

BOROUGH OF BARROW-IN-FURNESS

HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM

Meeting: Thursday, 15th January, 2009
at 2.00 p.m. (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. Disclosure of Interests

A Member with a personal interest in a matter to be considered at this meeting must either before the matter is discussed or when the interest becomes apparent disclose

1. *The existence of that interest to the meeting.*

2. *The nature of the interest.*

3. *Decide whether they have a prejudicial interest.*

A note on declaring interests at meetings, which incorporates certain other aspects of the Code of Conduct and a pro-forma for completion where interests are disclosed accompanies the agenda and reports for this meeting.

4. Confirmation of minutes of meeting held on 27th November, 2008.

5. Apologies for Absence/Changes in Membership.

FOR DECISION

STRATEGIC PLANNING

(R) 6. Housing Revenue Account.

(D) 7. Housing Maintenance Investment Programme 2009/10.

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

HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM MEMBERS:

Councillors: D. Dawes

O. N. Flitcroft

J. Hamezeian

L. Hammond

M. Irwin

D. V. James (Councillors' nominated Chairman appointed at Annual Council meeting)

R. E. J. Maltman

J. Waiting (Chairman for meeting management purposes)

Tenant Representatives: Mrs. P. Charnley

Mrs. M. Burgess

Mr. N. Hird

Mrs. K. Hotchkiss

Mr. A. McIntosh

Mr. D McMillan

Mr. T. Slater

Mrs. J. McMurray

HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM

Meeting: 27th November, 2008
at 2.00 p.m.

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

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

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

RESOLVED:- That by reason of the special circumstances outlined below the Chairman is of the opinion that the following item of business not specified on the agenda should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency in accordance with Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act, 1972.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Reason</u>
Supporting People: Older People Strategic Review (Minute No. 39)	To enable the Council's response to be submitted to Supporting People before a workshop due to be held in January 2009.

29 – Disclosures of Interest

Councillor Waiting declared a personal interest in Agenda Item No. 11 – Financial Inclusion: Development of a Credit Union (Minute No. 37). She was working with the Credit Union with regards to this matter.

Mrs Charnley declared a personal interest in Agenda Item No. 11 – Financial Inclusion: Development of a Credit Union (Minute No. 37). She was a member on a Working Group with regards to this matter.

Mr McIntosh declared a personal interest in Agenda Item No. 11 – Financial Inclusion: Development of a Credit Union (Minute No. 37). He was a member on a Working Group with regards to this matter.

30 – Minutes

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

31 – Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors Dawes and Flitcroft.

32 – Equality Impact Assessments

The Housing Manager reported that in line with the Council's key priorities to achieve Level 2 of the Equalities Standard this financial year, Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) must be carried out in Council services. The aim was to improve work by making sure that the Council did not discriminate in the way its services were provided, and where possible, equality and diversity and good relations between different groups was provided.

As part of the Council's commitment, an initial generic EIA of the Housing Service had been carried out and an Action Plan had been drafted to carry out the EIAs on specific service areas, within the next six months. The generic EIA of the Housing Service was attached as an appendix to the Housing Manager's report.

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

- An essential part of the process was to understand the client group;
- Build on information the Housing Service currently hold on how best to communicate with its customers; and
- Gain a more in-depth understanding of practical issues, e.g. customer requires caller to knock loud and wait to give them chance to answer the door.

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

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

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

RECOMMENDED:- That:-

- (i) The information on Equality Impact Assessments be noted; and
- (ii) The action taken by the Housing Service be endorsed.

33 – Sub Regional Choice Based Lettings Scheme

The Customer Services Manager updated Members on the progress of the sub regional choice based lettings scheme. The report sought agreement for the Housing Service to support the sub regional choice based lettings bid to the Communities and Local Government (CLG).

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

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

There were likely to be a number of benefits from sub regional schemes which span housing authority boundaries:-

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

Communities and Local Government (CLG) was committed to ensuring that social housing tenants had more choice and control over where they lived. The aim was to build communities that were stable, viable and inclusive.

CLG was providing funding to Local Authorities to support the development of the new sub regional and regional choice based letting schemes. This would enable Local Authorities to be part of a sub regional or regional choice based letting by 2010. The sub regional Choice Based Lettings Group had submitted a bid to CLG. The outcome of the bid was due in December 2008. If the sub regional bid was successful the funding would be released at the end of December 2008.

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

RECOMMENDED:-

- (i) That the information be noted on the sub regional choice based lettings scheme; and
- (ii) That the Housing Managers stance be endorsed and it be agreed to participate in principle in the Cumbria scheme.

34 – Stackwood Avenue Community Centre

The Housing Manager reported that this Community Centre had had very limited use for some time. He advised Members that the Community Group using the Centre had now re-located to St. Aidan's Church.

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

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

RECOMMENDED:- That it be agreed to the production of detailed plans and the appointment of Capita to project manage conversion of the Stackwood Avenue Community Centre into a two-bedroomed bungalow.

35 – Ocean Wave Community Centre

The Housing Manager reported that at the Housing Management Forum held on 28th February, 2008 it was agreed to enter into a Management Agreement for the above community centre with a group called Ocean Wave, for a twelve month period. The purpose of his report was to seek approval to continue this arrangement on a longer-term basis.

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

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

The Housing Manager recommended that alterations be carried out to the toilet facilities in order to meet the Disability Discrimination Act at a cost of approx. £5,000 and that Ocean Wave group had raised funds towards the rest of the costs.

It was moved by Councillor Waiting and seconded by Councillor Irwin that the full costs of the alterations, approx. £6,300 be paid in full by the Council.

RECOMMENDED:-

- (i) That alterations be carried to the toilet facilities in order to meet the Disability Discrimination Act and the Council meet the full costs of approx. £6,300; and
- (ii) Ocean Wave group manage the centre on a day-to-day basis and meet all outgoings.

36 – Mediation Services

The Housing Manager reported the Housing Service supported mediation services by providing an annual cash grant to Resolve Mediation.

Funding was to provide youth mediation services to avoid homelessness amongst young people and also mediation services to help resolve neighbour disputes within the Council's own housing stock.

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

The Housing Manager had had some initial discussions with CADAS to discuss offering these services in the Barrow Borough Council area, which they were interested in doing. He had already made Resolve aware of this. From his discussions with CADAS and the feedback he was getting from other Cumbria authorities he suggested that CADAS was in a better position to provide these services on the Council's behalf. He therefore requested that Members of the Forum agree to him serving notice on Resolve and entering into an alternative arrangement with CADAS as soon as was practical.

RECOMMENDED:- That consideration of this item be deferred until the next meeting for further information to be provided on the work of CADAS.

37 – Financial Inclusion: Development of Credit Union

The Housing Manager reported that the principles of Financial Inclusion were seen as key issues which social landlords should engage with. By way of definition, the concept of Financial Inclusion included:-

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

RECOMMENDED:- That support to the creation of a Credit Union be given in principle and to work with the organisations mentioned above to develop a proposal for further consideration.

38 – Status Survey

The Housing Manager's report provided Members with initial information on the recently completed Status Survey. A copy of the report along with the Executive Summary was attached as an appendix to the Housing Manager's report.

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

The Status Survey covered a range of issues, including:-

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

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

The Executive Summary showed that information had been provided on comparative figures from earlier surveys carried out and also against comparative landlords.

Below is a table which gives headline information from the survey:-

Indicator	2003	2006	2008	% Change
Overall satisfaction with landlord	82%	81%	87%	+6%
Rent good value for money	79%	82%	84%	+2%
Satisfaction with accommodation	85%	84%	88%	+4%
Satisfaction with the general condition of the property	82%	79%	86%	+7%
Satisfaction with the area	80%	77%	81%	+4%
Getting hold of the right person easily	81%	80%	82%	+2%
Staff helpful	90%	88%	90%	+2%

Satisfaction with repairs and maintenance	84%	82%	88%	+6%
Tenants being kept informed	83%	85%	79%	-6%
Account take of tenants views	72%	73%	76%	+3%

The Housing Manager reported that the headline figures showed an improvement across most areas. In particular, he drew Members attention to the 'overall satisfaction' with landlord services which had increased to 87%.

Feedback did appear to be influenced by the 'age' of tenants, and in doing so there was a relationship with areas.

Further work was required to study this information and he suggested that the Tenant Participation Compact Working Party be asked to study it and report further.

RECOMMENDED:-

- (i) That the information shown in the report be noted; and
- (ii) That the Tenant Participation Compact Working Party consider the results in more detail and use the information to influence the development of future Service Delivery Plans.

39 – Supporting People – Older People Strategic Review

The Housing Manager reported that at the meeting on 28th August, 2008 Members considered the recently completed Supporting People review of Older Persons Services. The review was suggesting the need for changes in the way Older Persons Services were commissioned and a full copy of the report was provided.

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

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

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

The Housing Manager showed in his report the numbers of people which had been consulted and invited to attend workshops.

In addition, the Chairman of the Executive Committee had also written to the Supporting People Team expressing concerns about changes to the service. A copy of their response was attached to the Housing Manager's report for information.

The letter provided an explanation as to the reason for changes being proposed and also offered to set up a two day workshop in January specifically to draft an Implementation Plan for the Borough. He therefore, requested Members to give further consideration to the proposals contained within the Strategic Review of Older People.

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

RECOMMENDED:-

- (i) That the proposals of the Strategic Review be endorsed;
- (ii) The Supporting People Team's offer to complete the Workshop in Barrow be accepted; and
- (iii) That Councillors James and Waiting be nominated to attend the above workshop.

40 – Performance Information - 7th April to 5th October, 2008

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

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS								
Housemark/ BVPI / Local	Performance Indicator	Actual 2004/5	Actual 2005/6	Actual 2006/7	Actual 2007/8	Target 2008/9	April to June 2008	To 5 Oct 2008
	Rent Arrears and Collection							
BV66a	% Rent Collected	98.3%	98.1%	97.88%	96.78%	98%	90.17%	93.32%
BV66b	% Tenants with > 7 weeks arrears	N/A	5.76%	5.89%	6.82%	5.5%	6.01%	7.18%
BV66c	% Tenants served with NOSP for arrears	N/A	33.37%	35.48%	29%	25%	18.6%	24.2%
BV66d	% Tenants evicted for rent arrears	N/A	0.99%	1.05%	0.66%	0.5%	1.6%	1.2%
Housemark	Current tenants arrears as % of rent roll	2.86%	2.9%	2.99%	2.96%	2.5%	3.05%	3.31%
	Void management							
BV212	Average relet time for dwellings (in days)	40.8	34	28	35.9	28	37.8	35.8
Housemark	% rent loss through vacant dwellings	1.7%	1.19%	0.98%	1.41%	1%	1.5%	1.4%
Local	% rent loss due to voids – garages	1.97%	3.6%	2.63%	2.81%	2%	3.2%	2.99%
	Homelessness							
Housemark	Average stay in B & B for families with children or pregnant women (in days)	N/A	3.5	2	10	3	9	6

Housemark	% of homeless applications where decision made and notified within 33 days	70%	99%	98.5%	95.3%	99%	88.9%	88.2%
Local	Average length of stay in B&B (in days)	N/A	24.5	22	14.4	12	13.9	17.9
Local	Average length of stay in dispersed (in days)	45	50	45	48	28	41	49
Local	Average length of stay in dispersed for families with children (in days)	52	61	34	41	28	30	45
Local	Average number of homeless households in dispersed accommodation	7.5	5.9	5.8	7.3	5	11.7	10.8
BV213	% of households whose situation was resolved by housing advice	NA	NA	NA	N/A	75%	NA	NA
NI 156 <i>(new for 08/09)</i>	Number of households living in temporary accommodation	--	--	--	13	10	20	10
	Housing Applications							
Local	% Housing applications answered within 6 days	96%	99%	95%	52%	95%	34%	61%
	Repairs							
Housemark	% urgent repairs completed within Government time limits	88.1%	85.7%	89.59%	78%	92%	84.07%	87.22%
Housemark	% emergency repairs completed on time	97.4%	98.4%	93.6%	84.36%	94%	84.09%	92.45%
Housemark	% routine repairs completed on time	83.4%	92.9%	92.3%	77.26%	93%	76.79%	89.91%
Housemark	% urgent repairs completed on time	81.6%	93.2%	78.7%	74.86%	90%	75.71%	81.65%
NI 158 <i>(was BV184a)</i>	Proportion of homes which are non-decent	--	--	17.8%	2%	1.75%	2%	NA
Local	Average time taken to complete non-urgent repairs (in days)	9.7	7.6	10	13.7	8	10.3	13.8%
	General Management							
NI 160 <i>(new for 08/09)</i>	Local authority's tenants' satisfaction with landlord's services	--	--	--	--	82%		

RENT ARREARS as at week ending 5th October 2008				
Area	Current £	% Gross Debit	Former Tenants £	% Gross Debit
Central	83,614.31	4.93	26,923.51	1.59
Dalton	19,449.10	2.90	4,341.36	0.65
Roosegate	73,188.24	3.36	24,748.50	1.13
Ormsgill	62,404.27	3.17	66,324.48	3.37
Walney	27,137.46	2.28	3,367.29	0.28
Miscellaneous	1,658.81	8.40	0.00	0.00
Dwellings total	267,452.19	3.46	125,705.14	1.63
Garages	6,190.00	3.82	1,646.82	1.02
Homeless	1,881.79	3.60	25,034.70	47.88
Total	275,523.98	3.47	152,386.66	1.92
Grand Total	£427,910.64 5.39%			

FORMER TENANT ARREARS

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

VOIDS from 7 th April 2008 to 5 th October 2008						
	Central	Dalton	Ormsgill	Roosegate	Walney	Total
1 Bedroom						
Ground-floor flat	6	1	17	12	2	38
Upper-floor flat	18	1	12	4	6	41
Bungalow	1	1	3	2	2	9
Sub total	25	3	32	18	10	88
2 Bedrooms						
Ground-floor flat	0	1	3	2	0	6
Upper-floor flat	6	0	10	3	1	20
Bungalow	0	0	0	0	0	0
House	8	0	2	5	2	17
Sub-total	14	1	15	10	3	43
3 Bedrooms						
Ground-floor flat	1	0	0	0	0	1
Upper-floor flat	0	0	0	1	0	1
Bungalow	0	0	0	0	0	0
House	3	2	6	9	5	25
Sub-total	4	2	6	10	5	27
4 Bedrooms						
House	0	0	0	1	0	1
5 Bedrooms						
House	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	43	6	53	39	18	159

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

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

NEW TENANCIES
7th April 2008 to 5th October 2008

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

HOUSING PROPERTY AS AT 30th September 2008

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

SOLD PROPERTIES
7th April 2008 to 5th October 2008

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

RESOLVED:- That the information on the Performance Information Report be noted.

41 – Planned Maintenance Programme 2008/09

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

RESOLVED:- To note the information.

The meeting closed at 3.15 p.m.

PLANNED MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME 2008/09

APPENDIX (I)

SCHEME	CONTRACTOR OR SUPPLIER	CONTRACTOR	AVAILABLE BUDGET	NO OF DWELLINGS COMPLETED	INVOICES RECEIVED	COMMENTS
REWIRES	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	KEITH WILSON	£250,000.00	65	£219,094.00	95% COMPLETE
ONE OFF REWIRES	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	KEITH WILSON	£0.00	14	£33,427.51	100% COMPLETE
ELECTRICAL TESTING	HOUSING MAINTENANCE CONTRACT	INTEGRAL	£175,000.00	400	£7,468.00	50% COMPLETE
BATHROOMS II	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	AB MITCHELL	£150,000.00	47	£92,090.00	100% COMPLETE
BATHROOMS II	HOUSING MAINTENANCE CONTRACT	INTEGRAL	£100,000.00	30	£88,000.00	60% COMPLETE
KITCHENS I	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	AB MITCHELL	£275,000.00	100	£207,314.00	95% COMPLETE
KITCHENS II	HOUSING MAINTENANCE CONTRACT	INTEGRAL	£225,000.00	36	£115,580.00	100% COMPLETE
ONE OFF KITCHENS	HOUSING MAINTENANCE CONTRACT	INTEGRAL	£0.00	55	£1,591.00	100% COMPLETE
HEATING I	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	AB MITCHELL	£375,000.00	106	£365,339.00	80% COMPLETE
HEATING II	HOUSING MAINTENANCE CONTRACT	INTEGRAL	£375,000.00	85	£324,628.00	97% COMPLETE
ONE OFF HEATING	HOUSING MAINTENANCE CONTRACT	INTEGRAL	£50,000.00	8	£23,919.00	100% COMPLETE
ONE OFF HEATING	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	AB MITCHELL	£50,000.00	8	£13,059.00	100% COMPLETE
DIGITAL TV	NEGOTIATED	AERIALEK	£60,000.00	190	£37,070.00	100% COMPLETE
ROOFING	TENDERED	CUMBRIA ROOFING	£88,000.00	16	£57,098.00	100% COMPLETE
DISABLED ADAPTATIONS	TENDERED	AB MITCHELL	£250,000.00	50	£118,329.00	NA
PAINTING (Central)	NEGOTIATED	B MONCUR	£130,000.00	490	£138,769.00	95% COMPLETE
PAINTING (07/08 Committed)	NEGOTIATED	B MONCUR	£70,000.00		£34,420.00	100% COMPLETE

HOUSING MAINTENANCE EXPENDITURE 2008/09

Date 18/11/2008

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

HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM	(R) Agenda Item 6
Date of Meeting: 15th January, 2009	
Reporting Officer: Director of Regeneration and Community Services	
Title: Housing Revenue Account	
Summary and Conclusion:	
The purpose of this report is to agree a Housing Revenue Account Budget for the financial year 2009/10.	
The report also provides an Expected Outturn Budget for the current year 2008/09 and information regarding balances.	
Recommendations:	
Members are asked to:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Note information at (1) and agree to redirect savings of c.£140,000 to the Housing Investment Programme.2. Note information on balances at (2).3. Agree 2009/10 budget as shown in Appendix A. (in year surplus £52,670)4. Agree an average increase of 5.8% in line with Rent Restructuring guidelines and note the effect on individual rents as shown at Appendix B.5. Agree an increase of Garage charges of 6%.6. Agree that Homelink charges be increased when Inflationary increase has been agreed by the Supporting People Commissioning body (4.2) and other charges be increased as outlined at 4.3.	

Report

The purpose of this report is to agree a Housing Revenue Account Budget for the financial year 2009/10.

The Report also provides an Expected Outturn Budget for the current year 2008/09 and information regarding balances.

The expected outturn and proposed HRA for 2009/10 is attached at **Appendix A**.

In drafting this report I have followed the final subsidy determination provided in this year's guidance on rent setting and Housing Subsidy. This has been issued earlier than last year and changes to this are not anticipated.

1. Expected Outturn Budget 2008/09

It is envisaged that any significant savings during 2008/09 will be in the areas of rental income and salaries. For example:

- (i) Rental Income sales during the year are significantly lower than when the budget was set.
 - Sales assumed in original 2008/09 budget = 40 dwellings
 - Sales current expectations 2008/09 = 6 dwellings (4 completed as at December 2008)
 - Expected income increase in rental income = £65,000

(ii) Salaries

Changes in personnel, working hours and unfilled vacancies have resulted in savings estimated to be £75,000 for the year to date.

(iii) Estimated savings 2008/09

Increased rental income	:	£65,000
Savings on salary costs	:	£75,000

Total	:	£140,000

(iv) It has been your practice to re-direct savings on in-year accounts to the Maintenance Budget. I would recommend c.£140,000 be transferred to the Housing Investment Programme for 2008/09.

2. Balances on the Expected Outturn for 2008/09

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

2.1 **Balance on the Major Repair Reserve as at 31 March 2008** : **£7,409**

This amount was earmarked for programmed work which is ongoing from the year before.

2.2 **Balance on the Housing Revenue Account as at 31 March 2008** : **£725,423**

The Housing Revenue Account Balance includes an element for funds committed to ongoing housing maintenance of £24,897.

2.3 Breakdown of Balances on Account:

Balance 1.4.08	:	£725,423
Ongoing Housing Maintenance	:	(£24,897)

Balance 31.3.09	:	£700,526
HMF agreed Stackwood Avenue (28.6.07)	:	(£50,000)

		£650,526

This figure is in line with the recommended minimum balances as suggested by the Borough Treasurer. However, it would be prudent to await completion of the final accounts in July before committing any further expenditure.

Please also note the £50,000 reallocated monies (HMF 28.6.07) was to be spent over two years and Stackwood Avenue was included in this report.

3. Draft Proposed HRA 2009/10

Appendix A also shows a proposed budget for 2009/10.

3.1 In developing a proposed budget for 2009/10 the following factors have been taken into account:

- Rent increases will be applied in accordance with the rent restructuring plans (further details are shown below) – currently averaging 5.8% on actual rents per annum 6.2% on guideline rents per annum.
- General inflation of 2% on salary costs, 4% on utilities or in line with contractual increases.
- Rental income is based on sales of 25 dwellings in 2009/10.

3.2 As referred to above, rent levels are dictated by the rent restructuring rules.

This year's rent restructuring guidance has been set to reflect the Department of Communities and Local Government's (CLG's) decision to fix rent increases for this year and next. The Retail Price Index (RPI) for September 2008 was 5% and hence would have led to rent increases in excess of 7%. As a result, the convergence date of 2009/10 has been pushed back to 2023-24, leading to an average increase in our rents of 5.8%.

The effect of this is as follows:

	48 Weeks	52 Weeks
2008/09	£62.73	£57.91
2009/10	£66.37	£61.27
Increase	5.8%	5.8%

Attached at **Appendix B** are further details of the resultant rents for different property types.

3.3 The HRA has also included a contribution to the Housing Repair Account which covers maintenance of the Council Dwellings. This has been increased by 6% in line with the rent increase. The amount of £1,092.68p per dwelling provides £2,986,290 for repairs and investment.

4. Other Charges

4.1 Garage Charges

The proposed budget does not include any increase on garage charges.

The following extra income would be generated if certain increases were approved:

3%	:	£4,610
4%	:	£6,150
5%	:	£7,690
6%	:	£9,230
10%	:	£15,390

The effect on individual garage charges would be as follows:

	2008/09	+3%	+4%	+5%	+6%	+10%
Garage rate 1	£4.99	£5.14	£5.19	£5.24	£5.29	£5.49
Garage rate 2	£6.90	£7.11	£7.18	£7.25	£7.31	£7.59

Please note that VAT is payable in addition to the above charges for garage holders who are not also Council tenants.

Demand for garages is buoyant with few vacancies.

I would suggest that garage charges should be increased by 6%, in line with the increase for residential properties.

4.2 Homelink

As Members will be aware, the Homelink Service is provided both to tenants and private users.

It is a requirement that the Housing Revenue Account does not subsidise private users.

To this end, the following price increases need to be introduced for 2009/10:

	2008/09 charge	Increase	2009/10
Homelink only	£125.26	5.29p	£130.55
Full Mobile Warden Service	£272.90	17.39p	£290.29

This equates to a 4% increase on Homelink and 6% on the Full Mobile Warden Services and will generate an extra £3,660 income which is not included in the Appendix A 2009/10 Budget.

Charges for tenant users are fixed by Supporting People and these increases are awaited.

4.3 Other Charges

Previously the principle has been agreed to vary certain charges as required to reflect the full cost of the service. These charges are altered when contracts are reviewed. Areas covered by this are staircase cleaning, supported tenancies, furnished tenancies, and dispersed accommodation.

I would recommend this principle be continued.

5. **Investing in the Future**

The suggested in-year surplus for 2009/10 shows a figure of c.£52,000.

During the year, however, there are a number of key issues to be progressed, for example:

- (i) The future of our contract with Integral.
- (ii) The development of choice-based lettings.

Further consideration of these two issues will be required, the outcome of which may necessitate investment. I would therefore recommend, in agreeing the HRA for 2009/10, that funds are not redirected as this time.

6. **Housing Revenue Account Review**

You will note within this Report that changes have been introduced to the rent restructuring rules, extending the rent convergence target to 2023/2024.

Linked to this is the way in which the Housing Revenue Account subsidy system currently operates.

It has previously been announced that a review of the Subsidy system is to be carried out by the Spring of 2009.

I will keep you informed of the progress of the review and implications on our Housing Revenue Account as it proceeds.

7. **Summary**

The proposed HRA budget for 2009/10 has been drafted to reflect the latest guidance.

The proposed rent increase is in line with the rent restructuring plan and provides a convergence date of 2024.

Contribution to the Maintenance Budget has been increased by 6%.

Recommendations:

Members are asked to:

1. Note information at (1) and action taken by the Housing Manager.
2. Note information on balances at (2).
3. Agree 2009/10 budget as shown in Appendix A.
4. Agree an average increase of 5.8% in line with Rent Restructuring guidelines and note the effect on individual rents as shown at Appendix B.
5. Agree an increase of Garage charges of 6%.
6. Agree that Homelink charges be increased when Inflationary increase has been agreed by the Supporting People Commissioning body (4.2) and other charges be increased as outlined at 4.3.

Legal Implications

Proposals in report reflect guidance on rent restructuring.

Financial Implications

Borough Treasurer expects 25 sales is too high.

Health and Safety Implications

N/A

Key Priorities or Corporate Aims

Meet the housing needs of the Borough and make decent housing more accessible

Risk Assessment

N/A

Equal Opportunities

N/A

Background Papers

2009/10 Subsidy Determination.

HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM	(D) Agenda Item 7
Date of Meeting: 15th January 2009	
Reporting Officer: Colin Garnett, Housing Manager	
Title: Housing Maintenance Investment Programme 2009/10	
Summary and Conclusion:	
The purpose of this report is to consider and agree the expenditure profile for the financial year 2009/10. It provides details of progress during the current year and details of ongoing investment.	
Recommendations:	
Members are asked to agree:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Note progress on achieving the Decent Homes Standard shown at point 1.2. Agree principles highlighted in point 2 and the annual Investment Profile shown at Appendix C.3. Agree continued delivery proposals through Cumbria Housing Partners, including external painting subject to a positive financial assessment.	

Report

The purpose of this Report is to agree the spend profile for the Housing Services Investment Plans for the next financial year.

It also seeks to suggest how it should be delivered.

Background:

The investment Programme is funded from the Housing Revenue Account or from the Major Repairs Allowance.

The principles adopted in drafting these proposals continue with the previously agreed approach that seeks to ensure:

- i The council achieves the Decent Homes standard.
- ii The investment split between responsive and planned works at a minimum meets the Audit Commission's guidelines, and seeks to maximise monies spent on planned works.
- iii The aspirations of tenants are considered and incorporated where appropriate.
- iv To work collaboratively with other housing providers and contractors to improve delivery of planned and responsive repairs services.

Properties identified for improvement are completed on a "worst first" basis. Programmes of delivery reflect the need to satisfy Decent Homes requirements and are based on the results from an independent stock condition survey completed in 2005/06.

1. Progress during the Current Year 2008/09

All planned investment works have progressed satisfactorily during the year, the bulk of which were completed prior to Christmas.

This shows improved delivery of the Investment Plan over previous years due to the following:

1. Investment Plan agreed earlier than normal enabling earlier starts on site.
2. Scheme spread over a longer duration resulting in fewer properties being worked on at one time.
3. Reduced administration and management time by using the CHP framework.
4. Implementing new contract for Disabled Adaptations resulting in quicker delivery.

The table below gives details of the number of properties that have benefited from the more significant Investment Plans:

Type of Work	No of Properties
Kitchens	191
Bathrooms	97
Central Heating	228
Rewires	79
Painting	499
Roofing	16 (roofs)
Adaptations	109
Digital TV	190

As a result of this Investment, the proportion of homes failing the Decent Homes Standard has reduced as follows:

	Properties	Percentage of Stock
* Baseline	509	18%
as at 4/08	68	2%
as at 4/09 (est)	47	1.7%

* 2005/06 stock condition survey

2. Suggested Investment Profiles for 2009/10

Attached at **Appendix C** is a suggested investment profile.

The proposals have been developed based on the principles highlighted at i, ii, iii and iv above.

I would draw your attention to the following issues regarding the draft Investment Plan.

Adaptations for Tenants with a Disability

I have recently been advised by Cumbria County Council of changes in the way requests for small adaptations are handled.

Traditionally, all requests for adaptations, whether small or large, involved an assessment by an Occupational Therapist.

With regard to tenants of this Council, small adaptations were also funded by the County Council.

I am now advised that this arrangement has been ended and the assessment for and cost of small adaptations (up to £1000) should be completed by ourselves.

I am currently seeking to establish the historical cost of such small adaptations from the County Council.

For the purposes of drafting this Investment Plan, no additional resources have been identified for meeting this commitment. I am currently looking to draft new procedures for dealing with such requests and will monitor this expenditure closely.

I would ask Members to note this information and agree the proposed action.

Communal Smoke Alarms - £75,000

During 2008/09 officers have undertaken a fire risk assessment of the communal areas in conjunction with the Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service and identified a need to improve the general safety of three storey flats serviced by an enclosed stairwell. It is proposed to provide additional smoke detectors and alarms in the main stairwell area and link them to the tenants' own smoke detection equipment. The fire department have agreed to these improvements. It is intended to complete this work over a two year basis.

I would recommend Members to agree this proposal.

Door Entry Replacements - £100,000

During 2008/09 officers undertook a review of the existing door entry systems fitted to flats with communal entrances and concluded that the units are fast approaching the end of their serviceable life. The review also indicated that the present systems do not comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. In view of this it is proposed to commence a 4 year replacement programme on a "worst first" basis.

I would recommend Members to agree this proposal.

3. Progressing the Planned Investment Works

As members will be aware, 50% of the major investment works, plus rewires, are completed through Cumbria Housing Partners. Other areas of work have been delivered through one-off contracts.

The remaining 50% of such works, plus other substantial works such as external painting and disabled adaptations, have been tendered as individual contracts.

During the current year we have been pursuing the option of completing the external painting through CHP. This assessment is ongoing and if positive, will look to deliver the work through CHP.

Recommendations

1. Note progress on achieving the Decent Homes Standard shown at point 1.
2. Agree principles highlighted in point 2 and the annual Investment Profile shown at Appendix C.
3. Agree continued delivery proposals through Cumbria Housing Partners, including external painting subject to a positive financial assessment.

Legal Implications

N/A

Financial Implications

N/A

Health and Safety Implications

N/A

Key Priorities or Corporate Aims

Meet the housing needs of the Borough and make decent housing more accessible

Risk Assessment

N/A

Equal Opportunities

N/A

Background Papers

N/A

Barrow Borough Council
HRA Resource Accounting – Budget 2009/10

	Actual	Original	Outturn	Budget
	2007-2008	2008-2009	2008-2009	2009-2010
HRA – Resource Accounting				
Income				
Dwelling rents	(7,793,980)	(8,039,670)	(8,039,670)	(8,499,850)
Other rents	(292,745)	(283,630)	(283,630)	(311,270)
Charges for services & facilities	(397,155)	(358,980)	(358,980)	(374,770)
Government grant	0	0	(8,000)	0
	(26,868)	(26,870)	(26,870)	(26,070)
	(8,510,748)	(8,709,150)	(8,717,150)	(9,211,960)
Expenditure				
Management	2,678,171	2,978,050	2,986,580	3,079,800
Maintenance – contribution to repairs account	2,688,647	2,817,250	2,817,250	2,986,290
Housing subsidy payable	331,371	41,810	41,810	399,940
Depreciation on dwellings	1,859,930	1,629,510	1,629,510	1,934,670
Depreciation on non-dwellings	107,910	107,910	107,910	118,230
Bad debt provision	66,654	109,610	109,610	82,210
Debt management costs	17,160	14,250	14,250	13,350
	7,749,843	7,698,390	7,706,920	8,614,490
Net cost of services	(760,905)	(1,010,760)	(1,010,230)	(597,470)
Premium on debt redemption – amortisation	251,250	249,970	249,970	249,970
Discount on debt redemption – amortisation	(22,782)	(9,050)	(9,050)	(8,900)
Interest on balances – paid	124,006	74,300	74,300	39,450
External interest paid on borrowing	393,737	393,740	393,740	393,740
Interest on mortgages	(738)	(880)	(880)	(460)
Interest on pension liabilities	667,000	602,000	602,000	667,000
Expected return on pension assets	(616,000)	(526,000)	(526,000)	(616,000)
Deferred grants released	(40,260)	0	0	(36,550)
Net operating expenditure	(4,691)	(226,680)	(226,150)	90,780
Transfers to Major Repairs Reserve	0	358,850	358,850	0
Transfers from Major Repairs Reserve	(187,060)	(107,910)	(107,910)	(150,090)
Reversal of grants released	38,348	0	0	36,550
Revenue financed capital	1,985,675	0	0	0
Net charges for retirement benefits FRS17	(208,919)	0	0	(307,030)
Employer's contributions	227,784	0	0	277,120
Pension Reserve	0	(54,080)	(54,080)	0
(Surplus) / Deficit	1,851,136	(29,820)	(29,290)	(52,670)

