

# **BOROUGH OF BARROW-IN-FURNESS**

## **HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM**

Meeting: Thursday 17th January, 2013  
at 2.00 pm (Committee Room 4)

Group Meetings at 1.15 pm

### **A G E N D A**

#### **PART ONE**

1. To note any items which the Chairman considers to be of an urgent nature.
2. Admission of Public and Press

To consider whether the public and press should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of any of the items on the agenda.

3. Declarations of Interest

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

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

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

4. Confirmation of the Minutes of the meeting held on 29th November, 2012.
5. Apologies for Absence/Changes in Membership.

#### **FOR DECISION**

##### **OPERATIONAL**

- (R) 7. Housing Revenue Account 2013/14.
- (D) 8. Housing Maintenance Investment Programme 2013/14.
- (D) 9. STAR Survey Key Findings.

#### **FOR INFORMATION**

10. Performance Information Report.

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

**HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM MEMBERS:**

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

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

**For queries regarding this agenda, please contact:**

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## **HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM**

Meeting: 29th November, 2012  
at 2.00 p.m.

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

**Tenant Representatives:-** Mrs P. Charnley, Mr M. Burton, Mr W. McEwan, Mrs C. McFadyen, Mr A. McIntosh and Mr W. Ward.

### **13 – Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14th June, 2012 were taken as read and confirmed.

### **14 – Apologies for Absence/Changes in Membership**

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillor Williams and Mr N. Hird and Mrs K. Warne.

### **15 – Cumbria Choice: Choice-Based Lettings Scheme - Update**

The Housing Manager submitted a report providing Members with an update on the progress of the review of the Cumbria-wide Choice Based Lettings (CBL) Policy.

It was noted that the Cumbria Choice County-wide Choice Based Lettings Scheme had been in operation since April 2011. The partnership had agreed a full review would take place of the CBL policy within the first 12 months of implementation.

The Project Board had commissioned Housing Quality Network (HQN) Equality and Diversity consultant Chris Root to carry out a detailed equality impact assessment of the Cumbria-wide CBL Policy which had involved:-

- A review of the existing CBL Equality Impact Assessment;
- A development of a small survey for stakeholder groups;
- A development of a small survey of a sample group of CBL users;
- A telephone survey of a small sample group of users who had never made a bid on Cumbria Choice but remained on the CBL waiting list;
- Analysis of all surveys with outcomes reported to the Project Board to feed into and form an integral part of the policy review; and
- A new reviewed Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) of the CBL Policy.

The Project Board had organised a Policy Review Day which took place on 23rd February, 2012 and had been attended by all partners and representatives from the Tenants' Panel. The work carried out by HQN had been fed into the review to

ensure any amendments reflected issues identified and to ensure the policy had taken due regard to accessibility for all groups.

The draft review policy had been out to a four-week public consultation which had closed on 12th October, 2012. During that period letters had been sent out to all Stakeholders advising them on how to access the online consultation. An overview of the consultation had also provided to the Tenant Participation Compact Working Party on 18th September, 2012. The proposed changes had been highlighted in a summary on the Cumbria Choice and the Housing Services Websites.

Members had been requested to agree the final draft of the review of the Allocation Policy which formed the operating basis for Cumbria Choice, a copy of which had been placed in the Members' Room and was also available to view online on the Housing Service's Homepage. A summary of the changes to bands in the Choice Based Allocations Policy had been noted as follows:-

<b>Band A – Urgent housing need</b>	No change to criteria for this Band. A few changes will be made to how the criteria are assessed.
<b>Band B – High Need for housing</b>	<p>2 additional criteria will be added to the Band B on cumulative preference grounds. If the customer is:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An existing social tenant who is under occupying the accommodation;</li> </ul> <p><b>or</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An existing social tenant who is suffering financial hardship as a result of housing benefit changes under Welfare Reform;</li> </ul> <p><b>and</b> also has another qualifying need from Band C they will be awarded Band B.</p> <p>A few changes will be made to how the criteria are assessed.</p>
<b>Band C – Medium need for housing</b>	<p>2 additional criteria will be added to the Band C:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Customers who are not currently in social housing who are suffering housing related hardship as a result where rehousing would alleviate the situation; and</li> <li>2. Existing social housing tenants who suffer financial hardship as a result of housing benefit changes under welfare reform.</li> </ol> <p>The following criterion will be removed from Band C:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Customers who share facilities with other households who are not members of their household / family.</li> </ol> <p>A few changes will be made to how the criteria are assessed.</p>
<b>Band D – Low need for housing</b>	No change
<b>Band E – Reduced priority</b>	No change

## **Other changes**

Numbers of rooms required by a household and overcrowding are currently based on a requirement that two children of the same sex share a room until they are 21. It is proposed to reduce this to 16.

In addition to these changes some alterations will also be made to clarify the existing policy and to allow the partners to make lettings which take account of housing benefit changes which are being made by the Government in its Welfare Reform programme.

RECOMMENDED:- (i) To note the information contained in the report; and

(ii) To agree the final draft of the review of the Allocation Policy which formed the operating basis for Cumbria Choice.

## **16 – 9-12 Pennine Gardens, Barrow-in-Furness**

The Housing Manager submitted a report requesting Members to consider what action should be taken with regards to a block of four flats, 9-12 Gardens, Barrow-in-Furness which were subsiding due to on-going settlement which had resulted in damage to the fabric of the flats and would involve significant costs to resolve.

The block in question formed the end part of a terrace of 12 flats constructed around 1970. Built on two floors with two one bed flats on each floor they were served by an open corridor and staircase. Three properties were currently tenanted and the fourth was leasehold.

It was noted that whilst there was clear evidence of movement in the four flats it did not extend to the remainder of the block.

The Housing Service had been aware of the problem of settlement in these four flats for a number of years which was evidenced by cracking in the fabric of the building and sloping floors to differing levels inside the flats. More recently, Structural Engineers, M & P Gadsden, had assessed the extent of the movement and the options for rectifying the problem. It was noted that they had advised that, “unfortunately due to specific site conditions in the sub-grade material and the presence of simple strip foundations of variable quality, flats 9-12 had undergone severe settlement due to foundation failure. This had resulted in damage to the exterior and interior fabric of the building. On-going repairs had been undertaken over a long period of time but, there was evidence to suggest that the on-going movement had not ceased”.

The Housing Manager had reported that the Structural Engineers had concluded their investigations and advised that damage could potentially reach a point where the structure would become unsafe.

Options available were noted as follows:-

**Option 1** Pile and needle beam scheme to underpin the existing structure - estimated cost £114k. This scheme would involve the removal of the

ground floor slab with internal piling works. Upon completion, the building would be technically safe from major further settlement, but would not correct the sloping floors.

**Option 2** Demolish and re-build using a mini pile scheme – estimated cost £225k. This scheme would result in the construction of new property, and would require piled foundations.

**Option 3** Demolish – estimated cost £45k. This was the simplest solution but entailed the loss of four residential units.

It was noted that the properties would have to be vacated for all the options resulting in loss of rent for the three tenanted flats and for the fourth leaseholder as the Council would need to provide alternative accommodation without charge. The loss varied according to the option chosen and it was noted that the Council would have to meet the residents' reasonable costs of relocation.

Relocation costs would be similar for all options with the additional cost of buying back the leasehold property in Option 3. With regards Option 3, this would appear to be the cheapest option but would leave the Council in the position that it had debt attributable to those properties and would lose their rental income.

The outline costs for each of the options had been presented as follows:-

<b>OUTLINE COSTS PENNINE GARDENS</b>	<b>Factor</b>	<b>REPAIR</b>	<b>DEMOLISH &amp; REBUILD</b>	<b>DEMOLISH</b>
Build Costs		£114,000	£225,000	£45,000
Buy Back (market value)	1			£50,000
Mortgage debt	£13,341			£40,023
Rent Loss - Demolition	£65			£456,901
Rent Loss Repair (weeks)	16	£4,144		
Rent Loss Rebuild (weeks)	32		£8,288	
Disturbance	0			
Moving costs	1,000	£8,000		£4,000
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>£126,144</b>	<b>£233,288</b>	<b>£595,924</b>

It was noted that the Council's block insurance policy excluded subsidence caused by 'settlement or movement of made up ground' and the cost of work would therefore have to be met from Housing Revenue Account resources. It was the responsibility of the Council to insure the building therefore any contribution could not be requested from the Leaseholder.

In respect of consultations with residents, it was noted that the three Tenants wished to remain on the Griffin estate and would be prepared to relocate on either a temporary or permanent basis. The Leaseholder was also in agreement with the option of moving on a temporary basis but has had also said indicated that she would consider selling the flat back to the Council.

It was noted that the delivery of the preferred Option would be subject to competitive tendering in accordance with Council Procedures. The Council did not have the resource in-house to project manage the delivery and the Housing Manager therefore recommended that M&P Gadsden be appointed to manage and deliver the scheme on the Council's behalf for an agreed fee of 2.5% for project management and 1% for the CDM requirements.

It was also noted that the adjoining flats would experience some disturbance whilst work was being undertaken and a risk assessment would need to be completed for each of the options to decide whether additional measures would be required.

RECOMMENDED:- (i) To agree Option 1 to repair at an estimated cost of £114k with the cost being met from the Housing Revenue Account Reserves;

(ii) To agree the temporary re-housing of the residents of the four properties and meet the cost of rent loss and residents' removal costs from the Housing Revenue Account Reserves;

(iii) To appoint M & P Gadsden to project manage the appointment of a suitably qualified Contractor through to completion; and

(iv) To agree not to buy back the single leasehold property.

## **17 – Welfare Reform Action Plan – Progress**

The Housing Manager submitted a report to update the Forum on progress made to inform and discuss with Tenants the implications of Welfare Reform and to mitigate the risks to the Housing Revenue Account.

It was noted that on 14th June, 2012 the Forum had agreed a six-point Action Plan in preparation for the Welfare Reform changes and Officers had been progressing the Plan. A copy of the full Action Plan had been appended to the report and the following was information on the progress made to date.

### **Action 3: (Identifying the extent of under-occupation)**

The sum of possible rent shortfall (based on 2012/13 rents) was as follows:-

<b>Property Size</b>	<b>Rent – possible shortfall (48 weeks)</b>
2	£56,751.84
3	£201,551.04
4	£35,171.52
Total	£293,474.40

It was noted that the figures in the table above were the worst case scenario and had been calculated based on Tenants who were under-occupying by one bedroom in two-bedroomed properties and by two bedrooms in three or more bedroomed properties.

The number of Tenants potentially under-occupying was as follows:-

Property Size	Number of Tenants
2	114
3	198
4	32
Total	344

All Tenants identified had now been written to and asked to contact the Service. The response from Tenants who had been in contact was as follows:-

- 14 were not under-occupying;
- 64 were under-occupying;
- 49 would make payment;
- 15 would like to move.

Total 78 (22.6% response).

As a general comment, from those Tenants who did get in contact, it would appear many were already aware of the changes being introduced. The Housing Manager advised that the service would be following up by telephone, where possible, or visits to Tenants who had not responded, initially looking to identify Tenants who were already in arrears.

#### **Action 4: (Making best use of stock)**

In considering changes to the Choice Based Lettings System, regard had been given to the Welfare Reform proposals. It was noted that Officers had also continued to promote the Homeswapper service and the Council had also recently agreed an Incentive Scheme to help Tenants downsize which would be rolled out shortly.

#### **Action 5: (Benefits Liaison)**

293 households had been identified with a non-dependent, of which 79 attracted non-dependent deduction. Action would be taken to alert families of whether they may be responsible for changes to their benefits due to non-dependent deductions.

#### **Action 6: (Communication Plan)**

Changes to Welfare Reform would continue to be included in Housing Matters. At present this was concentrating on under-occupation but would be extended to cover Universal Credit as more detail becomes available.

The Housing Manager advised that the above information largely focused on how the Housing Service could help existing Tenants. However, the Welfare Reform agenda may have further implications. For example, some properties had service charges which were currently Housing Benefit rebatable. The introduction of Universal Credit may leave a shortfall between their benefit level and the Council's charges. In



addition, the Housing Service operated two specific services which needed to be reviewed, namely: furnished tenancies and the provision of dispersed accommodation to meet the Council's duties under the Homeless Persons Legislation which may be similarly impacted.

RECOMMENDED:- (i) To note the information contained in the report; and

(ii) To agree a review of furnished tenancies and charges for dispersed accommodation.

## **18 – United Utilities Reward Offer**

Referring to Minute No. 10 of the meeting held on 14th June, 2012 the Business Support Manager submitted a report with further information concerning the introduction of a Water Charge Collection Scheme proposed by United Utilities.

The proposal was that the Council would collect United Utilities water charges from Tenants in return for a fee. The target date for commencement was 1st April, 2013.

The Business Support Manager advised that against the background where the various welfare reforms would reduce benefit entitlements and Universal Credit and Direct Payments would challenge those Tenants who had no experience of paying rent or service charges, the Council needed to be in a position of readiness where it could help Tenants to budget and set up bank accounts (or alternative pay arrangements) if the Council were to continue collecting the same levels of rent and service charge payments.

The United Utilities offer provided both the funding to support a financial inclusion role and the savings on water charges to help offset some of those benefit reductions for Tenants.

The benefits to the Housing Revenue Account were as follows:-

- Funded full time role for 12 months of £30k;
- Between £84k -£119k income dependent on collection rates; and
- Potential to raise the level of Direct Debit payers from 10% to the 30% achieved by United Utilities.

The risk was that the rates would be collected at a lower rate than forecasted however, the HRA could provide for that debt.

The potential savings for Tenants was £280k and benefits were as follows:-

- Housing Officer helping Tenants with water charge assessments/meter installations and setting up pay arrangements;
- The 900 single occupant flats could save up to £180 per annum each;
- £10 discount for every customer;
- £5 discount incentive for Direct Debit Payers (currently 791);

- First step for each of the blocks of flats to have bulk meters installed which would save the individual £120 standing charge (all block Tenants would need to agree to this at a future date);
- Payment of rent and water charges in a single transaction; and
- Ability to pay more flexibly with the Council than United Utilities using all existing Council payment methods and the facility to spread payments over the year by paying weekly or monthly.

Following discussion with the Tenant Participation Compact Working Party, it was considered that consultation should be on the basis of a majority vote of those who respond. Officers would suggest, however, having taken advice, that Tenants be asked to respond if they do not wish the Housing Service to participate. If the majority say 'No', it was suggested that the scheme should not be progressed at that time.

It was noted that legal advice had been sought to determine whether or not the Council would need to vary the tenancy conditions to make the payment of water charges a condition of the tenancy as with the rent and other charges. It was also noted that arrears owed to United Utilities prior to April 2013 would remain payable to them by separate agreement.

The forecast for the first five years had been presented in detail within the report. In summary, for year one, the Council would receive a charging schedule for each of its Tenants after their individual discounts had been deducted at the start of the year of £835,035. The Council would pay United Utilities a total of £681,800, payable in quarterly instalments. The balance of £153,235 would be retained by the Council to cover void loss and arrears. The term of the contract was five years with the ability to terminate on either side with six months notice at year end.

It was noted that the following actions had already been taken:-

- A mapping exercise which provided the profile for the commercial terms;
- Initial consultation with the Tenant Compact Working Party where it was agreed to carry the proposal forward to Tenants on a majority vote and where nil returns would not be counted;
- Newsletter to all Tenants explaining the proposal with Q & A's;
- Ballot form with pre-paid envelope hand delivered to be returned by 5th January; and
- The legal agreement had been properly reviewed and as a result the Contract was back with United Utilities to make amendments.

It was noted that further actions to be taken included awaiting the outcome of the consultation; and awaiting advice on the issue of changes to Tenancy Agreements.

**RECOMMENDED:-** To recommend adoption of the scheme, subject to consultation with Tenants.

## **19 – 2 Clive Street, Barrow-in-Furness**

The Housing Manager submitted a report in respect of a miscellaneous end of terrace house located in Hindpool at 2 Clive Street, Barrow-in-Furness. Whilst the property had benefitted from planned works such as central heating, kitchen and bathroom upgrades over recent years it presently suffered from a number of structural problems which required significant investment.

A recent dilapidation report had recommended the following improvements:-

- Install a new damp proof course to all lower ground floor walls;
- Pebble dashing to the external envelope of the building;
- Renewal of internal ground floor timbers; and
- Repairs to the chimney stack and roof.

The work was expected to cost approximately £20,000 and would take in the region of six to eight weeks to complete. The occupants would need to be relocated during that period.

Initial discussions had taken place with the occupants regarding long term relocation to an alternative property. This proposal would allow alternative solutions such as the disposal to be considered. With Members' agreement the Housing Manager suggested that the Council continued to explore this option and report any options arising from a potential change of tenancy as they arise.

**RECOMMENDED:-** (i) To agree to invest approximately £20,000 from the Housing Revenue Account resources to remedy the structural problems identified in the report; and

(ii) To agree that the Housing Manager would explore the option to relocate the occupants to an alternative property.

## **20 – Performance Information Report**

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

**RESOLVED:-** To note the Performance Information report.

## **21 – Planned Maintenance Programme 2012/13**

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

**RESOLVED:-** To note the information.

The meeting closed at 2.32 p.m.

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

Performance Indicator	Actual 2008/09	Actual 2011/12	Actual 2012/13			Target (Median)
<b>Satisfaction</b>						
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the landlord's services overall	87%					83%
Percentage of tenants satisfied with repairs and maintenance	88%					79%
Percentage of tenants satisfied that their views are taken into account	76%					64%
Percentage of new tenants satisfied with the allocation and letting process	NA					NA
Percentage of residents satisfied with estate services	81%					82%
<b>Value for Money -</b>	<b>Actual 2010/11</b>	<b>Actual 2011/12</b>	<b>Apr -Sept 2012</b>			
<b>Direct Costs per property</b>						
Overhead per property		£ 140				
Major & Cyclical works	£1,294	£ 1,256				£1,241
Responsive Repairs	£455	£ 480				£424
Void Repairs	£144	£ 167				£176
Rent Arrears & Collection	£53	£ 54				£71
Community Involvement	£27	£ 38				£46
Anti Social Behaviour	£29	£ 41				£38
Neighbourhood Mgt (Estates/Tenancy mgt.)	£34	£ 102				£66
Housing Options	£43	£ 36				£37
Leasehold	£50	£ 70				£136
Total staff turnover	10.3%	7.0%	2.0%	3.9%		8%
Ave. working days lost / sickness absence	22.3	14.0	4.1	9.0		10.5

Housing Property	2011-12	DISPERSED 2011-12	2012-13	DISPERSED 2012-13
HSE	1290	0	1289	0
FLATS	1258	11	1246	11
BUNGALOWS	157	0	157	0
<b>TL DWELLINGS</b>	<b>2705</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2692</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Community Centres</b>			<b>5</b>	
LEASEHOLDS	202		203	
GARAGES	484		486	
SHOPS	20		20	

SOLD PROPERTIES	2011-12	SOLD 2011/12	2012-13	SOLD 2012/13
HSE	148,500	3	38,000	1
FLAT	27,000	1	22,000	1
LAND	2,312	1		
<b>TL</b>	<b>177,812</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>60,000</b>	<b>2</b>

HOMELESSNESS	Actual 2010/11	Actual 2011/12	Apr -Jun 2012	Apr-Sep 2012
Homeless ave. days in temporary dispersed accommodation	46	59	53	71
Homeless ave. days in temporary B&B accommodation	31	20	26	21
Homeless Total Cases Closed	616	752	334	515
Homeless Advice	216	339	210	313
Homeless Prevention	174	114	42	59
Homeless Applications	226	185	36	78
Homeless Successful Preventions	146	85	38	52
Eligible Homeless (Owed a full duty)	27	29	8	13

HOUSING REGISTER	Actual 2010/11	Actual 2011/12	Apr -Jun 2012	Apr -Sept 2012
Applicants on housing register	1700			
Active Direct Applicants			1508	1553
Active Transfer Applicants			316	323
Cumbria Choice Register		1745	1824	1876

## PLANNED INVESTMENTS 2012-13

SCHEME	CONTRACTOR OR SUPPLIER	AVAILABLE BUDGET	NO OF PROPERTIES	EXPENDITURE TO DATE	START DATE	ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE	CONTRACTOR	COMMENTS	Leasholders affected?
RE-ROOFING WORKS (GRIFFIN)	TBC	£300,000	183	£ -	TBC	Mar-14	Tender due for return 30/11/12	2 YEAR CONTRACT	Yes
BALCONY REPAIRS	TBC	£50,000	52	£ -	TBC	Feb-13	TBC	2 YEAR CONTRACT	Yes
FENCING WORKS (HINDPOOL)	TBC	£50,000	69	£ -	TBC	Feb-13	Tender due for return 30/11/12	3 YEAR CONTRACT	Yes
REWIRES	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	£254,000	120	£ 127,001	1.4.2012	Feb-13	K WILSON	65% COMPLETE	No
BATHROOMS	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	£300,000	200	£ 150,449	1.4.2012	Feb-13	AB MITCHELL	50% COMPLETE	No
KITCHENS	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	£800,000	325	£ 440,148	1.4.2012	Feb-13	AB MITCHELL	60% COMPLETE	No
HEATING	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	£575,000	200	£ 464,378	1.4.2012	Feb-13	AB MITCHELL	80% COMPLETE	No
RE-POINTING	CUMBRIA ROOFING	£150,000	66	£ 130,993	1.4.2012	Feb-13	CUMBRIA ROOFING	70% COMPLETE	Yes
PAINTING	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	£200,000	500	£ 157,094	1.4.2012	Feb-13	GH JONES	80% COMPLETE	Yes

## HOUSING MAINTENANCE COMMITMENTS 2012-13

	Funding Available 2011-12	EXPENDITURE TO DATE	Weekly Available	Gross Comm. as a % funds available
Tenant Demand Repairs	£ 500,326	£ 126,868	£ 9,622	25%
Preliminary Cost	£ 399,674	£ 236,860	£ 7,686	59%
Voids	£ 200,000	£ 25,252	£ 3,846	13%
Gas Servicing	£ 280,000	£ 12,008	£ 5,385	4%
Decoration Vouchers	£ 35,000	£ 15,693	£ 673	45%
Disrepair Claims	£ 25,000	£ 351	£ 481	1%
Environmental Impmts	£ 25,000	£ 11,212	£ 481	45%
Disabled Adaptations	£ 300,000	£ 100,098	£ 5,769	33%
Electrical Testing	£ 75,000	£ 22,101	£ 1,442	29%
Door Entry Maintenance	£ 20,000	£ 20,394	£ 385	102%
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,935,000.00</b>	<b>£570,837.00</b>	<b>£35,769.23</b>	

<b>HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM</b>	<b>(R) Agenda Item 7</b>
<b>Date of Meeting: 17th January, 2013</b>	
<b>Reporting Officer: Jane Coles, Business Support Manager</b>	
<b>Title: Housing Revenue Account 2013/14</b>	
<b>Summary and Conclusion:</b>	
The purpose of this report is to agree a Housing Revenue Account Budget for the financial year 2013/14.	
The report also provides an Expected Outturn Budget for the current year 2012/13 and information regarding balances.	
<b>Recommendations:</b>	
Members are asked to:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Note information at (1).</li><li>2. Note information on balances at (2).</li><li>3. Note and agree the information in point 3 and agree 2013/14 budget as shown in <b>Appendix A</b>.</li><li>4. Agree an increase of 3.85% in line with Rent Restructuring guidelines and note the effect on individual rents as shown at <b>Appendix B</b>.</li><li>5. Agree an increase of Garage charges of 3.85% point 4.1.</li><li>6. Note the information at 4.2 &amp; 4.3.</li></ol>	

**Report**

The purpose of this report is to agree a Housing Revenue Account Budget for the financial year 2013/14.

Under Self Financing introduced last year Barrow Borough Council took on additional borrowing of £17.089 million. We are expected to service the cost of that debt and manage and maintain our stock to the Decent Homes Standard from the rents collected from our tenants.

The Settlements Payments Determination 2012/13 was calculated on the assumption that we would continue to bring our rents in line with and converge by 2015/16 and thereafter increase rents by Retail Price Index (RPI) + 0.5%.

We expect that the revised Business Plan (to take account of the actual loan profile and the comprehensive spending review) will indicate significant HRA surpluses in future, assuming that management & maintenance costs remain stable. We will therefore need to review and agree prioritising the possible applications of any surpluses: (1) accelerated debt repayment, (2) increased investment in stock (3) investment projects where the need or the

return is clearly identifiable, (4) increased levels of management services to assist with the challenges imposed by Welfare Reform (5) a blend of all 4.

The Report also provides an Expected Outturn Budget for the current year 2012/13 and information regarding balances.

The expected outturn for 2012/13 and proposed HRA Budget for 2013/14 is attached at **Appendix A**.

## 1. Expected Outturn Budget 2012/13

The outturn for the year forecasts a net surplus of £ 49,640. Key factors are:

- HRA Income will be higher than expectations;
- Dwelling rents, other services and charge income are in line with budget;
- Right to Buy sales may be higher than budgeted due to this year's raise in the discount available which has an effect on stock levels. We are expecting a stock level of 2,696 by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013;
- Tenancy terminations have increased by 13% in the last quarter which is mainly attributed to increases in deaths and transfers to the private sector;
- Management costs are marginally higher than budget; and
- Maintenance expenditure is in line with budget.

## 2. Balances on the Expected Outturn for 2012/13

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

2.1 **Balance on the Major Repair Reserve as at 31 March 2012** : **£ 1,601**

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

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

### 2.3 Breakdown of Balance on Account

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

## 3. Proposed HRA Budget 2013/14

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

- 3.1 The Settlements Payments Determination provided a budgetary and business planning framework for rental income and management, major repair and maintenance expenditure. Rents should increase by RPI + 0.5% however, rents are still expected to converge with those of a similar size, type and location by 2015/16, as they did under the Subsidy Determinations, by adding or subtracting a maximum of £2.00 per week to move the property to its 'target rent'. As a result dwelling rents increase by £354,540.
- 3.2 We face many challenges with the introduction of the various Welfare Reforms, Universal Credit and loss of Direct Payments. The greatest risk is to our income



collection which could reduce by as much as 2% unless we provide sufficient resource to pursue non payers and provide assistance for those with difficulties. We will take a risk based approach to debt cases which means that debts which are escalating are caught at the first opportunity and directed towards an experienced case Officer. This means that Officers carry a smaller but more complex, challenging and time consuming caseload. I would recommend that we employ an additional full time Income & Debt Recovery Officer. We have may provision for this post in the proposed budget as well as increasing the bad debt provision by £114,300.

- 3.3 I would like to suggest that we carry out General Needs Survey to establish future Housing Needs within the borough at an estimated cost of £30k.
- 3.4 The budget has allowed for an additional £200k Voluntary Repayment Provision and £390k for investment projects to be considered which either address a need highlighted in the recent Tenants' STAR Survey to improve the appearance and safety of certain neighbourhoods or which will bring about a sustainable improvement in cost to tenants / HRA.

#### 4 Dwelling Rents

- 4.1 The effect for this Authority is as follows:

##### Calculation for 2013/14

RPI in September 2012= 2.6%

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

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

	52 Weeks	48 Weeks	<b>Average Rent increase over 48 weeks</b>
2012/13	£68.65	£74.37	
2013/14	£71.29	£77.23	
+/-	£2.64	£2.86	
<b>Increase</b>	<b>3.85%</b>	<b>3.85%</b>	

Attached at **Appendix B** are further details of the resultant rents for different property types. Rents on an individual property basis will differ.

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

#### 5 Other Charges

- 5.1 Garage Charges

It is normal practice to recommend that garage rents are increased in line with residential properties. The proposed budget includes a 3.85% increase on garage charges which generates £7,448. The effect on individual garage charges would be as follows:

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

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

I would, therefore, suggest you give consideration to increasing current rents by 3.85%.

## **6 Business Improvement Initiatives**

Initiatives for 2013/14 will include:

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

## **7 Summary**

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

### (i) Legal Implications

The recommendation has no legal implications.

### (ii) Risk Assessment

The recommendation has no implications.

### (iii) Financial Implications

The recommendation has significant financial implications outlined in the body of the report.

### (iv) Health and Safety Implications

The recommendation has no implications.

### (v) Equality and Diversity

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

### (vi) Health and Well-being Implications

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

## Background Papers

Nil

# APPENDIX A

## Barrow Borough Council - HRA Budget Subjective Summary

Housing Revenue Account	Actual	Original	Outturn	New
	2011-12	Budget	Budget	Budget
	2012-13	2012-13	2012-13	2013-14
<b>INCOME</b>				
Dwelling rents	(8,902,880)	(9,514,990)	(9,514,990)	(9,869,530)
Other rents	(315,228)	(318,350)	(318,430)	(336,800)
Charges for services and facilities	(310,362)	(186,990)	(237,830)	(204,090)
Other income	(26,443)	0	(16,350)	(2,000)
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>(9,554,913)</b>	<b>(10,020,330)</b>	<b>(10,087,600)</b>	<b>(10,412,420)</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>				
Repairs and maintenance	2,657,528	2,967,370	2,967,370	2,967,370
Supervision and management	2,496,744	2,371,810	2,387,540	2,338,410
Housing subsidy payable	18,180,463	0	1,900	0
Depreciation and impairment - Dwellings	2,712,100	1,696,920	1,696,920	1,659,770
Depreciation and impairment - Operational assets	202,065	121,350	121,350	127,010
Bad debt provision	79,179	99,180	99,180	213,480
Debt management expenses	18,444	32,970	32,970	15,560
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>26,346,523</b>	<b>7,289,600</b>	<b>7,307,230</b>	<b>7,321,600</b>
<b>NET COST OF SERVICES</b>	<b>16,791,610</b>	<b>(2,730,730)</b>	<b>(2,780,370)</b>	<b>(3,090,820)</b>
HRA share of Corporate & Democratic Core	72,700	310,860	310,860	348,720
<b>NET COST OF HRA SERVICES</b>	<b>16,864,310</b>	<b>(2,419,870)</b>	<b>(2,469,510)</b>	<b>(2,742,100)</b>
Gains and losses on HRA assets	(104,756)	0	(562,480)	0
Interest payable + Voluntary Debt repayment	467,032	2,098,890	2,098,890	2,020,260
Interest on mortgages	(4)	0	0	0
Interest on pension liabilities	785,000	843,000	843,000	785,000
Expected return on pension assets	(627,000)	(582,000)	(582,000)	(627,000)
<b>SURPLUS / DEFICIT ON HRA SERVICES</b>	<b>17,384,582</b>	<b>(59,980)</b>	<b>(672,100)</b>	<b>(563,840)</b>
Statutory debits / credits to the HRA				
Accrued leave - reversal	1,369	0	0	0
SF payment reversal	(17,089,000)	0	0	0
Derecognition of non current assets	(87,217)	0	0	0
HRA premiums on early repayment of debts	130,007	45,760	45,760	43,440
HRA discounts on early repayment of debts	(10,071)	(10,080)	(10,080)	(10,080)
HRA net charges for retirement benefits	(321,058)	(261,000)	(261,000)	(158,000)
Gains and losses on sale of fixed assets	98,350	0	558,150	0
Gain on sale of contingent assets	6,406	0	4,330	0
Gain on previous HRA impairment	79,221	0	0	0
Reversal of impairment loss	(1,087,712)	0	0	0
Transfer to MRR	218,240	208,000	208,000	606,150
Transfer from MRR	(121,593)	(121,350)	(121,350)	(127,010)
HRA employer's contribution to pension scheme	314,594	198,650	198,650	209,340
<b>NET (SURPLUS) / DEFICIT</b>	<b>(483,883)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(49,640)</b>	<b>0</b>

## APPENDIX B

Sample Rents 2013-14							
Basic Rents Charged							
Archetype		No. Beds	Area/Sub Area	Constrained 2012/13 Rent	Constrained 2013/14 Rent	Weekly Difference	% Change
Ground Floor Flat	Low Rise	1	ORM/OR1	£62.53	£64.55	£2.02	3.23%
Upper Floor Flat	Medium Rise	1	CEN/LHI	£63.05	£65.94	£2.89	4.58%
Ground Floor Flat	Medium Rise	1	CEN/CEN	£64.44	£67.68	£3.24	5.03%
Upper Floor Flat	Low Rise	1	WAL/NWA	£65.09	£67.78	£2.69	4.13%
Bungalow	Mid Terrace	1	DAL/DAL	£68.98	£71.58	£2.60	3.77%
Upper Floor Flat	Low Rise	2	ORM/OR2	£70.84	£73.65	£2.81	3.97%
Bungalow	End Terrace	1	WAL/NWA	£70.63	£72.72	£2.09	2.96%
Bungalow	Semi Detached	1	ORM/GRI	£70.63	£72.72	£2.09	2.96%
Upper Floor Flat	Medium Rise	2	ROO/NBN	£72.53	£75.49	£2.96	4.08%
Ground Floor Flat	Medium Rise	2	ROO/NBN	£73.08	£75.87	£2.79	3.82%
Ground Floor Flat	Low Rise	2	ORM/GRI	£73.95	£76.82	£2.87	3.88%
House	End Terrace	2	ORM/OR1	£75.36	£77.80	£2.44	3.24%
House	Mid Terrace	2	CEN/HIN	£76.10	£78.83	£2.73	3.59%
Upper Floor Flat	Low Rise	3	ROO/NBN	£78.25	£81.66	£3.41	4.36%
House	Semi Detached	2	ROO/GGS	£77.77	£80.13	£2.36	3.03%
Bungalow	Semi Detached	2	DAL/DAL	£78.88	£81.30	£2.42	3.07%
Ground Floor Flat	Medium Rise	3	CEN/CEN	£79.50	£81.98	£2.48	3.12%
House	End Terrace	3	ROO/ROO	£81.80	£84.95	£3.15	3.85%
House	Mid Terrace	3	WAL/NWA	£85.61	£89.09	£3.48	4.06%
House	Semi Detached	3	WAL/WAL	£87.44	£90.65	£3.21	3.67%
Bungalow	Mid Terrace	3	ORM/OR2	£87.99	£91.03	£3.04	3.45%
Bungalow	End Terrace	3	ORM/OR2	£88.55	£91.41	£2.86	3.23%
Bungalow	Semi Detached	3	ROO/NBN	£88.55	£91.41	£2.86	3.23%
House	End Terrace	4	ROO/ROO	£89.25	£92.74	£3.49	3.91%
House	Mid Terrace	4	ROO/GGS	£89.78	£94.36	£4.58	5.10%
House	Semi Detached	4	DAL/DAL	£94.95	£98.39	£3.44	3.62%
House	End Terrace	5	ROO/GGS	£97.85	£101.61	£3.76	3.84%
House	Semi Detached	5	ROO/ROO	£105.31	£109.76	£4.45	4.23%

<b>HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM</b>	<b>(D) Agenda Item 8</b>
<b>Date of Meeting: 17th January, 2013</b>	
<b>Reporting Officer: Colin Garnett, Housing Manager</b>	
<b>Title: Housing Maintenance Investment Programme 2013/14</b>	
<b>Summary and Conclusion:</b>	
<p>The purpose of this report is to agree the expenditure profile for 2013/14. The proposed profile and priorities are based on the agreed Five-year Asset Management Strategy 2010.</p> <p>The Report provides details of progress during the current year and has regard to operational issues that have emerged during the delivery of this on-going programme.</p>	
<b>Recommendations:</b>	
Members are asked to:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Note progress on achieving and maintaining the Decent Homes Standard, shown at point 1;</li><li>2. Agree the annual investment profile shown at <b>Appendix C</b>;</li><li>3. Agree monies from reserves be made available to complete the Griffin roofing replacement and Hindpool balcony repairs in 2013/14; and</li><li>4. Agree continued delivery through Cumbria Housing Partners (CHP) but note consideration to delivery by other means should the value exceed the permitted level.</li></ol>	

## Report

The purpose of this report is to agree the expenditure profile for 2013/14. The proposed profile and priorities are based on the agreed Five-year Asset Management Strategy 2010.

The Report provides details of progress during the current year and has regard to operational issues that have emerged during the delivery of this on-going programme.

## **Background**

The 2013/14 Investment Programme is funded from the Housing Revenue Account. The principles adopted in drafting the programme continue with the previously agreed targets set out in the 2010 Asset Management Plan (AMP) and seeks to ensure:

- The Council maintains the Decent Homes Standards;
- The aspirations of tenants are considered and incorporated within the Programme; and
- To work collaboratively with other housing providers and contractors to improve delivery of planned and responsive repair services.

The information below provides an update on the progress with regard key targets included in the AMP:-

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

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

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

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

### 1. Progress during the Current Year 2012/13

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

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

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

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

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

Type of Work	No of Properties due for improvement in 2012/13	No of Properties estimated to be completed by 31/3/13
Kitchens	200	273
Bathrooms	100	158
Central Heating	160	240
Rewires	90	90
Painting	350	348
Minor Adaptations	100	101
Major Adaptations	100	69

It is our normal practice when presenting this report to provide an update on the number of properties failing the decent homes standard.

Our assessment is based on information provided by the independent Stock Condition Surveys carried out in 2006 and 2010. The updated property records of the investment work completed since the survey indicates that the current position is:

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

## 2. Suggested Investment Profiles for 2013/14

Attached at **Appendix C** is the proposed investment profile for 2013/14.

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

The HRA baseline model allocation for 2013/14 is:

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

With reference to the HRA report on your agenda, a sum of £360,996 has also been included and is identified in the profile as Other Contractors Planned Works. These monies are as a result of the new self-financing arrangements. Whilst they have been shown in the profile, I will bring a further report to consider options for the investment of these funds during the year and, in particular, following review of the STAR survey results.

I would also ask you note, within ‘Other Planned Maintenance’:

- Additional resources have been identified for ‘Void Major Improvement Works’. This has been identified to respond to the operational experiences of managing void property and to have the flexibility to consider completing additional investment whilst a property is vacant. A review of void standards will be progressed and a further report provided for your consideration on this matter; and
- Resources have been identified to improve security at Raglan Court.

Please also note that £300K and £50K had been identified in 2012/13 respectively to commence roof replacements and balcony repairs as referred to above. Because of the delays in progressing these contracts the first phase will not be completed in this current year.

The resources identified which are not spent in this financial year will move into reserves. I would ask you to agree, therefore, monies from reserves be used in 2013/14 to ensure both contracts are completed in the year.

### **3. Progressing the Planned Investment Works**

The majority of our planned works have been delivered through our arrangement with CHP.

A four-year framework has been established and in 2011 a series of 'mini-competitions' were completed to appoint suitable CHP contractors to undertake our investment programmes.

Officers would recommend continuing with these arrangements. I would ask you to note, however, as a 'customer' of CHP, it may be the case the Council has to limit the value of work completed through the CHP framework in order not to compromise the 'mutual status' of CHP. If this becomes an issue I will report further at a later date with alternative delivery arrangements.

(i) Legal Implications

The recommendation has no legal implications.

(ii) Risk Assessment

The recommendation has no, minor or significant implications.

(iii) Financial Implications

The recommendation has significant financial implications outlined in the body of the report.

(iv) Health and Safety Implications

The recommendation has no implications.

(v) Equality and Diversity

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

(vi) Health and Well-being Implications

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

Background Papers

Nil.



<b>HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM</b>	<b>(D) Agenda Item 9</b>
<b>Date of Meeting: 17th January, 2013</b>	
<b>Reporting Officer: Joanne Tyson, Community Involvement Manager</b>	
<b>Title: STAR Survey Key Findings</b>	
<b>Summary and Conclusion:</b>	
The purpose of this report is to inform you of the key findings following a recent Tenant satisfaction survey.	
<b>Recommendation:</b>	
Members are asked to note for information the key findings of the STAR Survey.	

**Report**

The purpose of this report is to inform you of the key findings following a recent Tenant satisfaction survey.

**Background and Introduction**

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

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

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

Barrow Borough Council Housing Service also chose to adopt the STAR Survey as our main satisfaction survey.

**Action Taken**

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

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

In total, 1,500 questionnaires and letters were mailed out to Tenants across all Council housing estates with two full reminder mailings going out to those customers who did not or could not respond to the initial mailing. The survey closed in October and a report was received in November.

In December 2012, BMG Research gave a presentation of their findings to senior Housing Service Officers, Councillors and Tenant Representatives.

The full report has now been uploaded onto the Barrow Borough Council website and the key findings and plans going forward will feature in the tenants Housing Matters newsletter in March 2013.

## **Key Findings**

We had a response rate of 35% (527 responses) which produced a 95% accuracy rate. This means that we can be very confident that the results are representative of our wider tenant population.

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

- 87% of Tenants were satisfied with the overall services provided. Satisfaction levels have remained static since 2008. Housemark benchmarking shows our performance is in the second quartile and we ranked 16th out of 43 landlords;
- 88% of Tenants were satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service. Satisfaction levels have remained static since 2008. Housemark benchmarking shows our performance is in the top quartile and we ranked 9th out of 40 landlords;
- 90% of Tenants were satisfied with the quality of their home. Satisfaction levels have increased by 2% since 2008. Housemark benchmarking shows our performance is in the top quartile and we ranked 5th out of 41 landlords;
- 85% of Tenants found staff helpful. Satisfaction levels have reduced by 5% since 2008. We are unable to benchmark this finding with Housemark;
- 89% of Tenants were satisfied with the general condition of their homes. Satisfaction levels have increased by 3% since 2008. We are unable to benchmark this finding with Housemark;
- 89% of Tenants felt they obtained good value for money from their rent. Satisfaction levels have increased by 5% since 2008. Housemark benchmarking shows our performance is in the top quartile and we ranked 4th out of 40 landlords;
- 84% of Tenants were satisfied with the neighbourhood as a place to live. Satisfaction levels have increased by 3% since 2008. Housemark benchmarking shows our performance is in the 3rd quartile and we ranked 24th out of 42 landlords;
- 80% of tenants felt that Barrow Borough Council Housing Service keeps them informed. Satisfaction levels have increased by 1% since 2008. We are unable to benchmark this finding with Housemark; and

- 79% of Tenants thought that their landlord takes account of their views. Satisfaction levels have increased by 3% since 2008. Housemark benchmarking shows our performance is in the top quartile and we ranked 7th out of 40 landlords.

Since our last survey in 2008, we have increased satisfaction with many of our services but we also recognise that there are areas where we need to improve.

For example, we had quite high dissatisfaction levels with our complaints service:

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

We will therefore be working with Tenant Representatives and Councillors to develop a plan of action, targeted at service improvement areas which have been identified through the STAR survey. This will be reported to Housing Management Forum in due course.

To read the full copy of the survey it is available to view on the Council's website, (follow links to Council Housing/Surveys).

## **Considerations**

The Tenant Compact Working Party Group and Housing Services Management Group will examine the results of the survey with a view to planning service improvement and delivery where applicable.

### (i) Legal Implications

The recommendation has no legal implications.

### (ii) Risk Assessment

The recommendation has no implications.

### (iii) Financial Implications

The recommendation has no additional financial implications.

### (iv) Health and Safety Implications

The recommendation has no implications.

### (v) Equality and Diversity

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

### (vi) Health and Well-being Implications

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

## Background Papers

Research report: Customer Satisfaction Survey 2012.

# ANNUAL INVESTMENT PROFILE : 2013/14

# APPENDIX C

Total Budget £5,233,290

## Routine Maintenance

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

## Other Planned Maintenance

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

## MRA

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

CHP = Cumbria Housing Partners

£1,324,629

£1,642,741

£2,265,920

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

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