

**Committee:** HEALTH AND HOUSING  
**Date:** 5 June 2003  
**Agenda Item No:** 4  
**Title:** Government consultation on reforming home buying and selling  
**Author:** Michael Perry (01799) 510416

### **Summary**

- 1 The Government is committed to reforming the way home sales and purchases are carried out with a view to speeding up the process and reducing the number of abortive sales. One initiative is the proposed introduction of a compulsory Home Information Pack ("the Pack") which sellers or their agents will have to supply to potential buyers on request. The Government is consulting on what information should be contained in the Pack.
- 2 The Pack will have little impact upon Local Authorities as it will only be required where a home is being marketed for sale to the public. Right to buy transactions and housing stock transfers will not be affected. However there will be some cases where the Council will dispose of individual homes on the open market where the Council will be obliged to provide a Pack and there may be some impact on local land charge searches.
- 3 This report is to inform members of the content of the consultation document and to recommend a response to the Government. As this report also has resources implications it will also be presented to the Resources Committee.

### **Background**

- 4 It is proposed that the Pack should contain a summary of the terms upon which a property is being marketed for sale. Views are sought as to whether such a summary should be included. If so should it be limited to the basic details of the transaction (identity of the seller; the property being sold; whether the title is freehold/leasehold/commonhold; title number (if registered); encumbrances affecting the property; the Title Guarantee being offered; details of fixtures and fittings included in the sale and confirmation that the sale is with vacant possession) or should a full draft contract be supplied?

In practice most conveyancers use standard form conditions of sale which are generally acceptable. It would not seem unreasonable to require the seller to state in the summary which conditions of sale will be used for the transaction, what amendments (if any) he will require to those conditions and what special conditions (if any) will be imposed. If a full draft contract were supplied there is

a risk that a buyer may sign the same without taking legal advice and unwittingly enter into a contract. It is therefore **recommended** that the Council's response should support a summary of the terms to include a statement as to what standard and special conditions will also be applied.

- 5 There is a proposal that the Pack should include a schedule of fixtures and fittings which are included or excluded from the sale. Completion of the form would not be obligatory giving the parties the opportunity to negotiate over fixtures and fittings. Fixtures and fittings are not generally relevant issues to the sale of a council house on the open market. It is **recommended** that the Council's response on this issue should be limited to supporting the proposal that completion of a schedule of fixtures and fittings should not be obligatory.
- 6 It is suggested that the Pack should contain evidence of title to the property. In the case of registered land this should be by way of office copies of entries on the register not more than 3 months old at the date marketing commences together with copies of documents and plans referred to in the registers. If the title is unregistered the evidence should be by way of an index map search result not more than 3 months old at the date marketing commences and copies of deeds evidencing title. Title to the land will need to be established at some stage of the transaction and there is no reason why this should not be done early on, particularly in the case of registered land where the register is in any event open to public inspection. However it would seem unnecessary to provide copies of documents which are referred to in the registers if there provisions are summarised. It is **recommended** that the Council's response should agree with the proposal with the exception of supplying copy documents which are summarised in the registers.
- 7 It is intended that the Pack would contain standard searches (local land charges, drainage, Environment Agency etc). One difficulty is that searches only have a limited "shelf life". Standard searches speak for the day on which they are issued. Consequently the older the search the more likely it is that it will be inaccurate. The consultation document suggests that the standard searches contained in the Pack should be no more than 3 months old at the date marketing commences. This is based on the premise that most conveyancers will rely upon a search up to 6 months old. It is the experience of officers that in practice conveyancers do not rely upon searches that are more than 3 months old and that the requirement for a search which could be that old at the date marketing commences would not assist in reducing delays as the buyer would need to carry out a fresh search. (There is no suggested requirement that the seller should be responsible for ensuring a current search is always available). It is **recommended** that the Council's response should be that the standard searches should be as up to date as possible and in any event no more than 14 days old when marketing of the property commences.
- 8 With regard to local land charge searches these come in three parts. There is the search itself, additional enquiries in form CON 29 Part 1 (which virtually all conveyancers will require to be answered) and optional additional enquiries in form CON 29 Part II which may or may not be relevant to a particular

transaction. There is a fixed fee for all of the Part 1 enquiries. There is a separate fee for each additional Part II enquiry which is raised. The consultation document seeks views as to which of these documents should form part of the Pack. It suggests that if Part II replies are not supplied as a matter of course, in the interests of speeding up transactions sellers should seek replies to those Part II enquiries which it appears may be relevant to the transaction. The cost of providing replies to all Part II enquiries (most if not all of which would be irrelevant) would be significantly higher than merely supplying the search together with CON 29 Part 1, in this authority more than trebling the cost of the search. It is therefore **recommended** that the Council's response should be that the Pack should contain the search and CON 29 Part I replies only.

- 9 A further issue arises as to who should be able to provide the information contained in standard searches. There are 3 options. Firstly, the information could be supplied by anyone. Secondly it could be limited to local authority and other source providers, their agents (e.g. NLIS) and anyone with sufficient insurance to protect the buyer in the event of inaccurate replies. Finally it could be limited to local authority and other source providers and their agents only. The consultation document suggests that the first option would not provide buyers and lenders with adequate safeguards. The third option would create effectively a monopoly situation although it offers the most scope for accuracy and reliability. The second option provides some protection and also encourages competition. However there is a problem that search companies may not have a long trading life. Errors in standard search replies may not come to light for many years. If at that stage the search company has ceased trading the buyer would have no recourse unless the company had in place adequate slip-off cover. The consultation document suggests that the cost of such cover may prove prohibitive. However given the risks officers feel it is essential that buyers do have adequate protection which would continue after a company ceases trading. It is **recommended** that the Council should respond by supporting the second option providing that the insurance cover is adequate, that slip-off cover is supplied and that buyers are provided with evidence of the availability of insurance with the search replies.
- 10 The consultation document seeks views on whether the Pack should include copy planning/listed building consents, planning agreements, Article 4 Directions and certificates under the Building Acts. For planning permissions and similar consents the consultation document asks whether all of these should be supplied or only those aged 10 years or less at the date marketing the property commences and whether approved plans and drawings should be included. The ten year figure has presumably been chosen as beyond that date breaches of planning conditions are no longer susceptible to enforcement. However the ten year period commences from the date of breach of the condition, not the grant of the planning permission. Conversely, there will be some planning consents which have been granted but have expired without being implemented and which are therefore unlikely to be of interest to a buyer. Plans and drawings would not be of general interest for a completed property. Planning agreements and Article 4 Directions may be of significant impact however. Buyers are immune from prosecution for breaches

of building regulations and it may be fairly considered that matters of construction are really a matter for survey rather than reliance upon a certificate under the Building Acts. It is **recommended** that the Council should respond that planning permissions etc which have not expired without being implemented (but not the plans and drawings), planning agreements and Article 4 Directions should all be included in the Pack.

- 11 In the course of a conveyancing transaction buyers require certain information not necessarily contained in evidence of title. There are a number of forms in common usage and some conveyancers will use their own. The consultation document proposes that there should be a prescribed form for this purpose based upon the Law Society pro forma developed some years ago which is probably the most popular form in use today. This contains most of the information which buyers will require as a matter of course and conveyancers will be able to ask additional enquiries if their clients or the circumstances of the transaction require them. The consultation document also seeks views as to what questions should be included in the form. As the Council is unlikely to be involved in transactions where the Pack is used as a purchaser it is **recommended** that the Council support the requirement for an information form without commenting upon its contents.
- 12 The consultation document seeks views as to whether guarantees relating to the property should be included in the Pack. These are unlikely to feature in Council transactions and no comment is therefore proposed.
- 13 It is suggested that the Pack should contain a Home Condition Report (HRC) and energy efficiency assessment. The HRC would be in standard format based upon the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors' mid-range survey. The report would be limited to the condition of the property and would not include a valuation. The report should be no more than 3 months old at the date marketing commences. There will be a central data bank of all such reports. Where as a result of the HCR the seller carries out work to rectify defects which the HCR has revealed and the seller obtains a further HCR after completion of the works the earlier report would also form part of the Pack if there was less than 12 months between the reports. Buyers will be able to arrange for further or more detailed surveys if they wish. This will have resource implications for local authorities. An in-house surveyor would not be acceptable for the purpose of preparing an HCR. It is **recommended** that the Council response should be that the requirement for an HCR and energy efficiency assessment should not apply to sales by local authorities.
- 14 For leasehold and commonhold properties and for new homes the consultation document contains suggestions as to documents to be supplied as part of the Pack. As the Council will not be involved in the sale of any such homes it is not considered appropriate for the Council to respond on this issue, although officers consider the suggestions to be generally appropriate.

**RECOMMENDED** that the Council respond to the consultation document as recommended above.

Background Papers: Office of the Deputy Prime Minister “reforming the home buying and selling process in England and Wales contents of the home information pack a consultation paper” March 2003

**Committee:** Health and Housing  
**Date:** 5 June 2003  
**Agenda Item No:** 5  
**Title:** Housing Capital Developments  
**Author:** John Dickson (01799) 510300  
Michael Dellow (01799) 510310

### **Summary**

- 1 This report updates Members on Government proposals included in the current Local Government Bill for the national redistribution of housing “right to buy” capital receipts and its amendment to introduce some short-term transitional arrangements for debt-free authorities. The report also recommends that the Housing Strategy Working Group as part of developing the Council’s Housing Strategy Plan be asked to comment on Officers’ suggestions and prioritise where necessary on the schemes included in Appendix 1. This will assist in preparing the Capital Programme for 2004/5 onwards in advance of information on the Government’s transitional funding proposals.

### **Background**

- 2 Fundamental changes for Local Government capital finance are included in the current Local Government Bill. One of the proposals is that, from April 2004, 75% of housing Right to Buy capital receipts will be pooled for central redistribution in line with national and regional housing priorities.
- 3 As a result, debt-free authorities with their own housing stock, like this Council, will lose a significant capital income stream from the sale of their council houses. However, the Government has recently proposed an amendment to the Bill covering transitional arrangements for such councils for the three years from April 2004. However, significantly, the operational details of the scheme have still to be decided and the Government is to issue a Consultation Paper during the Summer outlining alternative arrangements. The options will vary from giving debt-free authorities credit approvals (permission to borrow) to the funding of capital grants. This is of vital significance as the only assistance which will greatly benefit debt-free authorities is direct capital grants from the Government.

- 4 It is estimated that over the three year transitional period the Council will receive in total some £5.7m from the sale of Council Houses to tenants. The Government's proposed transitional arrangements for authorities with housing stock who are debt-free is that for a period of three years from April 2004, these authorities, will receive back from the Government in some form a given proportion (75%, 50% and 25% in successive years) of the estimated amount paid into the national pool by these debt-free authorities. For this Council the estimated three year total is approximately £2.5m. The Government's proposal is that spending provided by these transitional arrangements will be ring-fenced for housing purposes. The Capital Receipts Group of debt-free authorities (which includes this Council) is lobbying for this spending parameter to be increased to cover other areas such as regeneration.
- 5 The Government has still to decide on the detailed operation of the transitional arrangements and is going to issue a consultation paper on options during the summer. As previously mentioned, the outcome from this exercise is of great significance to debt-free authorities. This Council through the Capital Receipts Group is continuing to lobby for the proposals to be funded directly by Capital Grant and this report recommends that the Committee fully supports this action.

#### **About the Officer Suggestions**

- 6 In preparation for any direct funding from the Government, a team of officers have prepared for Members' consideration a list of suggested schemes, which could be financed from any transitional capital grant funding. A list of eighteen schemes is attached in Appendix 1.
- 7 The compilation of the list actively involved interested officers from all relevant service areas. To feature on the list, proposals had to meet a number of basic criteria, including:
  - They should be housing projects
  - They should be capital projects
  - There should not be any on-going revenue costs
  - They should deliver benefits in terms of local needs or national priorities
  - The estimated costs should be quantifiable in broad terms
  - They should all be achievable within the funding and time constraints
- 8 For practical and procedural reasons, it is recommended that the Council's Housing Strategy Group of Members reviews the schemes, amending/deleting as necessary and attempts to prioritise the suggestions. This is essential because of the uncertainty of the Government's funding of the transitional arrangements and also the extreme difficulty of estimating in advance the proceeds from Council House Sales. Details would then be

included in the draft Housing Strategy which will be presented to a future meeting of this Committee.

RECOMMENDED that this Committee

- a) supports continuing the lobbying of the Government through the Capital Receipts Group on issues including Capital Grants for debt-free authorities
- b) instructs the Housing Strategy Working Group to initially prioritise suggested schemes included in Appendix 1 as part of developing the Housing Strategy in advance of the Government's funding decisions.

Background Papers: ODPM "*The Impact of the 1999 Changes to the Right to Buy Discount*" 13 May 2003  
Officer papers supporting suggested schemes

## LOCAL HOUSING IMPROVEMENT SUGGESTIONS

## PRIVATE SECTOR IMPROVEMENTS

Estimated Cost  
£'000

<b>P1</b>	Renewable Energy initiatives – private sector grants	10
<b>P2</b>	Grants to landlords to improve private rented	75
<b>P3</b>	Private sector boiler replacement grants (no means test)	20
<b>P4</b>	Action on empty private sector homes	75

## COUNCIL STOCK IMPROVEMENTS

<b>H1</b>	CCTV for sheltered scheme security	18-144
<b>H2</b>	Pro-active adaptations for disabled	300-900
<b>H3</b>	Accelerate “decent homes” programme	604-1343
<b>H4</b>	Renewable Energy initiatives – council stock	40
<b>H5</b>	Address some identified “backlog repairs”	408-1251
<b>H6</b>	Stock improvements above “decent homes” standards	180-2323
<b>H7</b>	External insulation of solid wall properties	200
<b>H8</b>	Conversion of sheltered scheme for frail elderly	1750

## HOUSING INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

<b>E1</b>	Environmental Improvements – Rural Housing	10
<b>E2</b>	Replacement of Housing Sewerage Works	50-1150

## ADDITIONAL SOCIAL HOUSING RESOURCES

<b>N1</b>	Buy dwellings on open market	200-2500
<b>N2</b>	Additional support for RSL sector new build	900
<b>N3</b>	Buy housing land on open market	500-2500
<b>N4</b>	Replacement for B&B for homelessness	1000



**Committee:** Health and Housing  
**Date:** 5<sup>th</sup> June 2003  
**Agenda Item No:** 6  
**Title:** Assistance for Private Sector Housing Renewal  
**Author:** Will Cockerell (01799) 510581

### **Summary**

- 1 This report proposes a new scheme for providing assistance for private sector housing repairs and adaptations following changes to the legislation effective from July 2003.

### **Background**

- 2 The Council's current Housing Strategy acknowledges that the Best Value review of private sector housing should be the starting point for a comprehensive reassessment of the Council's involvement in improving private sector housing conditions through financial and other forms of support.
- 3 The Regulatory Reform Order on Housing Renewal came in to force on the 18 July 2002 and gives local housing authorities 12 months to introduce a scheme suitable for their own local private sector housing conditions. The recent publication of the Census 2001 results, the English House Condition Survey 2001 and the Uttlesford Housing Needs Survey help provide valuable information on the local housing scene.

### **Surveys**

- 4 The 2001 Census shows that over 20,500 of the 27,519 households in Uttlesford are owner occupied, 8,750 of them owned outright, over 2,100 are privately let and a further 1,250 are tied cottages, flats and the like. A large proportion (90% or 24,600) of all households live in traditional houses with the remainder in purpose built flats (2,000), shared houses (448), or caravans (187). A total of 25 households do not have central heating and also do not have sole use of a bathroom or WC, and a further 80 households have central heating but lack sole use of a bathroom or WC. There are a surprising number of privately let homes (2,100); only Colchester and Tendring have a higher proportion in the County. This may be a reflection of employment patterns associated with Stansted Airport as there are very low (0.01%) all-student households. The number of vacant household spaces is 907 (3.2%). The percentage is higher than the Essex average but this may have been influenced by the number of vacant properties at Carver Barracks in 2001. The number of households living in caravans or mobile homes was 187, in line with the county average but a large number of them (125) are

concentrated on one site in Takeley. In the coming months Census 2001 information will be available for individual parishes and wards that will allow a more detailed analysis to be carried out.

- 5 The Uttlesford Housing Needs Survey was carried out in September 2002 and involved 1500 face to face interviews with randomly selected households, the sampling error is 2% and the confidence interval 95%. The survey was not primarily concerned with the condition of the private housing stock but in the section dealing with the adequacy of present accommodation and whether improvements are required, valuable information was obtained. 75% of people in the private rented sector were satisfied with their home, rising to almost 90% in the owner occupier sector. Of those dissatisfied with their accommodation (14%) about half felt that repairs or improvement would solve the problem, this implies 1258 households in the owner occupier sector and 194 in the private rented sector. The authors of the survey argue that there is a high degree of satisfaction in the adequacy of existing accommodation. In response to a question designed to identify the types of repairs or improvements needed over the next five years 32% (9500 implied) responded with the following results:

Work Required	Owner Occupier with mortgage	Owner Occupier with no mortgage	Private Rented
Additional Security	19.9	16.6	15.3
Improved Heating	16.2	14.2	42.6
Re-wiring	18.8	20.8	10.9
Damp Proofing	7.7	4.9	18.2
Roof Repairs	25.0	19.7	25.8
Window Repairs	46.5	33.5	73.4
Boiler Replacement	35.9	36.1	16.0

When asked how they would fund the cost of the works 64.4% (5998 implied) replied from saving, 2.2% (205 implied) by a grant and 14.4% (1341 implied) stated that they could not afford the work. The survey also looked at projected demographic changes from 1996 to 2011 and concluded that the most significant feature was the growth of population in the 65+ age group (33.7%, 3400 people) with an increase of 27.1% in the 75+ age group (1300 people); the total 65+ population is projected to be 13500 by 2011 compared to 11100 in 1996.

- 6 The results of the English House Condition Survey 2001 were still awaited at the time of drafting this report.

### **Comment on survey findings**

- 7 The private sector housing market in the Uttlesford area can be described as 'high demand' with the vast majority of people satisfied with their living conditions. There are no areas within the District with concentrations of poor housing and in the main people can afford to look after their own housing requirements and keep them in adequate repair. There are still households

without sole access to a WC and bathroom and tenants in the private sector are less satisfied with the condition of their homes. Long term empty homes represent a significant waste of resources and further detailed work on the location of these properties is required. In the future the number of elderly and very elderly households will increase disproportionately and in the past these home owners have been more likely to be 'capital rich but revenue poor'. Those owner occupiers that felt that their homes needed work carried out over the next five years, window repairs and boiler replacement took the top places followed by roof repairs and electrical rewiring, additional security measures were also identified.

### **Development of an Uttlesford Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy**

- 8 In the majority of cases there is very little reason for the Council to intervene in the maintenance and improvement of privately owned homes, but there will always be some owners on low income unable to finance the capital cost of essential repairs and as a consequence a valuable national asset will start to deteriorate along with the health of the occupants. Government policy over the last 50 years or so has been to make grants available to bring these types of properties up to an acceptable level and in more recent times this assistance has been means tested. In July 2002 the Government repealed the present grant regime and introduced the freedom for Councils to develop their own schemes.
- 9 The use of equity release schemes was discussed during the BV Challenge and caution was expressed on encouraging elderly home owners to use this method of releasing capital from their property as there had been high profile cases in the past where rolled up interest charges had completely depleted all the capital remaining in the property. An industry code of practice has been introduced for these types of financial packages called Safe Home Income Plans (SHIP) to provide safeguards against some of the mis-selling that went on in the late 1980s and the use of an Independent Financial Adviser may help to avoid the previous poor reputation of this method of releasing funds for essential repairs or other purposes.
- 10 The establishment of a local Home Improvement Agency (HIA) during the late 1990s has been a welcomed development; it has been able to offer independent assistance to the elderly and the disabled on securing improvements, adaptations and repairs to their homes through advice on the availability of grants and other sources of funding, finding contractors and supervising the works. The HIA is supported by grants from Central Government, Essex Social Services and Uttlesford DC and its Handyman Service has been supported in the past by local charities and the UPCT. Currently it is now only supported by Essex Social Services. The central funding will be channelled through the Supporting People mechanism in future years and there will also be a fundamental review of the service offered by the current HIA, Springboard Housing, in the near future. Client satisfaction with the service they provide is high and in the fields of housing renewal and in providing adaptations for disabled owner occupiers through the mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant scheme (which is not affected by these changes to

the discretionary Housing Renewal Grants), Home Improvement Agencies have an important part to play in delivering enhanced services to the elderly and disabled.

### **Proposed Options for Housing Renewal Scheme**

- 11 Two principal options are set out for Members to consider which illustrate key features for possible inclusion in any scheme.
- 12 **Option 1** would be a tiered approach starting with a grant to owner occupiers on low income to help them carry out essential repairs or necessary adaptations or improvements to their homes. It would be similar in character to the current Homes Repair Assistance and a maximum grant of £3000 in any 5 year period is suggested. If the work needed costs more than £3000, or additional work is needed within the 5 year period following a grant, then an interest free loan of up to £7000 would be made available on top of the grant, secured as a land charge and repayable without interest on disposal of the property whether by sale or inheritance.
- 13 **Option 2**, similar to Option 1 in that a £3000 grant would be offered, but if the cost of the work exceeds £3000 an interest free loan of up to £10000 would be made available rather than on top of the grant.
- 14 In respect of work costing more than the £10000 the applicant would be referred to an Independent Financial Advisor for advice on the appropriateness of an approved equity release scheme to finance the necessary work, the cost of any associated fees could be accommodated within the grant and loan package.
- 15 Interest free loans repaid by applicants would be returned as a capital receipt and it is envisaged that the current budget of £70,000 would remain unchanged with no additional funding required to introduce the UHRA Scheme as a replacement.

### **Eligible Applicants**

- 16 Under the current grant schemes applications are restricted to the owners of residential property, including leaseholders with more than 5 years unexpired on their leases, and in some circumstances to the occupiers of mobile homes and houseboats. Low income is defined as being in receipt of a means tested benefit such as Council Tax Benefit or Income Support and it is suggested that this should remain as a qualifying requirement. In some circumstances, such as to encourage the return of empty homes to useful occupation, landlords have also been eligible for grants and it is suggested that this option should be included.

### **Eligible Works**

- 17 The types of eligible work can broadly be divided in to three categories, repairs, improvements and adaptations.

a) Repairs

Housing Renewal Grants have not been intended to replace timely routine maintenance but for the replacement of parts of the building structure that have become dilapidated and worn out and it is suggested this should remain. Examples of eligible works are replacement of rotten windows, defective roofing, unrepairable hot water boilers and dangerously worn out electrical wiring.

b) Adaptations

Grants to carry out alterations to adapt a dwelling for a disabled occupant are not affected by these changes, but there are circumstances when a frail occupier needs relatively minor adaptations to enable them to remain in their own home, for example a ground floor WC or the conversion of a solid fuel boiler to gas. In addition the works required for a mandatory disabled facilities grant may exceed the current maximum grant of £25000 and consideration can be given to top this grant up with a discretionary grant, match funded by Essex Social Services. It is suggested that this category of eligible work should remain.

c) Improvements

As the Census data shows there are very few households without the sole use of a WC or bathroom and grants for this type of work have declined over the last 10 years. However there is still the possibility of receiving requests to assist with this most basic of improvements and it is suggested that such assistance be available

**Appeals**

- 18 There will always be exceptional cases and Local Authorities should not fetter their discretion by having rigid policies that do not allow for the proper consideration of cases that fall outside these policies. It is suggested that any such cases should be referred to this Committee for determination

RECOMMENDED that the Council adopts a scheme for Housing Renewal Assistance from July 2003 and gives public notice to that effect as required by the Regulatory Reform Order.

Background Papers: Regulatory Reform Order on Housing Renewal

**Committee:** HEALTH AND HOUSING  
**Date:** 5 JUNE 2003  
**Agenda Item No:** 7  
**Title:** HOUSING STRATEGY STATEMENT/30 YEAR HOUSING BUSINESS PLAN  
**Author:** ROD CHAMBERLAIN (01799) 510508

### **Summary**

- 1 This report advises the Committee of a need to agree a process for the annual review of the Housing Strategy statement, 30 Year Housing Business Plan and other strategies and recommends that a Housing Strategy Working Party be appointed.

### **Background**

- 2 At a meeting earlier in the year the Committee decided to defer, until after the District Council Elections, how it was going to process the Housing Strategy Statement (HSS) and 30 Year Housing Business Plan (30YHBP) for 2003.
- 3 Last year a small task group of 3 Members was constituted to consider the review of these documents. The task group recommended drafts of the strategy documents to this Committee who in turn recommended them to the full Council.
- 4 In previous years there have been very tight timetables regarding the submission of these documents to Go East but this year the process has changed. There is still a requirement to supply operational data by 31 July 2003 but with regard to the HSS and 30YHBP a more flexible approach is being adopted by Go East.
- 5 It is now acceptable for the final document to be submitted much later than July and Go East are prepared to comment on any draft should the Council wish to involve them. Although no specific deadline has been set it is thought that the Council should aim to formally adopt the HSS and 30YHBD by the end of the calendar year at the very latest.

### **The Way Forward**

- 6 What has been made clear from Go East that the documents need only be updates and more importantly are 'fit for purpose'.
- 7 In addition, this year the Council also has to approve a Homelessness Strategy.

- 8 Accordingly the Committee may wish to appoint a time limited Housing Strategies Working Party to work on the documents during the next few months with a view of recommending drafts to the Committee later in the year. The suggestion of the Working Party is also raised in item 5 on this agenda in relation to the report on Housing Capital Development.

RECOMMENDED that a Housing Strategy Working Party be appointed and that it reports back to the October meeting of this Committee.

Background Papers: Documentation from Go East 2003  
HSS and 30YHBP 2002