

Committee: Health and Housing
Date: 9 June 2005
Agenda Item No: 4
Title: Tenant Forum Minutes
Author: Elizabeth Petrie (01799) 510362

Summary

- 1 This report supplies the Committee with the notes of the Tenant Forum held in April 2005.

Background

- 2 The Tenant Forum consists of elected representatives, which meet approximately six times per year. The Forum is consulted on policy and service delivery issues.
- 3 There are 2 representatives of the Forum on this Committee in a non-voting capacity.
- 4 At the Committee's March 2005 meeting Members requested that Tenant Forum notes be a standard Committee item. Accordingly appended to this report are the notes of the meeting held on 4 April 2005.

FOR INFORMATION

Background papers: Tenant Forum File 2005

MINUTES OF THE TENANT FORUM HELD ON MONDAY 4 APRIL 2005

Present:- Mrs Jill Bolvig-Hansen, Mrs Daphne Cornell,
Mr George Chesham, Mr Richard Livings, Mr John
Maddams.

Officers in attendance:-Mr Rod Chamberlain (Head of Housing Services),
John McCormack (Independent Tenant Adviser), Mrs
Helen Joy (Tenant Participation Officer),
Mrs Rebecca Procter (Tenant Participation Officer).

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Trevor Offord and Mr Ian Blows.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a correct record. Further to discussion under item 4 regarding the notification to the Council of breaches of the Tenants' Compact, Mr Chamberlain explained that any obvious issues of estate management would generally be noted by the Housing Officers and Repairs Officers when making site visits. It was agreed that the Tenant Participation Officers would report to the Forum on how often the estates are walked. Mr Chamberlain requested that if any Tenant Forum member becomes aware of any tenants' properties that appear to be neglected, that they should notify Housing Services. It was further noted that the letter about rent setting from the Minister for Housing should be copied to all Members of the Health & Housing Committee.

3 MATTERS ARISING

The recent study visit to Chelmer Housing Partnership was discussed (see item 4).

4 STOCK OPTIONS UPDATE

It was agreed that at the end of the appraisal process officers and tenants should meet to assess useful information and points of "best practice" gained from the exercise. The Independent Tenant Advisor should be invited to attend. The Tenant Participation Officers will keep a record of any suggestions made by Tenants during the appraisal. Initial suggestions were as follows:- freephone for repairs requests; quality of life officers; employment of occupational therapist for assessing special needs housing; "ground force" of tenants who are willing to carry out work on estates, or to be contacted; hotspot notation pads; "streetwalks"; direct labour.

There was a discussion about the recent visit to Chelmer Housing Partnership. It was agreed that whilst it was helpful to have attended, there were a number of points to be noted that would indicate that transfer of the stock would not be appropriate for Uttlesford DC. Unlike Uttlesford DC, Chelmer would not have attained Decent Homes standard. The presentation also indicated that the block vote of the council on Chelmer HP's Board may have had a disproportionate weighting; and the question of assured/secured tenancies was not clarified.

Mr McCormack and Mr Grimshaw joined the meeting, having been delayed. Mr Grimshaw expressed a positive view of the study visit. It was agreed that an informal return visit could be arranged later in the year for those who wished to go.

Mr McCormack commented that whilst the visit provided a useful insight into what stock transfer means, in the case of Uttlesford DC where the tenants express high levels of satisfaction and the condition of the stock is good, then the question of transfer does not seem to be appropriate at this stage.

Mrs Bolvig-Hansen requested that since the Tenant Forum has now had an opportunity to visit another housing provider, it would be interesting for Forum members to have a tour of Uttlesford DC's housing service.

5 Performance information

Housing repairs - Mrs Procter reported 97.73% overall satisfaction for housing repairs during March 2005.

Homelessness – a total of 76 people presented homeless for the year 2004/2005, of which 33 were accepted. As at 01/04/05 the number of homeless persons in bed & breakfast accommodation was 3.

6 Any other business

Mrs Bolvig-Hansen requested that the residents of Hatherley House be sent a letter of thanks and perhaps some flowers in recognition of the fact that their lounge has been used for the stock option workshops.

7 Date of next meeting

Mr Grimshaw requested that future meetings should not be held on the first Monday of the month, and should revert to a 7.30 pm start, as otherwise it is very difficult for him to attend. However, due to increased demand for room bookings during the general election period, the next meeting date is to remain **Monday 6th June 2005 at 7.00 pm, in the Committee Room.**

Committee: HEALTH AND HOUSING COMMITTEE
Date: 9 June 2005
Agenda Item No: 5
Title: HOUSING STOCK OPTIONS APPRAISAL
Author: Rod Chamberlain (01799) 510508

Summary

- 1 This report advises the Committee on the outcome of the Stock Options Appraisal (SOA) process and recommends to full Council that the Council remains as a social housing landlord and that the position is reviewed on an annual basis.

Background

- 2 It is a requirement of the Government that all stock owning Councils carry out a Stock Options Appraisal regarding the future management of their stock. The Government laid down a timetable which required this exercise to be completed and signed off by GO-East by July 2005.
- 3 At it's meeting held on 9 September 2004 the Committee approved the setting up of a Stock Options Appraisal Steering Group to oversee the process and make appropriate recommendations. The Group comprised two Members, members of the Tenant Forum, the Independent Tenant Advisor, the Financial Consultant and Officers.
- 4 The SOA Steering Group has met monthly and has overseen a thorough process of considering the stock condition survey, an extensive tenant consultation, an aspirational survey and a final report by the financial consultants.
- 5 An executive summary of the Financial Consultant is shown in Appendix A. A copy of the report has been placed in the Members Room and copies can be made available on request.
- 6 A report from the Independent Tenant Advisor is shown in Appendix B.

Housing Stock Options Appraisal Process

- 7 The objective of the Stock Options Appraisal is to advise the Council, along with its tenants and leaseholders, how the different options may, impact on the delivery of its housing objectives. It is felt there are 3 main objectives as being crucial to delivering the overall housing service:

- a) Ensure all housing developments are sustainable and provide sufficient affordable housing to meet identified needs of local people.
- b) Ensure that all housing in the district is built and maintained to a high standard in both the public and private sectors
- c) Consider and evaluate, in close partnership with Council tenants, all stock options to ensure the best possible service is made available to tenants.

8 The following issues have been at the centre of the SOA Steering Group's consideration:

- Delivery of the Decent Homes Standard by 2010
- Improved housing services and increased tenant involvement
- The priorities and aspirations of tenants and leaseholders
- National and Regional priorities
- Priorities of key stakeholders and partners
- The housing needs across all tenures
- The Council's statutory housing duties
- The Council's enhanced strategic role
- A contribution to neighbourhood renewal and regeneration where appropriate.

Stock Condition Survey

9 A detailed Stock Condition Survey was undertaken in 2002 which not only considered the current condition of the stock but also produced information to feed into the 30 year Housing Business Plan.

10 The survey and subsequent analysis concluded that all of the stock would meet the Government's Decent Homes Standard by the year 2007 and that this minimum standard could be sustained in the long term. This document has been carefully reviewed by the Financial Consultants.

Tenant Consultation

11 A major part of the Options Appraisal process is to consult with tenants to assess their views on the quality of the service and their possible aspirations, in an ideal world, for improvements in the future. The Tenant Forum, comprised of 10 tenant representatives, appointed in accordance with Council policy, an external Independent Tenant Advisor to assist with the process.

12 A "STATUS" satisfaction survey was carried out in the summer of 2004 which showed high levels of satisfaction with the Housing Service.

13 The SOA Steering Group commissioned a second major consultation exercise comprising a postal survey of its 2,500 general housing tenants and a series of 13 workshops at the Sheltered Schemes to ascertain the views of the 500 sheltered scheme tenants.

- 14 A series of three major tenant workshops took place between January and April 2005 to assist with the detailed consultation process, consider the outcomes and develop the more detailed aspirations within what became known as the "bronze", "silver" and "gold" standards (See Appendix C for details).
- 15 In order to raise awareness of the various options, members of the Tenants Forum, Councillors and Officers from the Steering Group visited Chelmer Housing Partnership (a Registered Social Landlord, RSL) and Colchester Borough Homes (an Arms Length Management Organisation, ALMO). Before each visit training sessions took place led by the Independent Tenant Advisor.
- 16 Tenants were kept informed of progress with the process through a series of newsletters. A final newsletter is planned to be sent out prior to the meeting of the Council to ascertain views on the recommendation.
- 17 The tenant surveys and consultation process identified a number of tenants that expressed a wish to become more actively consulted on the running of the housing service. It was concluded that there was an opportunity to strengthen the current tenant consultation arrangements on completion of the process and to generally target improved Tenant Participation within sheltered housing schemes.

The Aspirational Standards

- 18 The "bronze", "silver" and "gold" standards that were developed as part of the consultation process each comprised three aspects:
 - a) Condition and improvements to individual dwellings and to achieve and maintain a minimum Decent Homes Standard.
 - b) Environmental improvements.
 - c) Service improvements.
- 19 The "gold" standard was developed and then prioritised from the consultation exercise and assessed at costing £11.5 million net present value over a 30 year business plan model. It should again be stated that tenants were encouraged to identify issues in an 'open cheque' process. The information obtained has provided the Council with significant information about tenant priorities.
- 20 The "silver" standard was developed as being a package of investments amounting to an additional £2.4 million net present value expenditure that could be afforded within the business plan. Although a number of dwelling, environmental and service improvements were discussed no detailed plans were developed or agreed.
- 21 The "bronze" standard is the current standard of dwelling and services, which does deliver and maintains the minimum Decent Home Standard.

Financial Report and Assessment of the Options

- 22 The Council is required, in accordance with the process, to consider each of the following four options equally on merit and within the local Uttlesford context:
1. Stock Retention and direct management
 2. Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO)
 3. Private Finance Initiative (PFI)
 4. Transfer to a Registered Social Landlord (RSL)
- 23 The Financial Consultants Executive Summary is shown in Appendix A and it concludes that:
- a) The Council can meet and maintain the Government Decent Home Standard
 - b) The Council can meet and maintain a higher Uttlesford “silver” standard with a reasonable financial position
 - c) If either of these options is acceptable then no action is required.
 - d) If a higher “gold” standard is considered then the only option would be to work up a proposal to transfer the stock to an RSL and which could only take place following a positive result from a tenant ballot.
 - e) ALMO and PFI would not be options.

Housing Stock Transfer – The Concept and Financial Matters

- 24 Stock Transfer is a concept that transfers the ownership of the housing stock and associated assets to a Registered Social Landlord (RSL). The RSL is not subject to the public sector constraints and is able to borrow large sums of private sector money over a long period (usually 30 years) in order to pay for the cost of the stock and finance major improvements.
- 25 An RSL would be independent of the Council and would be run by a board, which usually comprises of tenants, Council nominees and independent members.

Financial Impact of Stock Transfer on the Council

- 26 A comprehensive analysis of the financial impact on the Council is contained within the financial consultants report.
- 27 The estimate that the net capital receipt for the sale of the housing stock to a RSL would be £16 million.
- 28 It is estimated that there would be additional General Fund revenue costs of between £300,000 to £500,000 a year, some or all of these additional costs could be offset by continued income from Right to Buy sales under an agreement with the RSL.
- 29 The Consultants have confirmed that although the Council can embark on a Council Housing programme the number of units that would be produced as part of the financial model would be very small. The Council is therefore likely

to be able to achieve better results working with Registered Social landlords in an attempt to attract Housing Corporation funding into the District.

Conclusions

- 30 The Stock Options Appraisal Process has demonstrated that the Council can meet and maintain the Government Decent Home Standard.
- 31 However, if it is desired to have a much higher “gold” standard of dwellings and amenities then this could only be achieved by moving to a social landlord rather than the Council.
- 32 Should the Council decide to undertake a ballot of tenants on stock transfer the pre-ballot costs would be about £320,000. If there was a positive ballot and transfer took place this cost would be paid for from the proceeds of the sale of the stock. However, if there were a negative ballot the costs would be borne by the General Fund of the Council.
- 33 The increased level of tenant participation generated through the consultation process should be integrated into strengthened arrangements with a particular focus on the aspirational issues.
- 34 The Council is therefore faced with two broad options:
- a) Retain the stock but review the situation on an annual basis
 - b) Undertake further tenant consultation and consider in more detail Housing Stock Transfer. (This would have major financial and staffing resource implications that have not been assessed as part of this report.)
- 35 The Steering Group has very carefully considered all the issues and has unanimously concluded that there are currently no major grounds for the Council to transfer the stock at this immediate time. However it is of the view that the issue should be reviewed on a regular basis.

RECOMMENDED that following the recommendation made by the SOA Steering Group that the Committee:

- a) Proposes to full Council that following the Housing Stock Options Appraisal the Council retains the housing stock and that the position is reviewed on an annual basis.
- b) Improved tenant participation arrangements are put in place for both general and sheltered housing tenants to discuss and consider in more detail issues highlighted by the process.

Background Documents

- a) HOA Steering Group Minutes and Agendas

- b) General Housing “Priorities for the future” Tenant Aspirational Survey Outcomes Report
- c) Sheltered Housing Consultation Outcome Report
- d) Housing Strategy Statement 2004 –2007
- e) Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2004-2007
- f) Stock Condition Survey – Countrywide Surveys
- g) Housing Needs Survey
- h) Government Guidance from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister – “Decent Homes”. www.odpm.gov.uk/housing

**Beha Williams Norman Ltd
Uttlesford District Council
Housing Options Appraisal Report April 2005**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Base Facts

Our task was to examine the long-term options available to the Council to achieve its aims and objectives in relation to its housing stock.

This needs to be linked with the Government Communities Plan which, inter alia, confirms policy to see all English social housing brought to the Decent Homes Standard by 2010.

As part of the route to meeting that Standard the Government requires that all local authorities undertake an appraisal of its options for achievement by mid 2005. This Report forms part of the required process.

The Government considers Decent Homes to be a minimum standard and wishes to see tenant and community involvement in deciding if that is the level appropriate locally together with issues requiring service improvement.

The Council was already working towards a standard that embraced all aspects of the Standard as opposed to a selective minimum.

We have therefore appraised four standards of repair and amenity:

- Bronze – the Council’s present standard – slightly above the Decent Homes Standard
- Silver – a higher Standard developed with Tenant representatives which utilises all available resources
- Gold – the aspirational standard of the community

The assessment of investment need is from an independent survey conducted by Countrywide Surveyors in 2002 with subsequent Officer adjustments. It details requirements to meet and maintain the Standards over the next 30 years.

In summary the investment needed per home over 30 years is:

	£
Bronze	38,115
Silver	38,580
Gold	40,077

Base Position

Our first task was to examine the Base Position - if the Council continues to manage the stock directly, what are its prospects of meeting and maintaining the three standards whilst keeping the HRA healthy to enhance the development of services to tenants?

Council costs in relation to housing arise as revenue (the HRA) in relation to service delivery and capital in relation to major works.

Using the data from the three Standards, we have made 30-year forward projections of the HRA taking account of all expected factors including stock losses due to the Right to Buy.

The position can be represented as:

Standard	Capital	Revenue
BRONZE		
2010	Meet	Good
Year 20	Meet	Good
SILVER		
2010	Meet	Good
Year 20	Meet	Failing
GOLD		
2010	Fail	Fail
Year 20	Fail	Fail

In summary the Council can meet and maintain both the Decent Homes Standard and its own Uttlesford Standard. It cannot however meet or maintain the higher Gold Standard which would also catalyse a long-term deterioration in the position of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

This then leads to examination of alternative options in terms of meeting the higher Standard.

Alternative Options

By Government definition these are:

- Private Finance Initiative (PFI)
- Arms Length Management (ALMO)
- Stock Transfer

We have examined each in depth.

Private Finance Initiative (PFI)

This involves the Council entering into an agreement with a private sector body to provide services, which can include asset repair and improvement. An annual charge is made which in the main is met by Government "credits".

The Government directs that this cannot be used as a holistic solution to condition issues – it is best linked with specific community regeneration.

Since there are no particular areas or stock packages which would meet this criteria, we conclude that PFI is not relevant to this Appraisal.

Arms Length Management (ALMO)

This option involves the Council delegating its landlord function to a Council owned not for profit company with a board comprising Council nominees, tenants and persons with business skills. The arrangements are evolving as similar to stock transfer but with the Council retaining ownership and strategic direction.

Since the Council remains the landlord, all tenants rights and security would be unchanged including rents and Right to Buy.

Providing the high management performance rating of 2* can be awarded by the Audit Commission, the ALMO can then gain access to Government financial support **to meet the Decent Homes standard + 5% only.**

ALMO offers a one-off capital injection to meet the Standard. It does not cover maintaining the standard once it has been achieved.

The arrangement is subject to tenant agreement. Best practice is for a ballot but this is not a requirement.

Employees would transfer to the new company.

There would be a financial impact on the General Fund. This would depend on the detail of the arrangements but could be of the order of £100,000 per annum.

Arrangements are subject to gaining a place on a Government Programme.

There would be set up costs of approximately £250,000, excluding employees. In the event of not gaining tenant support, the vast majority of these costs would fall on the HRA.

Since the option is only available in terms of meeting Decent Homes Standard (which the Council can), we have discounted it from the options.

Stock Transfer

This is the transfer of the stock to a new or existing not-for-profit landlord that is regulated by the Housing Corporation and termed a Registered Social Landlord or RSL. There have been over 180 full and partial transfers over the last 16 years.

The form of the new landlord is for Tenants and the Council to decide. This could embrace the new community gateway concepts, which maximise tenant involvement.

The RSL could stand alone or be in partnership with an existing RSL.

The Board would comprise Council and tenant nominees together with individuals with specific skills as with the ALMO option.

A transfer would be subject to majority tenant agreement at a secret postal ballot.

Tenants would have a new form of tenancy agreement but virtually all rights and security would be preserved.

Transferring tenants would have the Right to Buy but new tenants after transfer would not although they would have the Right to Acquire.

Rents would not be affected by transfer and would continue to be calculated by the Government Rent Formula.

The financial structure of stock transfer is such that **all aspects of the Gold (Aspirational) Standard could be met and maintained, service improvements achieved and the revenue position stabilised.**

Employees would transfer to the new landlord.

The Council could expect to receive a net capital receipt of the order of £16 million and this could be available for all capital purposes including the enabling of new homes and community regeneration.

There would be a financial impact on the General Fund which should be capable of reduction over the years. However investment interest from the capital receipt could be used to partly offset but this would prevent use to enable new homes etc.

In addition the Council could benefit from a share from potential VAT savings and would benefit year on year from a share of Right to Buy sales income. The latter would broadly equate to present annual GF use of receipts.

Arrangements are subject to gaining a place on a Government Programme.

There would be pre-ballot set up costs of the order of £350,000 (excluding employees). If there were a no vote, the vast majority of these costs would fall on the General Fund.

Mix of Options

The size and even spread of investment need really makes this impractical. The ALMO option is not available. PFI is more appropriate for estate regeneration.

It would not be possible to transfer part of the stock and use the sale proceeds to invest in the residual stock; the sums generated would be insufficient, the lower residual stock base would suffer from the loss of economy of scale on both revenue and capital terms.

New Build

In the course of the OA study, the community need for additional provision of affordable housing was mentioned again and again.

For the Council to be able to construct new homes it must look to grant/cost reduction sources since the Formula Rents regime does not produce rents which in themselves will finance new build.

The sources open to the Council are to use its net capital receipts from RTB sales or what is termed its "supported borrowing" annual allocation – borrowing which has Housing Subsidy to reduce servicing costs.

The dilemma is that both these resources are committed to achieving the Uttlesford Standard and are in any event, limited and there is long term doubt on supported borrowing allocations.

It also has to be noted that new build for Council HRA purposes would be subject to the Right to Buy.

The only route available is really that adopted by most shire districts – to make all land holdings available to RSLs for partnership development, to adopt the best position in relation to planning and Section 106 (elements of land securing permission to develop for housing specifically dedicated for affordable housing) and to work in partnership with RSLs to maximise regional housing grant allocations to the area.

It should be noted that stock transfer would produce a net capital receipt that could be used to enable the building of new homes by RSLs.

Overall Conclusion

The Council and Tenants face a choice that can only be community determined. In base terms (and we know there are a range of ancillary issues):

- The Council can meet and maintain the Government Decent Homes Standard;
- The Council can meet and maintain the higher Uttlesford Standard with a reasonable HRA revenue position;
- If either of these Standards is acceptable, then no action is necessary
- However if a higher Aspirational Standard is preferred, then the only option is to work up a proposal to transfer the stock and consult then ballot all tenants on the principle;
- The dilemma lies in arriving at the decision as to a course of action. For this we suggest the Council may wish to measure the views of all tenants. For them the choice is homes with greater amenity but their landlord becoming a not for profit housing RSL rather than the Council.

**Report by John McCormack
Independent Tenant Advisor**

ITA REPORT FOR UTTLESFORD DC HEALTH AND HOUSING COMMITTEE:

Tenant involvement in the stock options appraisal process

1. Formal requirements

As elsewhere, the stock options appraisal process in Uttlesford has had to proceed within a broad framework of guidelines issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. Amongst other things, these guidelines put requirements on local authorities to involve tenants and leaseholders every step of the way in the stock options appraisal process. This includes:

- Ensuring tenant representation on an overseeing project steering group/working party
- Production of a project-specific tenant empowerment strategy (TES)
- Discreet consultation with leaseholders
- Specific measures in respect of consultation with black and minority ethnic (BME) residents
- Efforts to engage with 'hard to reach' groups
- Appointment of an Independent Tenant Adviser to assist tenants in participating effectively in the project

2. Tenant Empowerment Strategy (TES)

A Tenant Empowerment Strategy was produced at the outset of the project by the ITA, and has been available for browsing on the Council's website. In addition, the key points contained within the TES were summarised in an early edition of the project newsletter.

3. Facilitation of tenant involvement

Tenant involvement in the project has been facilitated jointly by the Council's own Tenant Participation Officers (TPOs), the ITA, and the Housing Strategy Manager. Chiefly, the tasks have been broken down as follows:

TPOs: Co-ordinating newsletters and mail-shots; arranging study visits and workshops; servicing Tenant Forum meetings; liaising with ITA and Head of Housing Strategy

ITA: Independent commentary, analysis and advice to Tenant Forum members and tenant representatives on steering group; production of newsletter articles; provision of training and information

Housing Strategy Manager: canvassing of tenant views on investment re general needs tenant survey, and workshops with residents in sheltered schemes

4. Principal means of participation

3 tenant representatives have sat on the project steering group, which has had overall responsibility for managing the stock options appraisal project. In addition, the Tenants' Forum has been kept fully abreast of all developments, and has debated issues that have arisen in the steering group meetings. The wider body of tenants have been kept informed about (and invited to participate in) the project through regular project newsletters, as well as through a tenant aspiration survey.

5. Overall feedback and conclusions

- From a position of initial scepticism about the value of the options appraisal exercise, tenants came around to thinking that it served a useful purpose
- The process was considered initially as government-driven, and therefore 'top down' and this initially impeded objective assessment of options
- The preferred option has emerged to be stock retention, with a few action points to implement, including greater tenant involvement.
- In my capacity as the ITA, I am fully satisfied that the process within Uttlesford has been carried out in a fair independent manner with all relevant parties having full opportunity to input into the process.

Standards Comparison - Aspirational Survey

1. Your home

Item	“BRONZE”	“SILVER”	“GOLD”
	Government Decent Home Standard	“Uttlesford” Standard As Govt Standard Plus:	Possible Improvements
A) Your Home			
1. Heating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adequate heating & insulation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heating to all habitable rooms 	
2. Kitchens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No older than 20 years Adequate space & layout 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximise storage & worktops Extractor fan Choice of units, wall & floor tiles 	
3. Bathrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No older than 30 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choice of floor & wall tiles Extractor fan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overbath shower
4. Exterior doors		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UPVC doors on replacement 	
5. Windows		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Double glazed UPVC with locks 	
6. Electrics		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All sheltered or homes suitable for the elderly – hard-wired smoke detectors Other homes - Battery smoke detectors Adequate electric sockets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hard wired smoke detectors for all homes External front & back light with low energy lamp
7. Plumbing			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outside tap
8. Exterior		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paths to front & back doors Entry control to sheltered schemes blocks of flats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved paths Entry control to all blocks of flats
9. General			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of sustainable materials Improved access for wheelchairs
B) PLUS - Additional funding for dwellings, amenities and services			
See schedule on following page	NIL	Up to £2.4 million net present value	Up to £11.5 million net present value

ASPIRATIONAL SURVEY RESULTS IN PRIORITY ORDER

Ranking	Key Issue - General Housing – 2,500 units	Net Present Value	Comments/Proposal
1	Quality of repairs & improvements	£420,000	Member of staff
2	Help with decorating & gardens	£490,000	Increase from £75,000 to £110,000 per year
3	Showers - walk-in & over bath	£1,460,000	5 year programme - average of £500 per dwelling
4	UPVC exterior doors within 5 years	£2,400,000	5 year programme - average of £1,000 per dwelling
5	Fencing and paths	£1,000,000	Increase from £40,000 to £110,000 per year
5	Car parking eg off-street & lay byes	£653,000	5 year programme in addition to £120,000 per year
6	Access for the elderly eg ramps & rails	£880,000	Increase from £180,000 to £220,000 per year
7	Estate management eg grass cutting	£350,000	Increase from £75,000 to £100,000 per year
8	Communication with tenants about improvements	£210,000	Additional part time staff member
9	Lighting of car park areas	£235,000	18 sites at £12,000 per site
10	External lights for homes	£600,000	5 year programme - average of £200 per dwelling
12	Enforcement of tenancy rules	£420,000	Additional Officer
13	More affordable housing		Average of £2m pa from RTB sales already given
14	Children's play areas	£218,000	50% funding towards 10 schemes
15	More electric sockets	£530,000	5 year programme - average of £200 per dwelling
16	Sustainable "recycled" building materials	£280,000	Estimated additional cost of materials
	General housing totals:	£10,146,000	

Ranking	Key Issue - Sheltered Housing – 500 units	Net Present Value	Comments
1	Bathrooms		Already included in baseline programmes
2	Windows & doors		Doors included above - windows in programmes
3	Warden Contact		Undertake review
4	CCTV & Security	£38,000	5 schemes at £7,000 per scheme
5	Handyman	£420,000	Man and van
6	Gardens Upkeep	£28,000	Increase from £10,000To £12,000 per year
7	Heating controls	£33,000	Improved controls in 300 units @ £100 each
8	Social Facilities	£700,000	Provision of mini-bus and driver
9	Car Parking	£54,500	Improvements to 5 schemes @ £10,000 each
10	Scooter Sheds	£40,000	18 schemes at £2K per scheme
	Sheltered housing totals:	£1,313,500	
	Grand totals:	£11,459,500	

Committee: Health and Housing
Date: 9 June 2005
Agenda Item No: 6
Title: Hard to let Sheltered Accommodation
Author: Elizabeth Petrie and Suzanna Clarke (01799) 510362/543

Summary

- 1 This report advises the Committee of the current problem relating to hard to let sheltered units and recommends that officers be authorised to consult on solutions to reduce the problem.

Background

- 2 The Council currently has a sheltered housing stock of 420 units of which 76 are bedsit units. For most of the stock there are waiting lists. However for some schemes the waiting list was exhausted sometime ago.
- 3 Over the last few years work has been carried out to some difficult to let sheltered schemes (in some cases working with Registered Social Landlords) to either refurbish or change the client use of the buildings.
- 4 It should be noted that currently sheltered housing is allocated to people over the age of 60 who are able to live an independent life. The Council provides a full service to these tenants by Sheltered Housing Officers.
- 5 Officers will provide, at the meeting, up to date information on the scale of the hard to let problem.

The Way Forward

- 6 It is felt that this may be an appropriate time for the Committee to authorise officers to hold preliminary discussions with other partner care agencies to carry out a feasibility study, initially at one of the sites, to overcome the hard to let problem. Clearly with any feasibility exercise a number of alternative uses may need to be considered including refurbishment of any scheme in question. It will be necessary to have discussions with the tenants in question.
- 7 Once a feasibility study has been concluded a further report will be submitted to the Committee in order for a way forward to be agreed.

RECOMMENDED that the Committee authorises officers to carry out a feasibility study for a hard to let sheltered housing scheme and report back to a future meeting of the Committee

Background papers: None.

Hard to let sheltered units

Holloway Crescent, Leaden Roding

Total Sheltered Units	17
Total Sheltered Units Void	5
Total Sheltered Units Void over 10 weeks	5

Mead Court, Stansted

Total Sheltered Units	22
Total Sheltered Units Void	6
Total Sheltered Units void over 10 weeks	5

Reynolds Court, Newport

Total Sheltered Units	30
Total Sheltered Units Void	9
Total Sheltered Units void over 10 weeks	7

Committee: Health and Housing Committee

Date: June 2005

Agenda Item No: 7

Title: HOMELESSNESS STATISTICS 2004/05

Author: Judith Snares (01799) 510671

Summary

- 1 This report advises the Committee on the numbers of people presenting as homeless from 1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005 and the causes of their homelessness and their status.

Background

- 2 There has been a significant drop in the number of homeless acceptances compared to the last two years. However the reduction in the numbers presenting as homeless during the year is not indicative of a fall in the overall levels of homelessness within the district but is a result of the more proactive approach taken on homelessness following the implementation of the homelessness strategy and the creation of the post of a dedicated homelessness officer (Housing Support Officer).
- 3 This has meant that many people threatened with homelessness were assisted before they needed to present as homeless with the possibility of then having to be placed in bed and breakfast.
- 4 The Council continues to rely on bed and breakfast accommodation in emergency situations for families and it is regularly used on a longer term basis to fulfil the Authorities duty towards vulnerable single people, especially 16 and 17 year olds for whom alternative housing options within the District are very limited.

The Current Position

- 5 The Council will need to continue to work on strategies to prevent homelessness within the district and on the provision of suitable accommodation for those becoming homeless.
- 6 In this context a report will be made to a future meeting of the Committee which will address future allocation policy.

RECOMMENDED that the Committee notes the Homelessness figures for 2004–05.

Background Papers Homeless Files and Data – 2004 - 05

**CASES PRESENTING AS HOMELESS TO THE COUNCIL DURING THE FINANCIAL YEAR
2004-2005**

REASON FOR HOMELESSNESS	TOTAL CASES PRESENTING AS HOMELESS	% OF TOTAL (APPROX)	REHOUSED OFF HOUSING REGISTER	MADE OWN ARRANGEMENTS/ REJECTED/ ADVICE/ ONLY/ IN & OUT/ PREVENTION	HOUSED INTO TEMP TENANCY *	IN B/B As at 31.03.05
1 Parents no longer able/willing to accommodate	18	23%	4	9	5	
2 Other relatives/friends no longer able/willing to accommodate	9	12%		5	4	
3 Partnership breakdown/violent	3	4%	1		2	
4 Partnership breakdown/non-violent	10	13%	1	5	4	
5 Fleeing violence						
6 16/17 year olds	7	9%	2	4		1
7 18/20 year olds formally in care						
8 Racial/Homophobic						
9 Mortgage foreclosure	2	3%		2		
10 Termination of shorthold tenancies, other loss of private accommodation	9	12%	3	3	2	1
11 Termination of shorthold tenancies, other loss of private accommodation, because of Arrears.	9	12%	1	5	3	
12 H M Forces						
13 Asylum Seekers						
14 Health						
15 Mental Health						
16 Drug/Alcohol						
17 Having been in care	1	1%		1		

REASON FOR HOMELESSNESS	TOTAL CASES PRESENTING AS HOMELESS	% OF TOTAL (APPROX)	REHOUSED OFF HOUSING REGISTER	MADE OWN ARRANGEMENTS/ REJECTED/ ADVICE/ ONLY/ IN & OUT/ PREVENTION	HOUSED INTO TEMP TENANCY*	IN B/B As at 31.03.05
18 On remand or been in custody	2	3%		2		
19 Other	6	8%	1	3	1	1
TOTALS	76	100%	13	39	21	3

* Includes cases rehoused into bungalows (for elderly) and Temporary Housing Association Accommodation. A number of these cases previously spent time in bed and breakfast accommodation.

Report Details

76 cases presented as homeless to Uttlesford during the period 01.04.04 – 31.03.05

Of these:-

- 3 were elderly
- 15 were single parents
- 16 were a family
- 38 were single
- 4 were a couple

41 cases were either rejected as intentionally homeless, were found not to be homeless, or were owed a duty of advice only of these:-

- 2 were elderly
- 3 were single parents
- 10 were a family
- 25 were single
- 1 were a couple

33 cases were accepted as homeless during the period 01.04.04 – 31.03.05

Of these:-

- 1 were elderly
- 10 were single parents
- 9 were a family
- 13 were single
- 0 were a couple

There were 2 cases where a decision is pending as at 31.03.05

Total 2003 - 04 = 121 (accepted as homeless 62)

Total 2002 - 03 = 112 (accepted as homeless 62)

Cases in temporary accommodation as at 31.03.05 = 31

There was 1 referral from another local authority during the year.

Committee: Health and Housing
Date: 9 June 2005
Agenda Item No: 8
Title: Adaptation Work to a Council House
Author: Rod Chamberlain (01799) 510508

Summary

- 1 This report advises the Committee of a request to carry out major adaptation work at a Council house in Radwinter and recommends approval.

Background

- 2 A request has been received from Essex County Council Social Services for major adaptation work to be carried out to a three bedroom Council house in Radwinter.
- 3 The family in question comprises of 4 adults, two of which have severe disabilities.
- 4 The work includes the provision of a ground floor bedroom, shower room and bathroom and kitchen upgrade. The dwelling will also require other significant work to make it fully accessible for wheelchair use. A tendering exercise has been completed and the cost for the work, if approved, will be £74,350.
- 5 A drawing the proposal is appended to the report. Planning permission has been obtained.

RECOMMENDED that the Committee approve the request to carry out adaptation work to the dwelling referred to in the report.

Background papers: File and Document from Essex County Council Social Services

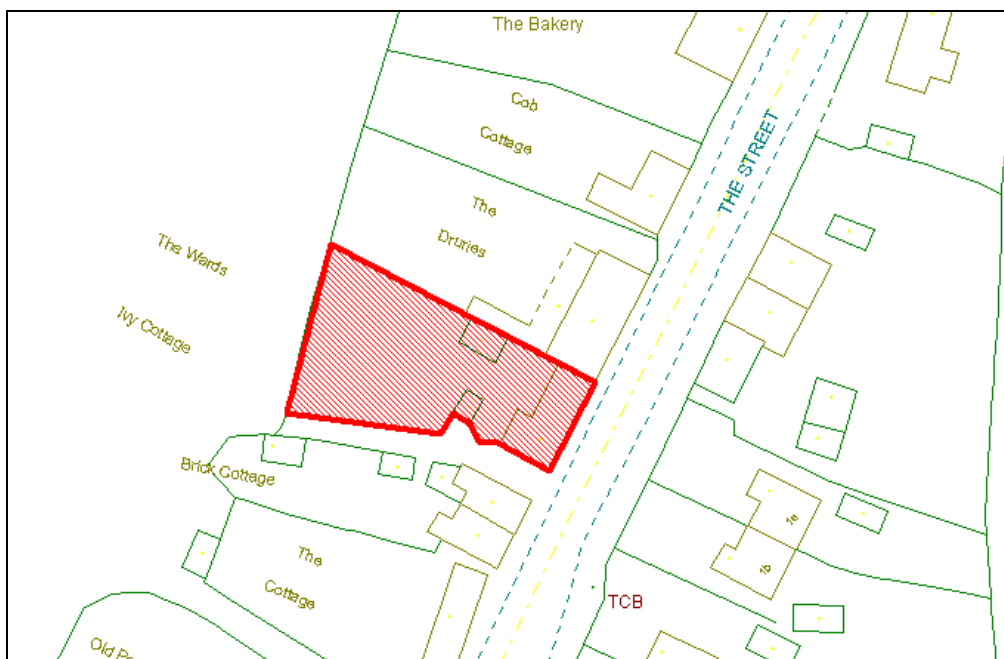
Committee: Health and Housing
Date: 9 June 2005
Agenda Item No: 9
Title: Sale of Council Property in High Roding
Author: Roz Millership (01799) 510516

Summary

- 1 This report advises the Committee of a proposal to sell a vacant non-traditional house and use the receipt on another housing project.

Background

- 2 One of the Council's current void properties, The Wards, is a Grade II listed timber framed three bedroomed link detached cottage situated in the parish of High Roding. Although visually the property is in reasonable condition a survey of the property has established that the council will incur excessive expenditure to retain the cottage in a lettable standard due to its age and construction. In addition ongoing annual maintenance costs will be in the region of £800.



The Way Forward

- 3 Under the circumstances the Committee may feel that it would be appropriate that the cottage is sold on the open market in its present condition. To ensure that the best sale price is achieved the property would be sold through sealed bid tenders. It should be noted that this receipt can be treated as a Capital

Allowance which can be put towards the Decent Homes programme, an affordable housing scheme or regeneration scheme elsewhere in the district.

- 4 RECOMMENDED to the Resources Committee that the sale of The Wards, High Roding be approved with appropriate terms and conditions agreed by the Council in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders.

Background Papers: none

Committee: Health & Housing
Date: 9 June 2005
Agenda Item No: 10
Title: Public Health
Author: Tracy Turner (01799) 510402

Summary

- 1 The paper summarises current work in progress within Uttlesford District Council on public health issues, and seeks support for a joint action plan between the Uttlesford Primary Care Trust and UDC to recruit a high calibre Director of Public Health. Decision making on the recruitment process is recommended to be delegated to the Executive Manager Environmental and Cultural Services subject to consultation with the Chairman of Health and Housing.

Background

- 2 The Government published a White Paper entitled *Choosing Health – Making healthy choices easier* in 2004 setting out key actions proposed to address the public health agenda in the twenty-first century. The underpinning principles of the new public health approach are informed choice, personalisation, and working together.
- 3 The public health priorities identified in the White Paper are:
 - Reducing the number of people who smoke
 - Reducing obesity and improving diet and nutrition
 - Increasing exercise
 - Encouraging and supporting sensible drinking
 - Improving sexual health
 - Improving mental health

UDC Work on Public Health Agenda

- 4 An extensive range of initiatives are currently undertaken by Uttlesford District Council as direct provider, in partnership, or as an enabler on the public health agenda. These are summarised in Appendix A.
- 5 The Uttlesford Primary Care Trust has approached the Council to extend joint work on the public health agenda through supporting the PCT in recruiting a high calibre Director of Public Health.

- 6 The Director of Public Health will be a PCT board level appointment having a key role in working with the local community, leading and driving programmes to improve health and well-being and reduce inequalities. They will forge and ensure wide participation in partnerships. The post will be an executive director of the Primary Care Trust and PCT Board member and the chief source of public health leadership and advice to the Primary Care Trust and Uttlesford District Council.
- 7 The Director of Public Health post will bring focus to the public health work of the UDC and UPCT, and will enable a joint action plan to be developed which will primarily be pursued at the Council through projects and programmes engaged in by the relevant teams in Strategy and Performance and Environmental and Cultural Services. Ultimately this may include managerial oversight of UDC's employees by a PCT employee, or vice versa.

RECOMMENDED that the Committee:

- a. note the ongoing work on the public health agenda
- b. agree in principle to support UPCT in recruiting a Director of Public Health; and
- c. delegate relevant arrangements to the Executive Manager Environmental and Cultural Services subject to consultation with the Chairman of Health and Housing.

Background Papers: Choosing Health – Making healthy choices easier, HM Government

Appendix A

HEALTH INEQUALITIES	<p>Negotiating with Leisure Centres on cheaper access for young people Healthwise – aimed at young women who do not participate in PE Bodycare– aimed at teaching junior school age about healthy living Young Peoples’ Disability Group Bid submitted to Sport England to target a weight management programme at young people U2005 – Health information tent Cultural Festival – Health Information Tent BEST Project Children and Young Peoples Strategic Partnership Improving housing conditions – private sector. Adaptations to Housing for Disabled occupants. Health & Safety at Work – inspection of work places and investigation of workplace accidents. Air quality monitoring</p>
SMOKING	<p>Crucial Crew Motorwise Trained Smoking Counsellors Smoking in the workplace – information to employers and catering premises Smoke free eating directory – Essex LA initiative to provide a directory of smoke free eating places across the county</p>
OBESITY	<p>See Health Inequalities Members of the Obesity Working Group for Children Heartbeat award (in conjunction with Dietician, PCT) Information on healthy eating</p>
SEXUAL HEALTH	<p>BEST Project Action for Men’s Health – Commissioning Partners Leisure Centres/CICs distributing condoms Joint working with PCT in schools</p>
MENTAL HEALTH	<p>ASBO activity Nuisance Complaints MIND Project – accessing services at a local level Drug Action Packs for parents and young people Family Support Centre – advice and counselling Noise Complaints</p>
ALCOHOL MISUSE	<p>Binge Drinking Project with local publicans BEST Bodycare Bodywise – Mountfitchet School General drug and alcohol education Motorwise Crucial Crew Summer and Christmas Road Safety Campaigns School Information Points Z Bike Training Licensing Act – statutory consultees to the Licensing Authority re: nuisance, noise, hours of opening etc from licensed premises patrons</p>
CHILDREN	<p>CYPSP and Youth Initiative Working Group Action Plans</p>

OLDER PEOPLE	Falls Prevention Keeping Active for Older People Electric Blanket testing Message in a Bottle Road Safety for Older People Older Peoples Service Planning Group Adaptations to housing
PERSONAL HEALTH	Democracy Week – Youth Forum involved in improving school toiletry conditions
DEVELOPING WORKFORCE	Health Promotion Officer post – commencing summer 2005
RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT	GEORGE Group - Health Promotion for 24 – 59 year olds – Commuter information points and associated health checks in conjunction with the PCT and Leisure Centres Airport Health Impact study
INFORMATION & TRAINING	Food Hygiene training courses – min 6 per year, open to everyone Information on food and health and safety at work activities – newsletters, leaflets, information packs

Committee: Health and Housing
Date: 9 June 2005
Agenda Item No: 11
Title: Work Plan for Committee
Author: Rod Chamberlain (01799) 510508

Summary

- 1 This report advises the Committee of the main issues expected to come before the Committee during 2005-6

Background

- 2 Committees of the Council have found it helpful to be aware of the main issues that are expected to be considered during each financial year.
- 3 Accordingly the following list indicates the date of the Committee and the scheduled reports for each meeting

	Sept 8	Oct 27	Jan 12	Jan 26
Health & Housing	Q1 Performance Monitoring; PI's. Service & Financial Planning (TT, PO'D) Allocations Policy relating to Homelessness (EP) Garage Sites (RM/SC) Tenant Compact Review (EP) Food Service (GS)	Q2 Performance Monitoring: PI's. Service & Financial Planning (TT, PO'D) Tenants in BAA Footprint (WC/LP)	Q3 Performance Monitoring: PI's. Service & Financial Planning (TT, PO'D)	Rent Review (PO'D)

- 4 Unfortunately no main business has been identified, at this stage, for the March 2006 meeting. However there is an expectation that some of the earlier reports submitted to the Committee will require follow up attention by the Committee.
- 5 In addition it is expected that there will be numerous other issues that have not yet been identified, that will require consideration by the Committee during the year.
- 6 Every effort will be made by Officers to ensure that reports are submitted to the Committee as outlined. In some cases, due to a number of factors, there can be changes to the timetable.

RECOMMENDED that the Committee agrees the provisional work programme timetable

Background Papers: Service Plan 2005