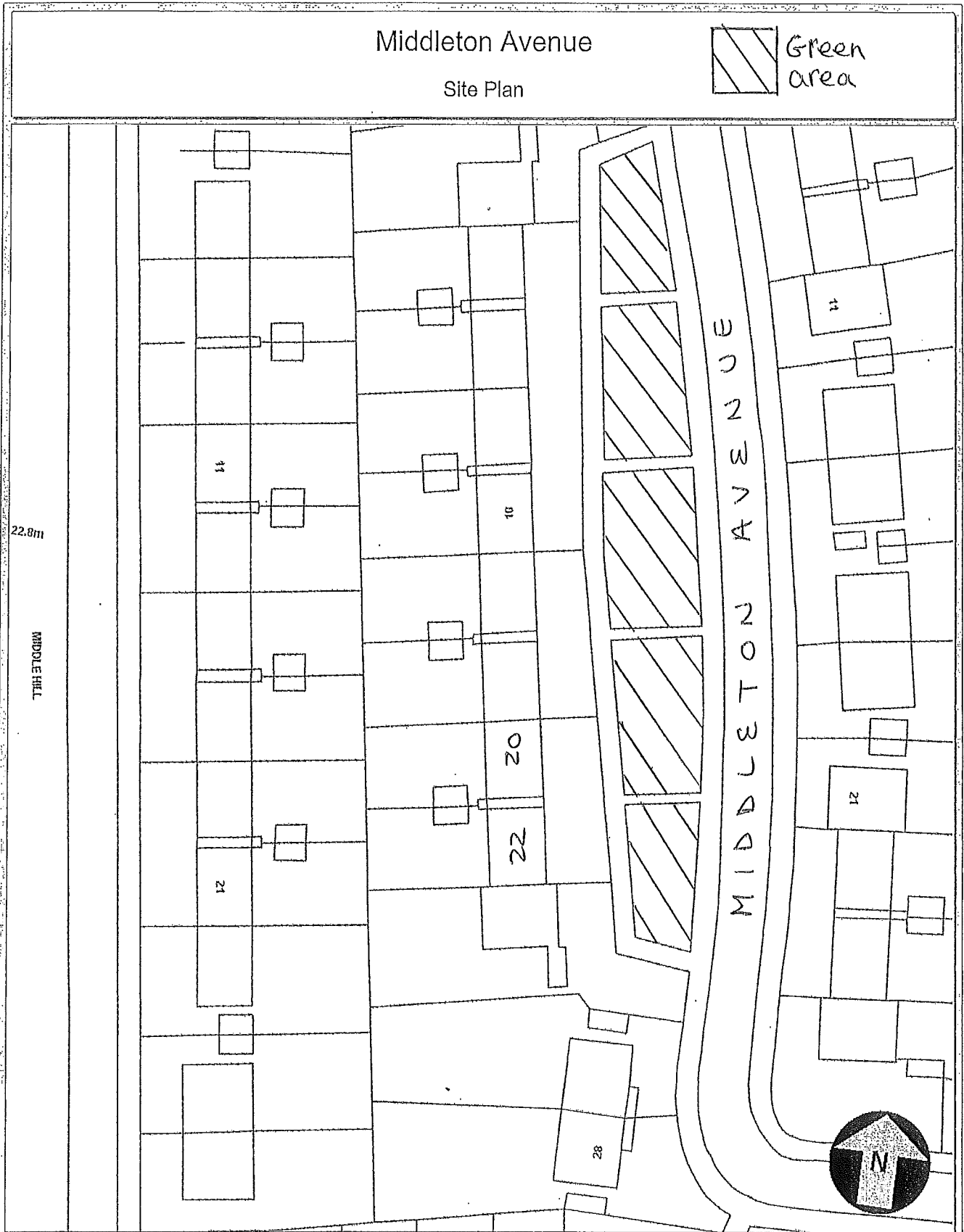
The recommendation has no adverse effect on the Health and Wellbeing of users of this service.

Background Papers

Correspondence held by the Housing Manager.

WEEKLY VOIDS: 7 April – 30 June 2013

VOID REASON	7 Apr	14 Apr	21 Apr	28 Apr	5 May	12 May	19 May	26 May	2 June	9 June	16 June	23 June	30 June	TOTAL
Abandoned property	0	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Court possession	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
Deceased	1	0	3	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	1	3	12
Emigrated	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Evicted	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3
Moved in with family	1	0	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	8
Moved to Private Rented	3	0	0	1	2	1	1	3	2	0	0	2	4	19
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Prison	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Purchased other	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Reason not declared (unknown)	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
Residential care	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	2	2	1	0	0	7
Return previous address	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3
Supported Housing Scheme	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Tenant moved out of LA	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	3
Transfer GEN Bands D, D+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
Transfer MED Bands C, A & B	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	7
Transfer MGT Band A	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	1	1	1	0	6
Transfer OCC Bands C & B	0	0	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	9
TOTAL	7	1	8	7	10	4	11	5	7	6	7	11	10	94



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Scale 1:500

Created 22.05.2013

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Performance Indicator	Actual 2011/12	Actual 2012/13	Apr - Jun 2013	Target (Median)
£ Rents Collection				
£ Rent & Service Charges due	£9,228,558	9,728,187	2,499,630	£0
£ Rent collected	£9,134,875	9,604,739	2,342,289	£ -
Rent collected as % of rent due (inc ft)	98.98%	98.73%	93.71%	97%
£ Current Arrears (dwellings)	£181,230	£203,623	£295,660	£175,679
£ Former Arrears (dwellings)	£92,499	£135,745	£153,108	£128,081
Write Offs (Gross)	£75,538	£38,573	£1,695	£50,000
Tenants evicted for rent arrears	6	5	3	10
Current tenants arrears % of rent owed	2.0%	2.1%	11.8%	5%
Former tenants arrears % of rent owed	1.0%	1.4%	6.5%	3%
£ Rent arrears Garages	£1,824	£1,452	£1,923	£ 3,750
£ Rent Arrears Shops	£16,602	£22,146	£19,609	£ 25,000
Void management				
Tenancy Turnover %	10.3%	10.4%	3.5%	8.05%
Total number of re-lets during the period benchmarked	278	245	101	217
No. of Voids	227	277	94	218
Ends due to Under Occupation			9	
Average relet time for dwellings (CORE)	37	32	30	28
£ rent loss through vacant dwellings	£ 100,227	£ 111,607	£ -	£ 109,685
£ rent loss due to vacant garages	£5,098	£2,290	£1,161	£ 4,500
£ rent loss due to vacant shops	£16,546	£5,000	£1,000	£ 4,000
% properties accepted on first offer	86.4%	78.4%	81.2%	70%
Loss per Void (Rents, Repairs, Arrears)	£ 2,846	£ 2,683.54	£ 1,774	£2,000
Maintenance				
No. Repair Orders issued (Tenant Demand)	11,587	10,109	2,846	9,197
Responsive & Void repairs per property	4.3	3.7	1.1	3.4
P1 & P2 as a % of total repairs	61.7%	63.8%	59.8%	47.5%
% all responsive repairs completed on time	87.3%	77.1%	69.8%	96.3
P1 % emergency repairs completed on time	94.6%	94.6%	77.0%	96.7
P2 % urgent repairs completed on time	78.9%	77.3%	71.0%	94.6
Average end-to-end time for all reactive repairs (days)	12.25	19.78	18.56	8.2
Percentage of repairs completed 'Right First Time'	78.5%	79.79	N/A	88.8
Appointments kept as a percentage of appointments made	77%	61%	N/A	96.8
Appointments made as a percentage of repair orders (exc gas & voids)	NA	100%	N/A	94.1
Percentage of dwellings with a valid gas safety certificate	99.89%	100%	100.0%	99.8%
Percentage of homes that fail to meet the Decent Homes	0%	0%	0%	0.2%
*Average energy efficiency rating of dwellings (based on RD SAP 9.83)	69.2	69.2	69.2	68.90%
Equality & Diversity				
ASB cases reported	82	72	26	143
Percentage of closed ASB cases that were successfully resolved	91%	99%	100%	88%
% Vulnerable people achieving independent living	100%	NA		77.2
% Diversity Information : Age	100%	100%	98%	100%
Gender	100%	100%	89%	98%
Ethnicity	95%	82%	87%	75%
Disability	100%	100%	89%	75%
Sexuality	56%	52%	45%	55%

Religion or belief	57%	53%	45%	55%
Percentage of Stage 1 complaints upheld	22%	40%		NA
Satisfaction	Actual	Actual		Target
	2011/12	2011/12		(Median)
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the landlord's services overall	88%	88%		83%
Percentage of tenants satisfied with repairs and maintenance	87%	87%		79%
Percentage of tenants satisfied that their views are taken into account	78%	78%		64%
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the quality of the home	90	90		N/A
Percentage of residents satisfied with the neighbourhood as a place to live	84%	84%		82%
Percentage of tenants satisfied that their rent provides value for money	90%	90%		N/A
Percentage of tenants satisfied that their service charges provide value for money	81%	81%		N/A
Value for Money -	Actual	Actual	Actual	
TL Cost per property inc overhead	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	
Overhead per property	£ 324	£ 274		
Major & Cyclical works	£ 1,256	£1,100		£1,241
Responsive Repairs	£ 480	£391		£424
Void Repairs	£ 167	£166		£176
Rent Arrears & Collection	£ 54	£59		£71
Community Involvement	£ 38	£36		£46
Anti Social Behaviour	£ 41	£41		£38
Neighbourhood Mgt (Estates/Tenancy mgt.)	£ 102	£105		£66
Housing Options	£ 36	£36		£37
Leasehold	£ 70	£134		£136
Total staff turnover	7.0%	5.9%	3.8%	8%
Ave. working days lost / sickness absence	14.0	18.9	2.1	10.5
Housing Property	2013-14			
HSE	1282			
FLATS	1248			
BUNGALOWS	157			
TL DWELLINGS	2687			
TL DISPERSED (FLATS)	7			
COMMUNITY CENTRES	5			
LEASEHOLDS	205			
GARAGES	486			
SHOPS	20			
TOTAL PROPERTIES	3410			
SOLD PROPERTIES	2012-13	SOLD	Apr-June	SOLD
HSE	252,750	6	84,600	2
FLAT	42,160	2	19,320	1
LAND	0	0	0	0
TL	294,910	8	103,920	3
HOMELESSNESS	Actual	Actual	Apr-June	
Homeless ave. days in temporary dispersed accommodation	56	57	18	
Homeless ave. days in temporary B&B accommodation	27	27	35	
Homeless Total Cases Closed	641	903	112	

Homeless Advice	339	408	63	
Homeless Prevention	87	170	57	
Homeless Applications	120	147	14	
Homeless Successful Preventions	71	148	32	
Eligible Homeless (Owed a full duty)	24	30	3	
HOUSING REGISTER	Actual	Apr-Dec	Apr-Mar	Jun-13
Applicants on housing register	1700			
Active Direct Applicants		1601	1471	1189
Active Transfer Applicants		358	346	297
Cumbria Choice Register		1959	1817	1486

PLANNED INVESTMENTS 2013-14

SCHEME	CONTRACTOR OR SUPPLIER	AVAILABLE BUDGET	NO OF PROPERTIES	EXPENDITURE TO DATE	START DATE	ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE	CONTRACTOR	COMMENTS	Leasholders affected?
RE-ROOFING WORKS (GRIFFIN)	DLP Roofing	£300,000	183	£ -	Apr-12	Dec-13	DLP SERVICES	COMMENCED WORKS APRIL 2013	Yes
REWIRES	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	£227,120	120	£ 90,483	1.4.2013	31.3.14	K WILSON	20% COMPLETE	No
BATHROOMS	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	£300,000	200	£ 27,185	1.4.2013	31.3.14	AB MITCHELL	10% COMPLETE	No
KITCHENS	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	£500,000	300	£ 93,027	1.4.2013	31.3.14	AB MITCHELL	10% COMPLETE	No
HEATING	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	£500,000	200	£ 116,133	1.4.2013	31.3.14	AB MITCHELL INTEGRAL	20% COMPLETE	No
PAINTING	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	£200,000	500	£ -	1.4.2017	31.3.14	GH JONES	15% COMPLETE	Yes

HOUSING MAINTENANCE COMMITMENTS 2013-14

	Funding Available 2011-12	EXPENDITURE TO DATE	Weekly Available	Gross Comm. as a % funds available
Tenant Demand Repairs	£ 750,000	£ 45,448	£ 14,423	6%
Preliminary Cost	£ 265,096	£ 71,168	£ 5,098	27%
Voids	£ 200,000	£ 38,955	£ 3,846	19%
Gas Servicing	£ 280,000	£ 18,667	£ 5,385	7%
Decoration Vouchers	£ 75,000	£ 7,676	£ 1,442	10%
Disrepair Claims	£ 15,000	£ -	£ 288	0%
Environmental Impmts	£ 25,000	£ 5,605	£ 481	22%
Disabled Adaptations	£ 300,000	£ 36,301	£ 5,769	12%
Electrical Testing	£ 75,000	£ 22,344	£ 1,442	30%
Door Entry Maintenance	£ 20,000	£ 9,912	£ 385	50%
Total	£2,080,096.00	£256,076.00	£38,559.54	