



The Gateshead Housing Company Board of Directors

Thursday 15 January 2009 at 10am
To be held in the Board Room, Keelman House, Fifth Avenue
Business Park, Fifth Avenue, Team Valley Trading Estate,
Gateshead

Agenda

Item	Business
1.	Apologies for Absence
2.	Minutes (Pages 4-16) To approve as a correct record the minutes of the last meeting of the Board held on 13 November 2008
3.	Matters Arising <p style="text-align: center;"><u>ITEMS FOR DECISION</u></p>
4.	Board Appraisal (Pages 17-21) Report of Director of Finance
5.	Budget Monitoring (Pages 22-26) Report of Director of Finance
6.	Former Tenants' Arrears – Transfer of Accounts (Pages 27-28) Report of Director of Finance
7.	Minutes of Human Resources Committee held on 2 December 2008 (Pages 29-50) Attached

Contact: Stuart Gibson Tel: (0191) 433 5308 Date: 8 January 2009

Item	Business
8.	Minutes of Value for Money and Audit Committee held on 3 December 2008 (Pages 51-53) Attached
	<u>ITEMS FOR INFORMATION</u>
9.	Housing Revenue Account 2009/10 Report of Director of Finance to follow
10.	Kibblesworth New Build – Progress Report (Pages 54-67) Report of Chief Executive
11.	Ravensworth Road Update (Pages 68-77) Report of Director of Housing Management
12.	Housing Quality Network’s Pre-Budget Report – Implications for the Housing Sector (Pages 78-85) Report of Chief Executive
13.	Right to Manage (Pages 86-90) Report of Assistant Chief Executive
14.	The Tenant Services Authority (Pages 91-93) Report of Assistant Chief Executive
15.	Clasper Village Estate Management Board – Evaluation of the Partnership Working Arrangements (Pages 94-102) Report of Director of Housing Management
16.	Stakeholder Engagement Action Plan – Progress Report (Pages 103-110) Report of Director of Finance
17.	Petitions Update (Pages 111-114) Report of Chief Executive
18.	Outstanding Issues (Pages 115-116) Report of Chief Executive
19.	Feedback from Outside Bodies and Events
20.	Date and Time of Next Meeting The next meeting of the Board will be held on Thursday 12 March 2009 at 10am in Board Room at Keelman House, Fifth Avenue Business Park, Fifth Avenue, Team Valley Trading Estate, Gateshead

Item

Business

21.

Exclusion of the Press and Public

The Board may wish to exclude the press and public during consideration of the remaining business in accordance with the following categories of the company' Access to Information Rules: -

Item	Category
22	5
23	4



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

13 November 2008

PRESENT:

Directors

Barbara Dennis (Chair)
Angela Armstrong
Allan Curry
Stan Dawson
Kathryn Ferdinand
Paul Foy
John Hamilton
Valerie Hodge
Peter Mole
Joachim Moussounda Mouanda
William Patterson
Jim Willis
Sara Woolley

Advisers

Bill Fullen	Chief Executive
Elaine Snaith	Assistant Chief Executive
Jon Mallen-Beadle	Director of Finance
Neil Bouch	Director of Housing Management
Peter Burchall	Director of Property and Technical Services
Stuart Gibson	Company Administrator

Also Present

Alan Brownson Audit Commission

Apologies for Absence

Richard Armitage

87 ALAN BROWNSON

Alan Brownson, the Lead Inspector from the Audit Commission for the company's inspection which starts on Monday 17 November 2008 was welcomed to the meeting.

88 MINUTES

The minutes of the Board Meetings held on 25 September and 22 October 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

89 MATTERS ARISING

(i) Board Appraisal

The action plan to address the recommendations in the draft report following analysis of completed Board Governance Questionnaires will be submitted to the next meeting of the Board following the conclusion of the Board one-to-ones and to also incorporate into Board Training and Development Plan.

The Chair of the Board and the Chair of Human Resources Committee have appraised the Chief Executive.

Finance training delivered by the Director of Finance was very well received by Board Members. A further session will be arranged early in the New Year for those Board Members unable to attend.

(ii) Asset Management Strategy

Gateshead Council has approved the Asset Management Strategy.

(iii) Lettings Plan

There has been an additional request from Gateshead Council for an Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the new Lettings Policy. It is anticipated that this will not alter the timescale for implementing the first phase in January 2009.

90 REVIEW OF COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The current committee membership has been in existence for over two years now. Since that time, there have been a number of changes as a result of changes in Board membership. Some committees have regularly had vacancies on them. In addition, the two recently appointed Directors are not currently members of any committees.

A review of the current membership has therefore been undertaken and nominations have been sought from Board Members to the four committees.

Details of the current nominations received for the Board's committees and suggested membership of each committee, attempting to ensure that Directors' first and/or second choice is accommodated, were reported.

The Board has considered which directors to appoint to its committees, apart from the Chair, who is an ex-officio member of all Board committees.

The existing protocol for the size of committees is that each committee will comprise of five directors. The existing quorum of one third of Director members should be retained. However, it is suggested that membership

of each committee be increased to six directors to ensure that committees can operate effectively.

It would be sensible to continue to place a limit on the number of committees on which a director may be asked to serve and it would be sensible that this remains at two. If the Board agrees that each committee comprise six directors, most of the Board will sit on two committees. There is also currently a vacancy on the Board for a Tenant Director following the resignation of Malcolm McKie and once this vacancy is filled, it will be necessary for this person to be appointed to at least one committee.

Each committee will elect a chair and deputy chair its first meeting following agreement of committee membership.

Guidance from the Housing Corporation suggests that it is good practice to review committee membership annually.

- RESOLVED –
- (i) That the committee membership, attached as an Appendix to these minutes, be approved.
 - (i) That the size of the committees be increased to six directors on each committee.
 - (ii) That a further review of Board Membership be undertaken after the next Annual General Meeting.

91 STRATEGIC RISKS – SIX-MONTHLY REPORT

The Board agreed, at its meeting on 8 May 2008, that the strategic risk register should be reviewed and considered six monthly by the Board, previously this has been annually. The latest register was approved by the Board at its 8 May 2008 meeting.

The proposed updated strategic risk register was submitted. Whilst no changes to the overall risks are proposed, a number of changes have been made to the detail behind this.

- RESOLVED – That the updated strategic risk register be approved, subject to the risk owner/manager being identified in future reports.

92 SHORT NOTICE INSPECTIONS OF LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING SERVICES AND ALMOS – HOUSING INSPECTORATE CONSULTATION

Short notice inspections for housing services were introduced by the Audit Commission as a way of reducing the burden of regulation and other compliance requirements on Housing Associations. They are a common method for inspecting service delivery in the Education and Social Care sectors and are

particularly effective in assessing performance in front-line, customer-focused services.

They reduce administrative burdens by eliminating the drawn-out preparation associated with planned inspections and help to drive continuous improvement by encouraging inspected bodies to review their performance regularly given that an inspection could happen at any time.

Over 20 Housing Associations volunteered for 12 places on a pilot Housing Association programme that ran from September 2007 to April 2008.

In June 2008, the Audit Commission's Board considered the results of that pilot and decided that there should be a pilot programme of short notice inspections of local authority housing services including those provided by ALMOs. The Commission formally launched a consultation exercise before the introduction of this pilot.

The Commission's Board also gave its approval to the possible extension of short notice inspections to other services delivered by local government and assessed by the Audit Commission. This, however, would be dependant upon the results of the current consultation exercise on short notice inspections of local authority housing services and would be subject to a separate consultation process.

This current consultation exercise is being undertaken at the same time that the Commission is consulting on a new performance framework for local services known as Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA). Regulation of housing services delivered by local authorities such as the strategic housing role or the homelessness service will come within the remit of CAA.

A summary of the main proposals contained within the consultation document, together with the next steps, were submitted.

- RESOLVED –
- (i) That the information be noted.
 - (ii) That it be agreed that the company's participation in the Audit Commission's pilot programme of short notice inspections is not appropriate at this point in time.
 - (iii) That responses to the questions set out in the consultation paper be agreed and officers be instructed to agree the final response with the Council.

- (iv) That the following comments of the Board be fed into the final response: -
- If a short notice inspection is called because of tenant involvement, some tenants might be unhappy if they aren't given sufficient notice to get involved.
 - Risk of not showing the company in as good a light by not being given enough time to prepare properly.
 - The company should have nothing to fear if the business is being run well.
- (v) That officers be instructed to provide agreed feedback on the consultation paper to the Audit Commission within required timescales.

93 SUSTAINABILITY BUDGETS 2008/09 TO 2011/12

The ALMO funding of £232 million allocated to the company includes a 5% budget for sustainability works to enhance the Decent Homes programme.

On 11 May 2006 the Board approved the setting up of local task groups to examine strategic proposals for spending the 5% ALMO funding. Since then 26 local task groups have met involving tenants, councillors and board members on each group. The groups have led the decision making process resulting in a variety of schemes such as improved play facilities, planting, improved car parking facilities and a hedge management plan.

To date five schemes have been completed, with a further twenty one schemes agreed by local task groups and due to be completed by March 2009. The total committed budget for these schemes is £3.8 million from an original allocation of £11.6 million. An evaluation has been made of how the remaining £7.8million could be allocated for sustainability works across the remaining stock.

The Value for Money and Audit Committee considered the allocation of sustainability budgets on 13 October 2008. The committee recommended that the allocation of sustainability budgets be approved in principle, subject to a review of the programme in respect of those estates where decent homes work has already taken place, particularly those identified as having two or more red traffic lights on the estate matrix, and a revised programme be submitted to the Board for final approval.

Following the Value for Money and Audit Committee meeting, four estates have moved forward in the programme by applying the criteria recommended. These estates are Emmaville, Crookhill, Acquired Properties and Birtley West. Other estates that have

already had Decent Homes work done but not sustainability works are spread throughout the programme. This enables the company to carry out sustainability works whilst Decent Homes is on site for most estates. This approach means the company can 'tap-in' to the involvement of tenants in the Decent Homes process and save on costs whilst strategic partners are still on site.

It is proposed that a reserve is held back to enable a review of estates each year following an update of the estate matrix. The proposed reserve is £400,000.

Other work to improve the performance of estates has been carried out via estate action plans. These plans targeted five estates in 2007/08 including Redheugh and Eslington Court, Clasper Village, Beacon Lough East multis, Chandless and Bleach Green.

RESOLVED – That the amended allocation of sustainability budgets be approved.

94 PERFORMANCE – SECOND QUARTER 2008/09

The Board was informed of the results for those Performance Indicators that can be reported at the end of the second quarter in 2008/09 and comments made by the Performance Committee at its meeting on 4 November 2008.

At the end of the second quarter, of the 26 indicators where performance can be compared to 2007/08: -

- 22 indicators are traffic lighted green and are currently achieving their quarterly/annual targets.
- Three indicators are traffic lighted amber and were not on target. However performance has improved compared to 2007/08.
- One indicator is traffic lighted red and is not on target and performance has fallen compared to 2007/08.

In addition, some indicators are reported later in the year and 2008/09 is the baseline year for two new indicators.

RESOLVED – That the performance information included in the report and comments made by the Performance Committee be noted.

95 CORPORATE HEALTH PERFORMANCE – SECOND QUARTER 2008/09

The Board was informed of the results for those Performance Indicators that can be reported at the end of the second quarter in 2008/09 and comments made by the Performance Committee at its meeting on 4 November 2008.

At the end of the second quarter: -

- Seven indicators are traffic lighted green and are currently achieving their quarterly/annual targets.
- Three indicators are traffic lighted amber and are not on target. However performance has improved compared to 2007/08.
- Two indicators are traffic lighted red are not on target and performance has fallen compared to 2007/08.

RESOLVED – (i) That performance information included in the report and the comments made by the Performance Committee be noted.

- (ii) That a Performance Clinic be established to look at the difficulties in respect of the indicators around employees from ethnic communities (CH14 and CH16).

96 VALUE FOR MONEY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

The minutes of the meeting of Value for Money and Audit Committee held on 13 October 2008 were submitted.

RESOLVED – That the recommendations contained in the minutes be approved.

97 DIVERSITY AND ACCESS COMMITTEE

The minutes of the meeting of Diversity and Access Committee held on 16 October 2008 were submitted.

RESOLVED – That the recommendations contained in the minutes be approved, subject to the following minor amendment to the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and Procedure: -

Vulnerable Groups Management Meetings have incorporated the multi agency Racist Incident **Management** Meetings and not Racist Incident **Monitoring** Meetings as was previously reported.

98 PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

The minutes of the meeting of Performance Committee held on 4 November 2008 were submitted.

RESOLVED – (i) That the recommendations contained in the minutes be approved.

- (ii) That the Board receive a demonstration of Performance Point at its next meeting.

99 BUDGET MONITORING

A monitoring statement against the budget for 2008/9 as at 30 September 2008 was submitted.

The actual result for the first six months of the year was a small deficit of £65,000. The company has managed to make a slight surplus of £81,000 on staffing costs to date but have incurred an overspend of £146,000 on overhead costs.

The overspend is a general reflection of the pressures on these budget areas during the first half of the financial year as we gear up for inspection. In addition, the original budget for Keelman House Repairs was under stated as there was no previous year's data to base assumptions on and the latest forecast represents a more accurate position.

The year end forecast has also been calculated. This is currently showing a £88,000 deficit which should it materialise would be comfortably met from reserves which stood at £767,000 at the start of the financial year.

The company continues to generate efficiencies and savings where possible and feel that this level of deficit for the year reflects a fair balance between investment in services and prudential financial management.

Within the staff costs budget, the company has provided for a 2.5% cost of living increase. An interim award of 2.45% has recently been agreed, although the final agreement is subject to the outcome of arbitration. The additional cost of implementing Job Evaluation has not been included within these figures as this cost will be met from the HRA by way of an increase in the management fee.

For the first six months of the current year, the average cost per job for responsive repairs has fallen from £127 to £123. The number of responsive repairs carried out this year has fallen slightly when compared with last year (following the significant reduction from the year before), hence the overall cost of responsive repairs is 2.30% less than last year.

- RESOLVED – (i) That the information be noted.
- (ii) That an analysis of insurance claims be presented to Value for Money and Audit Committee.

100 CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING

A budget monitoring statement for the second quarter of the financial year to 30 June 2008 was submitted. An analysis of the

Decent Homes portion of the capital budget broken down by strategic partner and estate was also submitted.

Generally all partners are on programme to complete their schemes within the targeted timescales. The disruption due to the very wet summer has generally been recovered and the partners are confident that the programme will be completed on time.

The expenditure on decent homes against budget is slightly higher than expected but adjustments for door renewals funded from prudential borrowing are to be made. Additionally, all the completed elements in the 643 properties in possession have been paid for.

The schemes to be funded through prudential borrowing were submitted. There has been little expenditure as yet although there will be some adjustment for the door renewals and door entry systems from the capital budget.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.

101 PROVISIONAL STATUS SURVEY RESULTS 2008/09

The Board was informed of the provisional results of the 2008/09 STATUS Tenant Satisfaction Survey.

A Council members briefing that was issued on 5 November 2008 in relation to the draft result of NI 160 (Local Authority tenants' satisfaction with landlord services). The draft results show an encouraging improvement in tenant satisfaction with the overall service from 75.7% in 2006/7 to 77.9%.

The provisional results of the other survey questions indicate that satisfaction levels have improved compared to the 2006/7 survey in the majority of areas. However, satisfaction with the opportunities for participation reduced from 65.1% in 2006/07 to 60.9% this year. Traditionally, a relatively large number of respondents (25 to 30%) indicate that they are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and are included in the denominator. However, only 9% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction. The provisional results were submitted.

For valid external comparison an adjustment to the results based on the indices of deprivation needs to be carried out and, for Gateshead, this usually has a positive effect on the figures. Once this been completed, adjusted figures will be reported to a future Board Meeting.

- RESOLVED –
- (i) That the draft Status results be noted and a further report be received following receipt of the final results.
 - (ii) That Diversity and Access Committee look at the results in detail.

102 LIFT CONDITION REPORT

The Board received an overview of the condition of the lifts within the managed stock.

The current condition level and the proposed refurbishment dates based upon a 15 year life span of the major mechanical components were submitted.

The criteria adopted in assessing the condition and the projected refurbishment dates is based upon the age, breakdown history, usage, and the legal requirements under the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998.

Each installation will need to be inspected on an annual basis to ensure that the condition remains the same and that the refurbishment dates should not change. Lifts in multi-story buildings are subject to continual heavy usage and the condition can change significantly within a short period.

A number of the lifts within the sheltered units are shown as having early refurbishment dates however they have not been included in the forward programme. The outcome of the Council's Older Person's Housing Strategy will inform the refurbishment programme. These lifts will continue to be maintained to ensure full operation until the outcome of the strategy is confirmed.

Similarly until the outcome of the master planning exercises at Ravensworth Road and Chandless has been concluded by the Council, the lifts have not been included in the forward programme.

The refurbishment programme will be financed through the capital allocations and prudential borrowing provided by the Council.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted and the Board receive further reports on specific lift refurbishment tenders.

103 FEEDBACK FROM OUTSIDE BODIES AND EVENTS

The following feedback from outside bodies and events was reported: -

- Concern was expressed about a press release in the Times on 10 November 2008 that people living in Council houses will no longer be entitled to a subsidised tenancy for life under Whitehall proposals to address waiting lists.

RESOLVED – (i) That the information be noted.

- (ii) That a briefing note for Board Members and employees be prepared on the key issues in the Times press release.

104 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting of the committee held on 22 October 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

105 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED – That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the remaining business in accordance with the indicated category of the company's Access to Information Rules.

106 MINUTES (CATEGORIES 5, 6 AND 1)

The minutes of the last meeting of the Board held on 22 October 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

107 TENDER RETURN – LIFT REFURBISHMENT AT REGENT COURT (CATEGORY 5)

The company has appointed consultants, Royal Sun Alliance, to undertake a condition survey of all lifts in multi-storey blocks to identify a programme of lift refurbishment.

Royal Sun Alliance has identified that the lifts at Regent Court are approaching the end of their economic life. The repair history shows that there are high levels of breakdown and spare parts are increasingly difficult to source.

The lifts serve nine floors on the north and south elevations of the block and do not comply with the DDA requirements.

Tenders were invited from seven companies and two tenders were returned. The tenderers were requested to submit a number of options for full and partial replacement of the lift motors as part of the refurbishment. The selection criteria were based on 70% price and 30% quality evaluation.

RESOLVED – That the contract be awarded to Stannah for the fixed price sum of £253,832.

108 TENDER RETURN – REFURBISHMENT OF 43 AIREY PROPERTIES AT HIGH LANES, FELLING (CATEGORY 5)

The Airey properties are a system built property type with a reinforced concrete frame and concrete slab external cladding. Structural surveys have highlighted defects in the reinforced concrete frame compromising the structural integrity of the properties. The company in partnership with a specialist consultant, Michael Dyson Associates Ltd, have investigated various options for replacing the structural elements of the properties. The various options were discussed with residents, who preferred the option to replace the existing frame and external concrete slab cladding with a traditional brick and block construction.

The Decent Homes works will also be carried out at the time of the structural work.

The work has not been automatically assigned to the partnering contractor for the area because it is over and above a decent homes scheme. It was considered more prudent to obtain competitive quotes for the specialist work and to reflect the current market climate.

Tenders were invited from eight organisations to carry out the work and six tenders were received. The tenderers have been requested to submit a total cost for the works based on the tender documentation produced and issued by the consultant Michael Dyson Associates Ltd. The estimated value of the works is £2,695,000.

RESOLVED – That the contract be awarded to Dunelm Property Services Ltd who submitted the lowest fully compliant tender of £2,078,505.

(Barbara Dennis declared a personal interest in this issue and withdrew from the Chair during its consideration. Peter Mole, Deputy Chair in the Chair for this issue only).

109 EMPLOYEE FORUM (CATEGORY 7)

The minutes of the meeting of the Employee Forum held on 8 October 2008 were submitted.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.



COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Human Resources Committee

John Hamilton (Chair)
Stan Dawson
Joachim Moussounda Mouanda
Valerie Hodge
Allan Curry (Deputy Chair)
Paul Foy

Value for Money and Audit Committee

Sara Woolley (Chair)
Stan Dawson
Jim Willis
Richard Armitage (Deputy Chair)
Allan Curry
Paul Foy

Diversity and Access Committee

Peter Mole (Chair)
Joachim Moussounda Mouanda
Bill Patterson
Valerie Hodge
Angela Armstrong
Kathryn Ferdinand

Performance Committee

Kathryn Ferdinand (Chair)
Bill Patterson
Jim Willis (Deputy Chair)
Sara Woolley
John Hamilton
Peter Mole



Report to the Board

15 January 2009

Title: Board Appraisal

Report of: Director of Finance

Purpose of report

1. To inform the Board of the conclusion of the individual appraisals and to agree a Board Training and Development Plan and the process for appraisals for 2009.
2. The report also highlights a number of proposals that will be considered during next year's Governance Review.

Background

3. The Board approved, at its meeting on 3 July 2008, a draft report and analysis of the completed Board Governance Questionnaires. It was agreed that an action plan be developed and submitted to the Board to address the recommendations in the report.
4. The Board was also informed that the Company Administrator had liaised with the Chair of the Board and a schedule of individual appraisals had been agreed.

Individual Appraisals

5. The Chair of the Board carried out individual appraisals of Board Members during October and November 2008.
6. The Chair of the Board was appraised by Human Resources Committee on 29 October 2008.
7. During the course of the appraisals, Board Members identified areas of training and development. These have been addressed as part of an overall Training and Development Plan for the next year or will be addressed with Board Members separately.

Evaluation of Appraisal Process

8. Following an evaluation of this year's appraisal process, it is not considered necessary for Board Members to complete the comprehensive Board Governance Questionnaire as part of next year's appraisal process. Instead, it is

proposed that the Company Administrator produces an appraisal form to help both the Chair and the appraisees to prepare for individual appraisals. The Company Administrator will also draw up some standard questions to assist the Chair of the Board's appraisal.

Board Training and Development Plan 2009

9. The Company Administrator received a separate report in relation to individual training needs identified by Board Members. These together with other training and development needs for the whole Board identified during individual appraisals, make up the Training and Development Plan for the next year. The proposed Plan is attached at the Appendix to this report.

Board Governance Questionnaire – Action Plan

10. The Board agreed, at its meeting on 3 July 2008, that an action plan be developed to address the recommendations in the analysis of the Board Governance Questionnaire.
11. It is proposed that reports be submitted to the Board at its meeting in March 2009 to address the following issues: -
 - Timings against agenda items
 - Reduce number of items/amount of paper
 - Review of protocol for Directors placing items on Board and committee agendas.
12. The recommendation to reduce the Board size to 12 is a more complicated issue and it is proposed that this be addressed as part of the 2009 Governance Review.
13. One of the recommendations in the analysis of the Board Governance Questionnaire was for informal time for Board Members. This was also a recurring request during the individual appraisals.
14. An ideal opportunity for this informal time to take place would be whilst attending training sessions identified in the Appendix to this report.
15. In addition, it is also proposed that from the March 2009 Board meeting, the board room will be available from 9am to 2pm to allow informal time for Board Members prior to and after every Board Meeting.

Governance Review 2009

16. The Board Development Agency has established a Benchmarking Club, which the company has signed up to. The company is required to complete a governance toolkit of what it is currently doing. The toolkit is split into the following eight requirements:
 - Vision, Values and Purpose
 - Goals Setting and Performance Monitoring
 - Governance Structures and Processes
 - Policy Development

- Internal Audit and Scrutiny
 - Personal People and Membership
 - Meeting Community Leadership Standards.
17. The Company Administrator will complete the toolkit and build up a dossier/folder of the evidence which backs up the claims made. It is proposed that completion of the toolkit form part of the 2009 Governance Review. A Governance Improvement Plan will be developed at the end of the process.
18. It is proposed that a summary report be submitted to the Board at its meeting in September 2009.

Board Member Website

19. A recurring issue highlighted in the individual training needs identified by Board Members was for them to be kept sufficiently up to date with external matters/developments that affect the company.
20. The company launched its new website in August 2008. The website allows the company to create dedicated pages that are password protected and it is proposed that dedicated pages for Board Members be created.
21. As well as having the facility to keep Board Members sufficiently up to date with external matters/developments that affect the company, the website could be used to hold confidential Board/committee reports and the Governance Handbook. The web pages would be tailored to suit Board Members' requirements and the Board might want to consider appointing a Website Champion.
22. It is proposed that the dedicated pages for Board Members go live from April 2009.

Link to Values

23. This report relates to the following values of the company: -
- Being honest, accountable and transparent – delivering excellent services with integrity.
 - Being positive and responsive - constantly striving to achieve excellence.

Equality and Diversity Implications

24. All members of the Board have received a copy of the Equality and Diversity Training E Learning Programme on CD. It is some time however since a half/full day training session for all Board Members has taken place and it is proposed to carry out some training for Board Members in September 2009.

Financial Implications

25. There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

Risk Management Implications

26. By providing regular training and carrying out board appraisals, the strategic risk of lack of board capacity is minimised.

Value for Money Implications

27. There are no value for money implications directly arising from this report.

Impact on Customers

28. There is a positive impact on tenants. A well trained Board makes better decisions resulting in improved services for tenants.

Consultation Carried Out

29. It was not necessary to undertake any consultation when compiling this report.

Recommendations

30. It is recommended that
- (i) the conclusion of the 2008 Board appraisals be noted;
 - (ii) the Company Administrator produces an appraisal form for the 2009 appraisals to help both the Chair the appraisee to prepare and to draw up some standard questions to assist the Chair of the Board's appraisal.
 - (iii) the Board Training and Development Plan 2009, attached at the Appendix to this report, be approved;
 - (iv) reports be submitted to the Board Meeting in March 2009 on the following: -
 - Timings against agenda items
 - Reduce number of items/amount of paper
 - Review of the protocol for Directors placing items on Board and committee agendas;
 - (v) the areas highlighted in paragraphs 12 and 16 of this report form part of the 2009 Governance Review and summary report be submitted to the Board at its meeting in September 2009.
 - (vi) from the March 2009 Board Meeting, the Board Room is available from 9am to 2pm to allow informal time for Board Members prior to or at the conclusion of every Board Meeting.
 - (vii) dedicated pages for Board Members are created on the company's website, which will go live from April 2009;
 - (viii) the Board consider the appointment of a Website Champion.



BOARD TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2009

Training	How will it be delivered	Who will deliver the training	Timescale
Future policy / national issues i.e. new build / viability of company beyond decent homes	Presentations at beginning of Board Meetings / single issue Board Meetings	Chief Executive	As and when need arises
Financial Management	Interactive training session	Director of Finance	January 2009 – Sweep up for those Board Members unable to attend sessions previously delivered
Business Planning 2009-12	Board/Corporate Management Team Away Day	Corporate Management Team	February 2009
Risk Management	Interactive training session on the importance of risk and to scrutinise in greater detail	External Facilitator	March 2009
NFA Annual Conference	-	-	1 and 2 April 2009
CIH Annual Conference	-	-	16-18 June 2009
Equality and Diversity	Refresher training session for all Board members	External Facilitator	September 2009
Current developments that effect Board Members' responsibilities as a director	Interactive training session	Director of Finance	Early November 2009 *

* Anthony Collins Solicitors facilitated a training session with Board Members on 24 October 2008 on directors' duties with particular emphasis on the Companies Act 2006 and Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007



Report to the Board

15 January 2009

Title: Budget Monitoring

Report of: Director of Finance

Purpose of Report

1. To present a monitoring statement against the budget for 2008/9 as at 31 November 2008.

Background

2. The Board agreed a budget for 2008/9 at its meeting on 13 March 2008.

Summary

3. A budget monitoring statement for the first eight months of the current financial year is attached at Appendix 1.
4. Further analysis of the budget monitoring statement is provided at Appendix 2.
5. The actual result for the first eight months of the year was a deficit of £127,000.
6. The overspend is a general reflection of the pressures on the overhead budget areas during the first eight months of the financial year as we geared up for inspection.
7. In addition, the original budget for Keelman House Repairs was under stated as there was no previous year's data to base our assumptions on and the latest forecast represents a more accurate position and the current year insurance costs have been higher than anticipated.
8. The year end forecast has also been calculated. This is currently showing a £147,000 deficit which should it materialise would be comfortably met from our reserves which stood at £767,000 at the start of the financial year.
9. We continue to generate efficiencies and savings where possible and feel that this level of deficit for the year reflects a fair balance between investment in our services and prudential financial management.

10. An analysis of the repairs costs is provided as Appendix 3. For the first eight months of the current year, the average cost per job for responsive repairs has fallen from £127 to £123. The number of responsive repairs carried out this year has fallen slightly when compared with last year (following the significant reduction from the year before) hence the overall cost of responsive repairs is 2.72% less than last year.

Link to values

11. This report is in line with the following values of the company :-
- Being honest, accountable and transparent – delivering excellent services with integrity.
 - Being motivated trained, and committed across the company - delivering efficient and effective services.

Impact on tenants

12. Whilst this report does not impact on tenants directly, appropriate financial monitoring and control will ensure efficiencies are maximised and redirected to services that directly impact on tenants

Risk Management Implications

13. Regular and accurate monitoring will ensure that that the strategic risk within the business plan (Insufficient available financial resources) is effectively controlled.

Financial Implications

14. The financial implications are contained within the report and appendices.

Equality and Diversity Implications

15. There are no equality or diversity implications arising from this report.

Value for Money implications

16. Regular financial monitoring and control will ensure efficiencies are maximised and then utilised in the most appropriate manner.

Consultation carried out

17. None directly for this report.

Recommendation

18. The Board is asked to note the report and agree that quarterly finance reports are scrutinised in more detail by the Value for Money and Audit Committee.

THE GATESHEAD HOUSING COMPANY
BUDGET MONITORING STATEMENT 2008/9

	Budget 2008/09	Budget to 30 Nov	Actual to 30 Nov	Year End Forecast
<u>Management Fee</u>	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Income				
Management Fee	12,937	8,591	8,670	13,177
Capitalisation	3,130	2,087	2,087	3,152
Performance Related Fee	277	185	236	354
External Funding	125	83	81	114
Total Income	16,469	10,946	11,074	16,797
Employee Costs				
Housing Management	2,800	1,866	1,835	2,787
Business Support	703	460	423	707
Property & Technical Services	2,548	1,670	1,738	2,609
Finance & ICT	1,721	1,135	1,054	1,650
HQ Sub Total	7,772	5,131	5,050	7,753
Area Costs	3,141	2,094	2,110	3,189
Total Employee Costs	10,913	7,225	7,160	10,942
Overhead Costs				
Housing Management	408	272	334	499
Business Support	347	232	261	390
Property & Technical Services	150	100	119	181
Finance & ICT	3,155	2,103	2,289	3,386
HQ Sub Total	4,060	2,707	3,003	4,456
Area Costs	1,495	997	1,038	1,546
Total Overhead Costs	5,555	3,704	4,041	6,002
Management Fee Surplus/(Deficit)	-	17	(127)	(147)
Repairs Costs				
Management Fee	17,367	11,566	11,836	17,367
Repair Capitalisations	6,000	4,000	4,054	6,000
	23,367	15,566	15,890	23,367
Repairs Costs (see Appendix 3)	23,367	15,566	15,890	23,367
Repairs Costs Surplus/(Deficit)	-	-	-	-
Overall Surplus / (deficit)	-	17	(127)	(147)

THE GATESHEAD HOUSING COMPANY

HQ OVERHEAD ANALYSIS 2008/09

	Budget 2008/09	Budget to 30 Nov	Actual to 30 Nov	Year End Forecast
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Rent	601	401	395	601
Non Domestic Rates	108	72	78	117
Security	10	7	2	10
Utilities	27	18	31	60
Cleaning	20	13	25	37
Insurance	139	93	181	228
IT Costs	333	222	216	324
Staff Advertising	30	20	2	10
Training	187	124	161	208
Telephone	49	32	68	105
Stationery	35	23	30	48
Postage	53	36	48	76
Car Allowance & Travel	93	62	88	132
Vehicle Expenses	86	58	56	86
GMBC Financial Services	207	138	138	207
GMBC ICT Services	425	283	283	425
GMBC Legal Services	110	74	74	110
Legal Services	125	83	100	125
Misc Supplies & Services	80	54	25	48
Misc Fees	51	34	9	21
CAB Supervision	8	5	5	8
Tenant Management - Clasper Village	8	5	5	8
Home Choice - COMMS	222	148	162	237
Business Support - COMMS	274	186	226	323
Tenant Involvement	29	19	16	24
Council Tax Voids	200	133	117	175
Giro/Cash Collection	182	121	97	154
Equality & Diversity	30	20	11	23
Links Age Plus Scheme	0	0	0	0
Depreciation	185	123	123	211
Keelman R&M	8	5	60	80
Audit Fees	20	13	15	20
Catering & Provisions	5	3	14	22
Room Hire	8	5	7	11
Equipment	18	12	13	20
Publicity, Promotion & Design	2	1	18	28
HR	17	11	11	17
Consultancy	40	27	61	70
Subscriptions	1			1
Waste Disposal/Recycling	28	19	27	40
Uniforms	6	4	5	6
TOTAL OVERHEADS	4,060	2,707	3,003	4,456

THE GATESHEAD HOUSING COMPANY

REPAIR COSTS 2008/9

	Budget 2008/09	Budget to 30 Nov	Actual to 30 Nov	Year End Forecast
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Repairs Costs				
Fixed Costs (Contractors' Preliminaries)	3,200	2,133	2,128	3,200
Responsive	11,147	7,431	7,068	11,147
Relets	6,000	4,000	4,614	6,000
Cyclical Repairs	400	267	304	400
Water Hygiene Testing	150	100	142	150
Painting	700	467	352	700
Prior to Painting	300	200	164	300
Gas Servicing	900	600	809	900
Electrical Circuit Testing	50	33	9	50
Solid Fuel Testing	10	7	0	10
Lift Maintenance	125	83	60	125
Security	150	100	94	150
Environmental Works	35	133	138	35
Energy Performance Certificates	200	12	8	200
	23,367	15,566	15,890	23,367



HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

2 December 2008

PRESENT:

Directors

Allan Curry
John Hamilton
Joachim Moussounda Mouanda

Advisers

Bill Fullen	Chief Executive
Jon Mallen-Beadle	Director of Finance
Jennifer Aston	HR and Administration Manager
Stuart Gibson	Company Administrator

Apologies

Stan Dawson
Paul Foy
Valerie Hodge

19 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND DEPUTY CHAIR

RESOLVED – That John Hamilton and Allan Curry be appointed as Chair and Deputy Chair of the committee for the ensuing year.

20 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 23 September 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

21 OUTCOME OF CONSULTATIONS WITH TRADE UNIONS

The committee approved the following strategies at its meetings on 17 June and 23 September 2008, subject to consultation with trade unions: -

- Learning and Development Strategy
- Human Resources Strategy
- Workforce Development Plan
- Capability Policy.

Unison and GMB have been consulted on each of the strategies, plans and policies. The trade unions welcomed the Learning and Development Strategy, Human Resources Strategy and Capability Policy. The trade unions welcomed the Workforce Development Plan and detailed comments were submitted.

- RESOLVED – (i) That the strategies, plans and policies be approved following consultation with the trade unions.
- (ii) That the Chief Executive considers a reward for employees to thank them for their work during the last year and the Chair of the Committee is given delegated authority to approve the reward.

22 MOBILE PHONE AND BLACKBERRY GUIDELINES

The existing guidelines for use of mobile telephones and Blackberry's are relatively brief.

New guidelines were submitted that outline in more detail the roles and responsibilities of the mobile telephone user, the manager and the accounts department.

The guidelines have been developed to protect both the user and the company. The guidelines include Blackberry's which are now more widely used and provide clarity around who should have access to a mobile device.

- RESOLVED – That the new Mobile Phone/Blackberry Guidelines, attached at Appendix 1 to these minutes, be approved, subject to amendments to the policy regarding the use of handhelds, excessive use and misuse.

23 TRANSSEXUAL, TRANSGENDER AND GENDER REASSIGNMENT POLICY

The company is committed to the belief that all individuals have the right to be treated with fairness, dignity and respect.

A Transsexual, Transgender and Gender Reassignment Policy was submitted that provides straightforward, user friendly advice and information for employees about the service offered.

The policy reaffirms the company's position on equality and applies to all employees and workers, however outlines clearly the expectations of employees when dealing with customers and the community.

The policy will ensure that as required in the Gender Equality Duty 2007, harassment, discrimination in employment and vocational training is eliminated for those people undergoing gender reassignment.

Guidance is provided for managers responsible for an employee who has undergone or is undergoing gender reassignment.

- RESOLVED – That the Transsexual, Transgender and Gender Reassignment Policy, attached at Appendix 2 to these minutes, be submitted to the Board for approval.

24 SICKNESS AND HR UPDATE

The committee received an update on general HR initiatives and developments for the period April to October 2008.

An analysis of the key HR data to provide the committee with an overview of the company's performance and key priorities was submitted.

An analysis of the sickness absence levels for the period compared with performance last year with that of the top quartile performance for ALMOs as a whole was submitted. The reasons for absence within each department of the company were also submitted.

The total sickness absence for the period equated to 5.96 days (compared to 7.93 days for the same period last year), a 25% reduction in the seven month period.

The company has set a target of 10.25 days absence per employee for the current year (an improvement of last year's performance of 12.4 days), with a planned reduction over the next three years to reduce lost days due to sickness to be in line with the top quartile set by Housemark, which is currently 9.5 days. If absence continues at the levels as the first seven months, the company is likely to achieve 10.2 days.

Short term absence relates to periods of absence less than 15 working days in duration with long term absence greater than 15 days in duration. In the period, short term absence was 2.55 days and long term 3.41 days. This compares with 2.74 days short term absence and 5.19 days long term absence in the same period last year.

Depression and anxiety with the effect of stress is still the biggest cause of absence. In the period, 970 days were lost to stress. This compares to 1,057 days lost in the same period last year and equates to an 8.3% reduction.

The cost of sickness absence to the company for the period was £222,063.

182 employees (59%) have achieved 100% attendance in the period.

The company has held 31 sickness counselling interviews triggered in response to four periods of absence or two periods of 15 days or more in a rolling 12 month period. Two employees have attended an options interview triggered where long term absence has reached four months.

41 employees attended a health and safety stress awareness course, with another 30 employees scheduled to attend a course up to March 2009.

A Stress Awareness day was held on 5 November 2008 to raise awareness of the positive initiatives that employees can take to manage stress. Evaluation from the day indicates that 50% of respondents would like to be involved in developing a programme of physical activities. An

Occupational Health Involvement Group will meet in December 2008 to review policies and plan a programme of activities.

As a result of the day, smoking cessation sessions have begun for a period of eight weeks with eight employees signed up to the programme. Fitness testing appointments have also taken place. All sessions were fully booked and additional dates are being explored for December 2008.

The company continues to promote work life balance policies and supports applications. Details of applications processed in the period were reported.

The committee received an update on disciplinary and grievances during the period.

An Employee Benefit Statement promoting many of the benefits of working for the company has been issued to all employees and Board Members. The benefit statement will be issued to candidates who attend for interview and will also be included in an induction pack.

Employees have been informed of job evaluation grades and were being paid the grade of the post in October 2008. A number of employees are preparing an appeal to the job evaluation grade for submission to Human Resources by 31 December 2008. Unison, GMB and HR have been available to support employees throughout the process.

The annual pay award for 2007/08 is subject to arbitration at ACAS. An interim amount of 2.45% has been awarded pending the outcome of arbitration and has been paid to employees in November.

The committee received a recruitment update for the period. The company attended an Employment and Training event on 19 August 2008. To enhance the customer experience of applying for a job with the company, a Jadu Online Recruitment software package is scheduled to be introduced in December 2008.

The company is working with the Council to introduce an expenses self service software application that will allow employees to input their own car mileage. The company has agreed to pilot the system, which is scheduled for early next year.

The company has successfully secured the services of Durham County Council who are an umbrella body to process CRB checks.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.

25 FLEXI SCHEME UPDATE

The committee received an update on the revised flexi scheme which was revised in January 2007 and resulted in enhanced flexi time entitlement.

There is a maximum carry forward entitlement of two full days. Flexi sheets have been developed to ensure compliance with the 48 hour

working time directive with all infringements highlighted. In managing flexi time, managers and employees must comply with the directive and ensure that at least a 30 minutes break is taken when a six hour period is worked. Additionally, only employees who have signed to be excluded from the 48 hour working time directive should ever exceed working a 48 hour week average over a 52 week period.

Employees and line managers sign the flexi sheet at the end of a four week period as an accurate record of time worked, training, sickness and leave taken. The monitoring of credit and debit balances is carried out centrally by the HR and Administration Team.

A four month summary of flexi time exceeded over the approved carry forward credit of 14.48 hours (pro-rata) from 14 July – 31 October 2008 was submitted. The number of employees who have exceeded the approved credit in each service area and the total hours exceeded was also reported.

The following actions have been taken: -

- Ensure compliance with appraisal and 1-2-1 and achievable objectives.
- Assess capacity and priorities.
- Reviewed and updated the flexi sheet to ensure compliance.
- Information to all employees on completion of the form and compliance with the 48 working time directive.
- Monthly information on exceeded time to CMT members.
- Meeting with service managers.
- Managerial meetings to address specific concerns.

This has resulted in the “exceeded time” reducing from a peak of 277 hours in September 2008 to 194 hours in October 2008.

- RESOLVED – (i) That progress being made on reducing the levels of “exceeded time” be noted.
- (iii) That a further report be submitted to consider a proposed strategy to reduce the amount of exceeded time.

26 LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

The committee received an update on the progress and activity of the Staff Development function.

The Management Development Programme is well underway with the first four modules now complete. Following completion of these modules, managers will be presented with a certificate in Developing Leadership Skills.

The 12 month training prospectus is now finalised and has been issued to employees.

The Council is working with Ivy Learning Services Ltd to provide ICT and personal development training via e-learning. Following a demonstration of the training, the company's Staff Development Officers now have access to the system to set up new users and produce usage reports to ensure all licences are utilised. This training will provide additional learning materials to support the classroom training which is already provided. It will also allow employees to access the relevant courses without the requirement to attend a full one day workshop if this is more suitable to their individual training needs.

The company has accepted an invitation from the Learning and Skills Council to attend a workshop to gain insights into employers' opinions and suggestions in regard to engagement of 14-19 year olds. The information given is part of a large project.

This was the first year of the Partnership Apprentice of the Year Award. Nominations were made by each of the construction partners and the company also provided a nomination. All finalists received an award, with the overall winner being chosen from Local Environmental Services. It is hoped that this will become an annual event.

Michelle Cherrett, Older Persons Housing Manager has won the Chartered Institute of Housing North East Branch award for best postgraduate student for the Housing Management and Policy course at Northumbria University. Keith Nicholson, Estate Officer has won the award for best student at New College Durham.

A Harassment Working Group has been established with members nominated to ensure representation across services. Training is to be arranged from early 2009 and will be delivered by EEF Northern.

Details of training additional to the in-house & PSA training prospectus were reported.

- RESOLVED – (i) That the information be noted.
- (ii) That a letter from the committee be sent to Michelle Cherrett, Older Persons Housing Manager and Keith Nicholson, Estate Officer congratulating them on their Chartered Institute of Housing North East Branch awards.

27 UPDATE ON NVQ'S FOR CONTACT CENTRE OPERATIONS AND CUSTOMER CARE

The Staff Development function has secured additional funding for a number of training courses during the last 12 months. The funding provides additional training for employees to supplement the existing programmes and initiatives already provided by the existing Learning and Development budget. Several innovations have been used to increase the knowledge of employees in key subject areas with the ultimate aim of increasing performance and business benefit.

The North East Contact Centre Academy, part of City of Sunderland College support improvements in performance of both organisations and individuals operating in a customer contact environment. The Academy provides a range of NVQ's including Contact Centre Operations and Customer Care. The programme will initially focus on Contact Centre Operations with progression onto the Customer Care programme for those employees who do not already hold this qualification. As a pilot, the NVQ's will initially be targeted at employees in the Repairs Reporting Team. This will ensure all existing employees within the repairs team are trained and qualified to NVQ level 2.

The programme of NVQ's will, where possible, be funded by the Learning and Skills Council. Additional funding is required for those employees who already hold an existing level 2 qualification, however, the Contact Centre Academy has committed to providing both qualifications at no additional cost to the company.

The initial pilot programme will be aimed at 15 employees with the view to rolling it out to the new members of the repairs team during 2009. Each NVQ will take approximately 16 weeks to complete and will be mapped to the particular job roles of those employees in the repairs team. There are mandatory units which must be completed along with additional optional units which will be selected and agreed by the company.

A session will be arranged for the Academy to introduce the NVQ's to those involved and explain what will be involved in the programme. In addition, the benefits to both the company and the individuals of attaining such qualifications will be covered.

The initial programme will commence early January 2009. The NVQ assessors will attend Keelman House weekly and will see each individual for one hour. A workshop will be arranged to cover some key elements of the agreed units.

A service level agreement will be made with the Academy which will set out their requirements and expectations along with the company's expectations and success criteria. This will be measured by the Academy to ensure the programme delivers to expectations. Regular meetings will take place to monitor the implementation of the programme.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.

28 DATE AND TIME OF MEETINGS 2009

RESOLVED – That the following schedule of meetings of the committee during 2009 be approved: -

Tuesday 3 March 2009 at 10am
Tuesday 16 June 2009 at 10am
Tuesday 8 September 2009 at 10am
Tuesday 15 December 2009 at 10am.

29 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the committee will be held on Tuesday 3 March 2009 at 10am in Board Room 1, Keelman House, Fifth Avenue Business Park, Fifth Avenue, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear.

30 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOVED – That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the remaining business in accordance with the indicated categories of the company's Access to Information Rules.

31 MINUTES (Category 1)

The minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 23 September 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

32 EMPLOYEE FORUM (Category 7)

The minutes of the meeting of the Employee Forum held on 8 October 2008 were submitted.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.



Mobile Phone/ Blackberry Guidelines

Introduction

1. The provision of a mobile phone or device will be at the discretion of managers where it is felt that such a phone/device is necessary and beneficial for staff to fulfill their role. To fulfill this requirement a role should meet one or more of the following criteria:
 - Predominantly lone working in the community
 - Emergency out of hours role including the on-call rota
 - Requirement to spend a significant amount of time out of the office and required to be contactable during working hours and/or out of hours
 - Requirement to use Microsoft Outlook whilst out of office
 - Require photographic evidence as part of their job
2. Mobile phones/devices are, and remain the property of, The Gateshead Housing Company at all times. These are provided for and are linked to a specific role within the Company and therefore, should remain with that role.
3. Quarterly checks will be carried out on all mobile phone/devices to ensure that they are held by the appropriate role.
4. Budget holders will be responsible for the mobile phone/device costs within their team.
5. Individuals can decide whether to use their mobile phone/device to make personal calls. Should you decide to use your mobile phone/device for personal use then you will be required to pay for personal calls every quarter. The following is a list of the call charges for mobile phones and mobile devices:

Mobile Phone Charges

£4.00	Monthly Line Rental
4p	Vodafone to Landline (24/7) per minute
4p	Vodafone to Vodafone (24/7) per minute
12p	Vodafone to Any other Network (24/7) per minute
5p	Text Messaging each

Mobile Devices Charges

£15.00	Monthly Line Rental – data only
£19.00	Monthly Line Rental – data and voice
3.5p	Vodafone to Any other Network (24/7) per minute
3.5p	Text Messaging each

Roles & Responsibilities

Mobile phone/device Users Responsibilities

6. The mobile phone/device is, and remains the property of The Gateshead Housing Company, and as such, it is a requirement that staff take good care of the mobile phone/device.

7. It is the responsibility of staff to ensure that the mobile phone/device and accessories are kept safe and secure and should report any loss, damage or misuse to Accounts at Keelman House. Should the loss, damage or misuse be found to be the fault of the individual then you may be liable for charges in relation to obtaining a replacement mobile.
8. If the phone/device is stolen, staff will be expected to report the theft to the police and obtain a crime number. You should also report the theft to the Accounts section.
9. Please report any faults, difficulties or problems to Accounts as soon as possible.
10. It is the responsibility of staff to keep the batteries fully charged and for the mobile phone/device to be kept on during working hours unless in a meeting.
11. It is the responsibility of staff to ensure a work greeting is recorded on their mobile phone/device. For example: Thank you for calling The Gateshead Housing Company, you have reached the voicemail of ***** ***** If you would like to leave a message, please leave your name and telephone number after the tone and I will get back to you as soon as I can.
12. All staff who have mobile phone/devices should remember to:-
 - Ensure they have their phone/device with them when away from their office base.
 - Ensure the phone/device is switched on and they are able to receive calls, when they are not in a meeting.
 - Regularly check their mobile phone/device for messages if the phone/device has been switched off for the duration of a meeting or have been in a black spot.
13. When issuing a mobile phone/device to individuals they will be asked to read the guidelines and will be required to sign the declaration of use form.
14. You will have the choice to use your phone/device for business use only or business and personal use. If you choose to use your mobile phone/device for personal calls you must contribute towards the cost of all personal calls made from your mobile phone/device.
15. The mobile phone/device, accessories and sim card are issued to yourself only. It is your responsibility and these should not be loaned or passed on to anyone. This includes family members, friends and other members of staff. Your line manager will monitor the use of this mobile phone/device and any misuse could and may result in disciplinary action.
16. If you no longer require your mobile phone/device please wipe the mobile phone/device free of all information and return it, along with all the accessories and sim card, to Accounts, Keelman House, Fifth Avenue Business Park, Team Valley Trading Estate, Gateshead, NE11 0XA.

17. Leavers must return their mobile phone/device and all accessories to Accounts for re-allocation or disposal. Failure to comply may result in the user being invoiced for the full cost of the modern equivalent handset and any other associated costs. All information on the mobile phone/device must be cleared.

Managers Responsibilities

18. When issuing a mobile phone/device to a member of staff, managers should ensure that the criteria is met and that the guidelines have been read and understood.
19. All forms should be completed and signed by a manager before the mobile phone/device can be ordered/issued.
20. All forms should be sent to Accounts, Keelman House, Fifth Avenue Business Park, Team Valley Trading Estate, Gateshead, NE11 0XA or can be emailed to Accountancy@gatesheadhousing.co.uk. If the form is emailed it must be followed up with an email from the relevant manger authorising the mobile phone/device.
21. Managers should notify Accounts if a mobile phone/device is reallocated to a different member of staff. Mobile phone/devices and sim cards must stay with the post for which the mobile phone/device was originally allocated.
22. Managers/budget holders will be responsible for mobile phone/device costs within their team.

Accounts Responsibilities

23. The accounts department will determine which type of mobile phone/device to provide dependant upon required use. The mobile phone/device will be ordered by the Accounts department who will then notify the staff member or manager when it arrives. When issuing a mobile phone/device to staff the individual will be required to complete the mobile phone/device collection form.
24. The accounts department will send individual quarterly bills to managers on a quarterly basis. These must be checked and distributed to individuals.
25. It is the responsibility of the Accounts department to keep an up to date register of all mobile phone/devices.
26. The Accounts department will monitor mobile phone/device usage for excessive use, such as use out of office hours and at weekends which are not known to be due to overtime, and will bring any issues to the attention of the manager.

Safe Use of Mobile phone/devices

27. The latest advice being given by the National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB), who are the main advisers to the Government, is that there is no firm

evidence that mobile phone/devices have any detrimental effects on health, although more research is needed.

28. However it would be wise to take the following precautions whilst using a mobile phone/device.

- # Only use mobile phone/devices when necessary. Where possible use an ordinary 'landline' phone/device instead. Encourage callers to use message-taking services such as Voice Mail systems or e-mail and to contact you on the mobile phone/device only when the call is urgent.
- # Calls made using a mobile phone/device should be kept as short as possible.
- # When using a mobile phone/device with an extendible aerial, make sure it is fully extended and do not use the phone/device if the aerial is damaged.
- # Don't press the phone/device tight against your ear. Leave a slight gap between the phone/device and your ear.
- # If you have to make an unavoidably lengthy call, change the phone/device periodically from ear to ear.
- # Switch off and unplug battery charger when not in use.
- # Do not use a hand held phone/device when driving. When driving switch off the phone/device and use a message services, or allow a passenger to answer or make a call.

Use of Mobile Phones/Devices while driving

29. For safety reasons staff must not use a handheld mobile phone/device whilst driving any vehicle. It is illegal to do so and you must pull over at the earliest opportunity, when and where safe to do so and switch off the engine to make or return a call. The Gateshead Housing Company will not take responsibility or be liable in any way for someone charged with using a handheld device whilst driving.

30. The Gateshead Housing Company also prohibits the use of a hands free phone/device while driving. Using a hands free phone/device is likely to distract you. For your own safety, and that of other road users, do not take and make calls or use text messaging whilst driving. You must pull over at the earliest opportunity, when and where safe to do so and switch off the engine to make or return a call or text.

31. Your attention is drawn to the following extract from the Highway Code:

"127. Mobile phone/devices and In-Car Technology.

*You **MUST** exercise proper control of your vehicle at all times. Never use a hand held mobile phone/device or microphone/device when driving. Using hands free equipment is also likely to distract your attention from the road. It is far safer not to use any telephone/device while you are driving – find a safe place to stop first.*

Mobile phone/device Misuse

32. The Gateshead Housing Company recognises the benefits of ensuring that adequate communication facilities are available to its staff, however, they also have a duty to protect the assets of The Gateshead Housing Company from misuse.
33. The definition of mobile phone/device misuse, for the purposes of this guideline, includes:-
 - Loaning the phone/device to family, friends and anyone else.
 - Use of the mobile phone/device for personal calls and texts, if these are not reimbursed.
 - Transmission via text either inside or outside the company, sensitive or confidential data or information which could, by accident or design, cause detriment to the company
34. Mobile phone/device misuse may be regarded as serious or gross misconduct, which may result in disciplinary action being taken.
35. Employees must ensure that the content of text messages, including multimedia, could not be seen as expressing libellous or defamatory opinion or comment, fact or otherwise, which may cause detriment to the company. This includes the content of any personal texts.
36. When communicating personal data by text, employees must not break laws on Data Protection.
37. In communications, which involve licensed or copyright material, employees must not infringe copyright, license or patent restrictions.
38. Employees should not express in any text message any personal opinions or comments which contradict company policy.
39. Employees must not use company mobiles to send text messages, which cause or could reasonably be thought by anyone as intended to cause, offence, harassment or inconvenience to the receiver, or delay or disruption of any kind to their mobile phone/device.
40. Text message correspondence should not be used to enter the company into any contract or similar agreement without the express permission of the Strategic Employee. Employees should ensure that text message contents cannot be construed in any way as entering the company into any contract or agreement.
41. Staff should ensure that they comply with the company's internet and email policy when using mobile phone/device to access these services.



Mobile phone/device Questionnaire

Provision of mobile phone/devices for staff will be at the discretion of their managers and will only be authorised where it is considered that a phone/device is necessary and beneficial to enable the individual to carry out their role.

Please complete the following form:

Name:.....

Job Title:.....

Section:.....

The following criteria will be used to assess the necessity of a mobile phone/device. Please tick which of the following applies to you:

• Predominantly lone working in the community	
• Emergency out of hours role including the on-call rota	
• Requirement to spend a significant amount of time out of the office and required to be contactable during working hours and/or out of hours	
• Requirement to use Microsoft Outlook whilst out of office	
• Require photographic evidence as part of your job	

- How often do you/would you use a mobile phone/device?

Daily Weekly Monthly Emergency Use

- In your opinion, do you require a mobile phone/device to carry out your job?

Yes No

If yes, for what reasons?

- How often do you take photographs on your mobile phone/device?

Daily Weekly Monthly Never

- Is it essential you have a camera on a mobile phone/device?

Yes No

If yes, for what reasons?

- Would you require access to Microsoft Outlook via your mobile device?

Yes No

- On a regular day how often are you in the office?

1-2hrs 2-4hrs 4-6hrs 6-8hrs

Approved by:.....
(Approved manager)

On the completion of this form please hand it back to Accounts.



DECLARATION OF USE BY MOBILE TELEPHONE/DEVICE USER

Signing this declaration confirms that you have read and will comply with The Gateshead Housing Company Mobile Phone/Device Guidelines.

I confirm that in consideration of The Gateshead Housing Company issuing me with a business mobile phone/device I agree the following:

I agree to give back the mobile phone/device when leaving the employment of The Gateshead Housing Company and will be prepared to pay any additional costs incurred as a result of any delay in doing this. Mobile telephones and mobile devices remain the property of The Gateshead Housing Company. Leavers must return their mobile phone/device and all associated accessories to The Gateshead Housing Company for re-allocation or disposal. Failure to comply with these guidelines will result in the user being invoiced for the full cost of the modern equivalent handset and any other associated costs.

You have the choice to use the phone/device for business only or business and personal use. If you choose to use the phone/device for personal use then all calls must be paid for. Users are only expected to use the phone/device for personal calls/text messaging where no other reasonable alternative is immediately available. The phone/device should not be used for personal calls/text messages by anyone other than the person named on this form unless in exceptional circumstances.

Print Name:.....

Sign:.....

Date:.....



Transsexual, Transgender and Gender Reassignment Policy

1 Induction

The Company is committed to ensuring that transgender people are treated with dignity, respect and understanding and that it does not discriminate unlawfully. This commitment is an important aspect of its overall commitment to providing equal opportunities in employment and access to services.

A Transsexual person is someone who decides to change their gender from that which has been assigned at birth because they do not feel that their gender identity matches that assigned to them. Gender reassignment is the process of changing to the new gender identity. This may involve surgical treatment but some transsexual people will not undergo surgery for personal reasons, such as age, health or finances.

2 Purpose

This policy is intended to assist the company to put this commitment into practise and to help the company, transsexual people and other employees to deal with any practical issues that may arise. Compliance with this policy should also ensure that employees do not commit unlawful acts of discrimination.

Striving to ensure that the work environment is free of harassment and bullying and that everyone is treated with dignity and respect is an important aspect of ensuring equal opportunities in employment.

Ensuring people receive fair and equal access to services and no individual receives a lesser level of service due to their gender identity is an important consideration for the company and its commitment to equality and diversity.

3 Application

This policy applies to all employees and workers within the company.

4 Legislative Background

The Gender Equality Duty 2007 requires public authorities to take action to eliminate harassment, discrimination in employment and vocational training, for people undergoing gender reassignment.

The Gender recognition Act 2004 allows transsexual people who have undergone gender reassignment to apply for a gender recognition certificate. When a full gender recognition certificate has been issued, the person is

considered in the eyes of the law to be of the acquired gender, there is no obligation on an individual to apply for a gender recognition certificate and there may be good personal reasons, such as an existing marriage, why someone has not applied for one. There are special laws protecting the privacy of someone if he/she discloses information about the gender history of someone with a gender recognition certificate without that persons consent.

The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 makes it unlawful to treat someone less favourably than other people in relation to employment or vocational training on grounds that he/she intends to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone gender reassignment. The protection applies whether or not the individual has a recognition certificate. Harassment or bullying on grounds of gender reassignment is unlawful discrimination.

There are some limited exceptions where it is lawful to prevent someone doing a job on the grounds of gender reassignment, for example where being a man or a woman is a genuine occupational qualification for the job, as set out in the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, and the employer can show that it is reasonable to prevent the transsexual person from doing the job as a result. The exceptions apply only in rare cases. The exceptions do not apply to someone with a gender recognition certificate.

It is unlawful to victimise someone because he/she has alleged unlawful discrimination or supported someone to make a complaint or given evidence in relation to a complaint. An employee who discriminates against another employee on grounds of gender reassignment may be held liable for unlawful discrimination and be required to pay compensation as well as, or instead of, the company e.g. criminal liability in certain circumstances e.g. giving out information about prior gender status.

5 Stakeholder and employee involvement

The Chief Executive and Directors, together with managers and supervisors have the responsibility for policy compliance and developing and encouraging good information handling practise within their designated areas.

Line managers are responsible for ensuring that their employees clearly understand and adhere to this policy. However, it is the responsibility of all employees to adhere to the policy's principles and procedures to help maintain the security and confidentiality of information.

6 Policy

Employment

It will not normally be necessary for the Company to be made aware of the gender history of an employee who has undergone gender reassignment. If it becomes aware of information relating to an employees gender history, it will keep this information confidential. It will not disclose information about an employee's gender history to a third party without the employees consent. Any records that the Company needs to keep that relate to an employee's

previous gender, for example relevant qualifications in a previous name, will be kept confidential, with only specified employees having access to them. It is a criminal offence to do allow this information to be given out. When the Company no longer needs to keep those records, it will destroy them.

The Company will not take account of an employee's gender identity status or history in making employment decisions except where necessary and permitted by law.

The gender history of an employee with a gender recognition certificate will never be relevant to employment decisions. An employee with a gender recognition certificate will be treated in accordance with his/her acquired gender for all employment benefits including pensions and insurance.

An employee who has undergone gender reassignment but does not have a gender recognition certificate may be required to disclose his/her gender history for insurance or pension purposes. This information will be passed only to those people who require it for these purposes and will be kept confidential.

The Company will make it clear in information about insurance whether the insurance providers require disclosure of gender history. A transsexual employee has an obligation to disclose necessary information to the insurance company if the Company is not aware of the employee's gender history. If the Company is aware of the employee's gender history, the company can supply the information to the insurance company only with the employees consent.

The Company will make it clear in information about the company pension what information is required and any implications that gender reassignment have on the company pension.

Dealing with the transition

The Company will be supportive of any employee who expresses an intention to undergo gender reassignment and will work with him/her to try to ensure a smooth transition at work as possible.

The Company will appoint, in consultation with the employee, a manager to be the employee's principal point of contact. That manager will agree with the employee an action plan for managing the transition at work. Matters to be addresses may include the following.

The employees job: Consideration will be given to whether the employee wishes to stay in the same job and location or, if possible, to move post and/or location. In the rare cases where a genuine occupational qualification applies to the post, a change of job may be required.

Time Off: The employee may require time off for medical or other treatment. Time off for these purposes will not be treated as less favourably then time off for illness or other medical appointments.

Change to social gender: Consideration will be given to: -

- When the employee expects to change name or start presenting at work in the new gender;
- How work colleagues and clients are to be informed of the changes;
- Whether the employee wishes to inform colleagues and clients of the change or have someone from the company do this;
- What information and guidance is to be given to managers and work colleagues;
- The point at which the employee will start to use single sex facilities, such as toilets, in his/her new gender;
- Time off to under go surgery.

Dress Codes: If there is a dress code applying to the job done by the employees consideration will be given to what, if any, flexibility may be required to accommodate the transition.

Records: Consideration will be given to changes to records and systems that may be needed. After gender reassignment has been completed, records relating to the transition will be destroyed. The company will create a new personnel record to ensure confidentiality.

7 Service Delivery

All services should be made available to all members of the community and should be delivered in a fair and equal manner considering and individual specific needs.

There are occasions when a person's circumstances and needs can make them more vulnerable and subject to inappropriate behaviour and language from others. For example an individual in the process of gender reassignment may be subject to harassment.

Employees must never be judgmental and all individuals should be treated with dignity and respect according to their specific circumstances. Any issues should be dealt with in an appropriate and sensitive manner.

It is not appropriate for this policy to highlight all the different sensitive circumstances that individual services may face. This policy seeks to re-affirm the company's position on equality 'embracing equality and valuing difference'. The company acknowledges that a diverse workforce and community enriches and strengthens communities and creates a more tolerant society. Employees are expected to adhere to company policy.

8 Useful Contacts

For support and information on the application of this policy please contact your line manager. Alternatively contact Human Resources.

9 Related Policies

For related additional reading please refer to the company's Equal Opportunities Policy and Bullying and Harassment Policy.

10 Equality and Diversity Implications

There are several Equality and Diversity implications relating to Gender Reassignment. The Company fully accepts and welcomes the fact that society consists of many diverse groups and individuals and that the diversity of our population is an asset to the borough. Compliance with the principles of this policy will ensure that the employees do not commit unlawful acts of discrimination.

11 Financial Implications

The day-to-day financial implications of this policy are negligible. There are however potential significant costs to the company as a direct result of legal action resulting from inappropriate handling of gender reassignment issues.

12 Monitoring

All employees are responsible for monitoring their compliance with the principles/procedures detailed in this policy; departmental managers and supervisors should also monitor compliance on a regular basis.

13 Review

This policy will be reviewed from time to time to take account of changing legislation, organisational needs and trends in best practise. Where appropriate, changes will be discussed with the employee forum and/or TU representatives.

Employees will be informed of any such changes as soon as possible and no later than four weeks after the changes take effect.



VALUE FOR MONEY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

3 December 2008

PRESENT:

Directors

Richard Armitage
Paul Foy
Sara Woolley
Jim Willis

Advisers

Jon Mallen-Beadle	Director of Finance
Elaine Snaith	Assistant Chief Executive
Tom Hall	Business Support Officer (Performance)
Philip Slater	Chief Internal Auditor, Gateshead Council
Stuart Gibson	Company Administrator

Apologies

Allan Curry
Stan Dawson

28 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND DEPUTY CHAIR

RESOLVED – That Sara Woolley and Richard Armitage be appointed as Chair and Deputy Chair of the committee for the ensuing year.

29 MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting of this committee held on 13 October 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

30 DATE AND TIME OF MEETINGS 2009

RESOLVED – That the following schedule of meetings of the committee during 2009 be approved: -

Wednesday 25 February 2009 at 10am
Wednesday 22 April 2009 at 10am
Wednesday 24 June 2009 at 10am
Wednesday 21 October 2009 at 10am.

31 VALUE FOR MONEY UPDATE

The committee received an update on the value for money (VFM) activities being carried out by the company.

All the second quarter Service Level Agreement (SLA) monitoring meetings have taken place on schedule. A further update will be submitted to the next meeting in relation to the benchmarking review of SLAs.

VFM reviews are carried out in line with the programme plan which is included within the VFM strategy. The company has developed a toolkit for undertaking the VFM reviews which provides a step-by-step approach. Each report is presented to the VFM Service Improvement Group who scrutinise the results and provides challenge to those areas which do not represent VFM. A further two VFM reviews have been undertaken in the areas of Bulky Waste for Decent Homes and HomeChoice.

An initial trial of the was undertaken from June 2008 of providing a free service for residents wishing to dispose of items during the Decent Homes process to prevent fly tipping. In the past this had been carried out by placing a skip at various positions on the site.

The bulky waste collection service to be provided by LES will save an estimated £33,500 in 2008/09 and has qualitative benefits of collecting the waste directly from the resident's doorsteps which makes the service more accessible.

HomeChoice was launched in July 2006 and was originally costed on a weekly 4-page newspaper. There have been a number of developments since its launch which have led to an increased number of pages and increased costs. Therefore, a review has been undertaken on the costs of using other mediums – it was found that the newspaper was the most cost effective method.

A review of options to reduce the costs has been included and the report to the Choice Based Lettings Project Board recommended that they approve advertising via the website to reduce the newspaper back to a 4-page newspaper, qualifying criteria for the weekly mailing lists and work to be carried out to identify options to make efficiencies in the application process.

The Programme Plan attached to the VFM Strategy is used as a live document to track the VFM reviews to be undertaken, as well as any other work required in relation to VFM, such as the training programme.

The next VFM review which is being undertaken is a review of the Income Management Section and a review of the Repairs Section. A programme plan detailing the actions to be undertaken in relation to these reviews will be agreed with the VFM SIG.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.

32 OPERATIONAL RISKS REGISTER – SIX-MONTHLY UPDATE

The committee agreed, at its meeting on 2 May 2008, its first operational risk register, subject to an additional column identifying the risk manager. The

committee also agreed that the register should be reviewed and considered six monthly by the committee.

An updated operational risk register was submitted.

RESOLVED – That the updated operational risk register be approved.

33 2007-08 FINAL ALMO BENCHMARKING REPORT

A summary of the 2007-08 Final ALMO Benchmark Report was submitted.

RESOLVED – (i) That the information be noted.

(ii) That the report be presented to the Board after the Inspection result has been announced.

34 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the committee will be held on Wednesday 25 February 2009 at 10am in Board Room 2, Keelman House, Fifth Avenue Business Park, Fifth Avenue, Team Valley, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear.

35 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED – That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the remaining business in accordance with the indicated categories of the company's Access to Information Rules.



Report to the Board

15 January 2009

Title: Housing Revenue Account 2009/10

Report of: Director of Finance

Purpose of Report

1. To inform the Board of the Housing Revenue Account for 2009/10 to be agreed by the Council.

Background

2. At its meeting on 13 January 2009, the Council's Cabinet considered the Strategic Director – Finance and ICT's proposals for the Housing Revenue Account for 2009/10 and has recommended that full Council approve the HRA 2009/10 at its meeting on 22 January 2009. The Council's Constitution states that the approval of budgets is a function of full Council. A copy of the Cabinet report is attached for information at the Appendix to this report.

Implications

3. The Housing Revenue Account as agreed reflects: -
 - An increase in the average weekly rent of 6.3%, in accordance with the prescribed formula, giving an average rent increase of £3.61 to £60.75 per week (over 50 weeks). Currently, 65% of tenants are receiving Housing Benefit.
 - The need to provide for a Management Fee for The Gateshead Housing Company to carry out its functions on behalf of the Council.
 - Increased subsidy and borrowing costs associated with additional capital expenditure of £144.14m between 2005/06 and 2008/09 and £30m in 2009/10 for decent homes work.
 - Provision for £48m unsupported borrowing to enhance decent homes work and support solutions in areas such as Kibblesworth and Dunston.
 - A proposal for existing fees and charges to be increased in line with inflation and a stepped increase in some service charges and warden charges in line with previous Council decisions.
 - A proposal to consult on increasing the number of rent "free" weeks from two to three.

Links to Values

4. This report links to the following corporate values;
 - Being honest, accountable and transparent - *delivering excellent services with integrity*
 - Being motivated, trained, and committed across the company - *delivering efficient and effective services*

Impact on Tenants

5. The rent increase will impact on tenants, many of whom will be on low incomes.

Risk Management Implications

6. There are no additional risk management implications arising from this report.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

7. There are no equality or diversity implications arising from this report.

Value for Money Implications

8. There are no value for money implications arising from this report.

Consultation carried out

9. Consultation on the contents of the report will take place with the relevant Service Improvement Group.

Recommendations

10. The Board is asked to note
 - (i) the £3.61 average rent increase for 2009/10 (over 50 weeks);
 - (ii) the increase in fees and charges for 2009/10 in line with inflation;
 - (iii) the carrying out of consultation about increasing the number of rent “free” weeks from two to three.

TITLE OF REPORT: Housing Revenue Account 2009/10

REPORT OF: Derek Coates, Strategic Director – Finance and ICT

Purpose of the Report

1. This report proposes a balanced Housing Revenue Account for 2009/10, incorporating rent increases in line with the Government's revised policy on property specific rent restructuring, an increase in fees and charges in line with inflation and provision for the Management Fee for The Gateshead Housing Company.

Background

2. The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (Part VI) requires the Council to set a Housing Revenue Account for each year which is in overall credit. Part of this process includes consideration of rent increases for tenants, which are subject to national guidelines under the Government's policy on rent restructuring and are therefore out of the Council's control.

Proposal

3. A report to Cabinet on 2nd December 2008 set out the Government's proposals on rent restructuring and housing subsidy, which were subject to consultation. These proposals have now been confirmed. These proposals and other factors that have been taken into account in preparing the Housing Revenue Account for 2009/10 are set out in Appendix 1.
4. The proposed Housing Revenue Account for 2009/10 is set out in Appendix 2 and the proposed increases in fees and charges with effect from 1 April 2009 are set out in Appendix 3.
5. The proposal includes: -
 - An increase in the average weekly rent of 6.3%, in accordance with the prescribed formula, giving an average rent increase of £3.61 to £60.75 per week (over 50 weeks). Currently, 65% of tenants are receiving Housing Benefit.
 - The need to provide for a Management Fee for The Gateshead Housing Company to carry out its functions on behalf of the Council.

- Increased subsidy and borrowing costs associated with additional capital expenditure of £144.14m between 2005/06 and 2008/09 and £30m in 2009/10 for decent homes work.
- Provision for £48m unsupported borrowing to enhance decent homes work and support solutions in areas such as Kibblesworth and Dunston.
- A proposal for existing fees and charges to be increased in line with inflation and a stepped increase in some service charges and warden charges in line with previous Council decisions.
- A proposal to consult on increasing the number of rent “free” weeks from two to three.

Recommendations

6. Cabinet is asked to recommend to Council:

- (i) The recommended option for the average weekly rent increase of 6.3% as set out in Appendix 1.
- (ii) The Housing Revenue Account as set out in Appendix 2.
- (iii) That fees and charges are increased as shown in Appendix 3 with effect from 1 April 2009, and
- (iv) That consultation about increasing the number of rent “free” weeks from two to three be carried out.

For the following reason:

To set a Housing Revenue Account for 2009/10 which is in overall credit as required under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (Part VI).

THE HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA)

Policy Context

1. The proposals are consistent with Vision 2030, the Sustainable Community Strategy for Gateshead and in particular support the “Sustainable Gateshead” and “Active and Healthy Gateshead” Big Ideas. The proposals also support Corporate Priority 4 of the Council’s Corporate Plan by “Improving Accessibility, Connectivity and Economic Prosperity”.

Background – Rent Restructuring Policy

2. Rental income is the main source of income to the Housing Revenue Account. For a number of years rents have been determined according to the Government’s policy on rent restructuring. The policy became effective from April 2002 and takes rent setting out of the Council’s control with the aim of achieving parity with Registered Social Landlord (RSL) rent levels by 2011/12.
3. The current national policy is for rents to move in equal steps to a target rent by 2011/12 to align with rents of RSL’s. The target rent is calculated using a formula set by the Government. The formula takes into account the number of bedrooms of the property and the value of the property at 1999 prices. The formula gives a target rent at 2000/01 prices, which is uplifted each year by a specified amount for inflation.
4. After three years of rent restructuring the Government carried out a review. The review found that the formula would not bring local authority rents in line with those of RSL’s by 2011/12. In 2004 the Government issued a consultation paper proposing changes to the current restructuring policy. These changes were reported to Cabinet in October 2004. The Council responded opposing the changes because it would lead to an increase in rents and a proportionally higher increase for tenants of properties with 3 or more bedrooms. The increase in rents of larger properties could also lead to an increase in people extending the right to buy their homes and a reduction in the most needed type of social housing properties.
5. The Government decided to defer implementation of the proposed changes to allow for more consultation and to assess the implications for tenants. This was reported to Cabinet in January 2005. After limited consultation the Government decided to implement the changes with effect from April 2006.

Rent Restructuring Changes

6. The changes to the rent restructuring policy in April 2006 were for: -

- Harmonisation – the formula for calculating local authority rents was adjusted so that the rents of all properties increase to give greater harmonisation with those of RSL's.
 - Larger properties – the bedroom weighting in the formula increased for properties with 3 or more bedrooms so that the rents of these properties increase by more than those of smaller properties.
 - Convergence – the formula was uplifted for annual inflation by RPI (Retail Price Index) plus ½% rather than the previous basis of GDP deflator plus a factor. This means that local authority rents increase in line with RSL's.
 - Limitation – Rents continue to be limited to the September RPI increase (5% for 2008) plus ½% plus £2 per week but rents are now no longer limited to reductions of RPI plus 1/2% less £2 per week. The proposed increase in rents for 2009/10 will mean that no tenants within Gateshead will be subject to any form of limitation on their individual rent increase.
7. In conjunction with this limit on individual rent increases the Government sets “caps” on formula rent levels to be applicable in 2009/10. However these are set at such a high level as to have no effect on Gateshead rents.

Rent Restructuring 2009/10 and Beyond

8. The Government has announced it is currently exploring various options in the joint Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and HM Treasury review of Council Housing Finance, which is due to report to Ministers in Spring 2009. Consultation on proposals will be taken forward to feed into the next Comprehensive Spending Review. While a new determination will be issued for 2010/11 the stated intention of DCLG is that the methodology agreed for 2009/10 will not change for 2010/11.
9. In 2006/07 and 2007/08 the government decided to cap the average local authority rent rise to 5%. This cap was removed for 2008/09 and the date for convergence of guideline and limit rents was extended from 2011/12 to 2016/17. This resulted in an average rent increase for Gateshead of 5.9% in 2008/09.
10. As reported to Cabinet on 2nd December 2008 the draft housing subsidy determination for 2009/10 proposed a preferred option of having a new floating date for convergence under rent restructuring. This would be based upon the relationship between actual inflation and the rate at which DCLG increase “guideline” rents. Guideline rents dictate how much rental income an authority is assumed to have for the housing subsidy calculation. This forces councils to increase rents to the level of the guideline to replenish the income lost through subsidy.
11. The higher the actual rate of inflation in comparison to the proposed increase in guideline rents, the longer the period of convergence. This has been confirmed in the final determination. This means that based on inflation at 5% (the September 2008 RPI figure) and guideline rents increasing by 6.2% convergence will extend to 2023/24 for 2009/10 rent levels and ensure they are set at a more affordable level than if convergence still had to be achieved by 2011/12. Continuing on the route to

convergence in 2011/12 would result in average rent increases of around 9% a year.

12. DCLG has also confirmed a cap on the average local authority rent rise in 2009/10 of 7%.

Rent Free Weeks

13. At present Gateshead has two rent-free weeks at Christmas to help customers meet seasonal costs whilst avoiding falling into rent arrears.
14. Analysis by the Gateshead Housing Company shows a regular and significant drop in customers paying their rent during the first week in September. This trend reflects the financial pressure of the school holidays, combined with the cost of new school uniforms for the start of term. Further work and consultation will needed to be carried out in this area before any recommendations can be brought to Cabinet for possible implementation in 2010/11. The introduction of a third rent free week would lead to a small increase in the weekly rent payable.

Housing Element Subsidy

15. Housing subsidy is the Government's method of reallocating resources to support housing services. The guideline rent, which is used for calculating the housing element of the subsidy, has been increased in line with the formula for rent calculations. This in turn forces authorities to raise actual rents in line with guideline rents to cover the reduction in subsidy.
16. The combined management and maintenance allowances have increased by £20.99 (1.3%) per property from an average amount of £1,584.72 to £1,605.71 per property. The combined increase in management and maintenance allowances will generate an additional £453,951 in 2009/10.
17. As a result of a rebasing of the existing subsidy formula figures Gateshead will see a proposed reduction in its Major Repairs Allowance (MRA) in 2009/10 of £276,266 to £14,086,906. The MRA is a key part of the funding of decent homes work and while management and maintenance allowances have received "cash protection" no such similar measure is in place for the MRA in 2009/10.

Rent Rebates

18. Prior to 2006-07 the HRA bore the cost of Rent Rebate Subsidy limitation. This is where the value of an authority's average rent is above the 'limit rent', which the Government prescribes and will not reimburse the authority the cost of rent rebates. However, when the Government moved the limit rent in 2006/07 in line with the new formula rents without taking account of capping or the increased limitation it resulted in the limit rent becoming greater than the average rent. This meant the authority was removed from limitation and therefore does not bear a cost. This position continues to be the case for 2009/10.

Gateshead Housing Company

19. The Gateshead Housing Company is funded by a management fee from the Council. The level of the management fee to allow the Company to operate will need to be agreed following approval of the Housing Revenue Account. It will be made from within the Supervision and Management and Repairs and Maintenance budgets within the HRA and will need to reflect cost pressures identified by the Company as well as the ability to achieve efficiency gains.
20. In addition to the MRA the Government is continuing to release additional resources to support capital expenditure to bring the Council's stock up to decent homes standard. The additional resources are received through a special determination to fund capital expenditure as follows: -

Year	Amount
2005/06	£13m
2006/07	£54.140m
2007/08	£37m
2008/09	£40m
2009/10	£30m
2010/11	£30m
Total	£204.140m

21. The additional resources come in the form of additional subsidy to fund the borrowing costs arising from the capital expenditure. The additional subsidy and borrowing costs associated with the capital expenditure detailed in the table above have been taken into account in setting the Housing Revenue Account for 2009/10. The implications of this significant investment will be considered as part of the 2009/10 Capital Programme report by Council in March 2009.
22. The bid made by the Gateshead Housing Company to the Government for additional resources to bring the Council's housing up to decent homes standard assumed some unsupported borrowing in addition to that secured through the Audit Commission inspection. A schedule of works to the value of £48m over the period from 2008/09 to 2011/12 has been formulated and is subject to approval by Council as part of the annual capital programme each year.
23. Following the Chancellor's Pre-Budget Report in November 2008, Ministers have decided to bring forward £175 million resources from 2010-11 into 2009-10 as part of the package aimed at stimulating the economy. This is on the basis that the total available for 2010-11 will be reduced by an equivalent amount.
24. DCLG intends to issue guidance early in 2009 on how bids might be made by authorities intending to access this resource and any successful bids under this initiative will be confirmed in Special Determinations to be issued to the successful authorities. The guidance will also cover the potential of bringing forward supported borrowing resources for ALMO's. Any bid will be the subject of a separate report to Cabinet when guidance is available.

Service Developments

25. The HRA includes a contingency to cover pay and price increases and to cover unexpected events. In previous years the Council has also provided additional resources to fund developments in partnership with the Gateshead Housing Company. For 2009/10 an additional contingency fund of £0.3m is proposed to cover future developments.

Fees and Charges

26. Rent restructuring does not provide for the recovery of the cost of providing for services. The Council agreed to recover these service costs with effect from 1 April 2005. The services include caretakers, concierge and cleaning and heating of communal areas. New tenants are charged the full economic cost but for existing tenants the cost will be recovered in steps, which will now extend to 2023/24.
27. It is proposed that existing fees and charges are increased by 5%, which is in line with inflation as measured by the RPI at September 2008. The option does exist for Cabinet to increase fees and charges by a maximum of 5.5% (RPI at September 2008 plus 0.5%). It is estimated that this would generate additional income of £10,140. Appendix 3 also includes a stepped increase in some fees and charges where a phased increase for existing tenants has been previously agreed.

Balancing the Housing Revenue Account 2008/09

28. Appendix 2 shows a proposed balanced Housing Revenue Account for 2009/10, which is in overall credit. It reflects: -
- Rent increases calculated in accordance with the revised property specific rent restructuring policies;
 - An average rent increase of 6.3% (£3.61 per week to £60.75 per week over 50 weeks);
 - Increased management and maintenance allowances, a reduction in MRA and additional costs arising from borrowing to fund capital expenditure.
 - Interest costs associated with £48m unsupported borrowing.
 - Provision of £0.3m to fund future developments.
 - The need to provide for a management fee for the Gateshead Housing Company.
 - An increase in existing fees and charges of 5.0% and a stepped increase for those service charges where a phased increase for existing tenants has been previously agreed.
29. The projected balance of the Housing Revenue Account at 31 March 2010 is £17.820m. Given the commitment to fund additional unsupported borrowing from Housing Revenue Account resources in the future, the volatility of the subsidy system, the significant risk of costs resulting from equal pay claims and for the revised pay structure following Job Evaluation, the proposed balance on the Housing Revenue Account is considered adequate.

Consultation

30. Consultation has taken place with the Cabinet Members for Economy, Skills, Housing, and Transport. Discussions are taking place with the Gateshead Housing Company on how best to consult with tenants about the proposed rent increase. Options include arranging consultation through their Tenancy Management Service Improvement Group, Value for Money Service Improvement Group or both.

Alternative Options

31. There are no alternative options proposed.

Implications of Recommended Option

32. **Financial Implications** – The Strategic Director, Finance and ICT, confirms that the financial implications are reflected in appendices 1, 2 and 3.
33. **Risk Management Implication** – There are no additional risk implications arising from this report compared to previous years, therefore no additional control measures are required.
34. **Human Resources Implications** – Nil
35. **Equality and Diversity Implications** – Nil
36. **Crime and Disorder Implications** – Nil
37. **Sustainability Implications** – The report contains a number of measures, which will help deliver a more Sustainable Gateshead and ensure sustainable use of the Council's resources in delivering corporate priorities.
38. **Human Rights Implications** – Nil
39. **Area and Ward Implications** – All wards will be affected by housing rent increases.

Background Information

40. The following information has been used in preparing this report
Housing Subsidy Determination 2009/10.

Appendix 2

	Likely Outturn 2008/09 £'000	Provisional Estimate 2009/10 £'000
Income		
Dwellings	(59,820)	(63,630)
Non dwellings	(1,140)	(1,180)
Charges for Facilities and Services	(2,660)	(2,780)
HRA Subsidy Receivable	(4,930)	(3,840)
Contributions	(730)	(750)
	(69,280)	(72,180)
Expenditure		
Repairs and Maintenance	17,350	17,560
Supervision and Management	20,110	22,530
Increased provision for bad and doubtful debts	800	800
Depreciation	25,290	26,400
Debt management expenses	310	310
	63,860	67,600
Net Cost of Services	(5,420)	(4,580)
Appropriations		
Depreciation	(25,290)	(26,400)
MRA	14,530	14,090
Capital charges	16,060	16,650
	(120)	(240)
Amortised premiums and discounts	650	1,270
HRA investment income	(780)	(310)
Net Operating Income	(250)	720
(Surplus)/Deficit brought forward	(18,290)	(18,540)
(Surplus)/Deficit carried forward	(18,540)	(17,820)

Gateshead Council

2009/10 Fees and Charges

Fees and charges have been increased by 5%

Additional income generated in 2009/10 as a result of the implementation of the proposed increases in these charges is estimated to amount to **£156,360**

Type of Charge	Current Weekly Charge	Additional Unpooled Service Charge	Proposed Weekly Increase	Proposed Weekly Charge
WARWICK COURT				
<u>DISTRICT HEATING</u>				
Bedsit	3.31		0.17	3.47
1 Bed Flat	4.86		0.24	5.10
2 Bed Flat	6.51		0.33	6.83
3 Bed Flat	7.43		0.37	7.80
3/4 Share Flat	12.36		0.62	12.98
<u>COMMUNAL FACILITIES</u>				
Bedsit	2.83		0.14	2.97
1 Bed Flat	2.83		0.14	2.97
2 Bed Flat	4.26		0.21	4.47
3 Bed Flat	5.64		0.28	5.92
3/4 Share Flat	7.08		0.35	7.43
<u>FURNISHINGS</u>				
Bedsit	6.88		0.34	7.22
1 Bed Flat	8.67		0.43	9.11
2 Bed Flat	10.73		0.54	11.27
3 Bed Flat	12.29		0.61	12.90
EAST STREET FLATS				
<u>Heating and Hot Water</u>				
Bedsit	5.80		0.29	6.09
1 Bed Flat	7.37		0.37	7.74
2 Bed Flat	8.82		0.44	9.26
3 Bed Flat	10.35		0.52	10.87
AGED PERSONS' UNITS				
<u>HEATING CHARGE</u>				
Units with Communal Area and a Heating Charge				
Existing tenants				
Bedsit	6.68		0.33	7.02
Flat	9.41		0.47	9.88
Warden	10.58		0.53	11.11
All tenants	1.16		0.06	1.22

New tenants from 1 April 2005			
Bedsit	6.68	0.33	7.02
Flat	9.41	0.47	9.88
Warden	10.58	0.53	11.11
All tenants	1.16	0.06	1.22

Units with Communal Area and no Heating Charge

Existing tenants	1.11	0.06	1.17
New tenants from 1 April 2005	1.11	0.06	1.17

CLEANING OF COMMUNAL AREAS

Units with Communal Area and a Heating Charge

Existing tenants	1.93	0.01	0.10	2.04
New tenants from 1 April 2005	3.94		0.20	4.13

Units with Communal Area and no Heating Charge

Existing tenants	0.66		0.03	0.69
New tenants from 1 April 2005	0.66		0.03	0.69

ELECTRICITY IN LYNDHOLME, McERLANE SQUARE,
MULGRAVE VILLAS AND THE LONNEN

Tenants	3.85		0.19	4.04
Wardens	7.73		0.39	8.12
Communal Electric	1.40		0.07	1.47

WARDEN SERVICE

Existing tenants	1.41		0.07	1.48
New tenants from 1 April 2005	10.83		0.54	11.38

MOBILE WARDEN SERVICE

New tenants from 1 April 2005	0.95		0.05	0.99
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COMMUNAL LOUNGE

Tenants with Communal Room	1.41		0.07	1.48
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CLEANING SERVICE

Chandless, Maisonettes & 3 Storey Flats

Existing tenants	0.96	0.01	0.05	1.01
New tenants from 1 April 2005	2.01		0.10	2.12

Units with a mobile cleaner

Existing tenants	0.67		0.03	0.71
New tenants from 1 April 2005	0.81		0.04	0.85

DISPERSED HOMELESS UNITS

Heat and Light

Sharing Bedsits (each)	11.90	0.59	12.49
2 Bed Flat	21.40	1.07	22.47
3 Bed Flat	23.78	1.19	24.97

Furnishings

Sharing Bedsits (each)	15.07	0.75	15.83
2 Bed Flat	27.13	1.36	28.48
3 Bed Flat	30.13	1.51	31.63

Warden Charge

Sharing Bedsits (each)	63.64	3.18	66.82
Flats	63.64	3.18	66.82

Laundry

Sharing Bedsits (each)	7.43	0.37	7.80
Flats	7.43	0.37	7.80

Cleaning Materials

Sharing Bedsits (each)	4.44	0.22	4.66
Flats	4.44	0.22	4.66

OUTSIDE USE OF COMMUNAL LOUNGES

Up to 1 hour	5.21	0.26	5.47
Up to 2 hours	10.39	0.52	10.91
1 session (2-4 hours)	16.51	0.83	17.34
2 sessions	31.17	1.56	32.73
3 sessions	43.58	2.18	45.75

USE OF APU GUEST ROOMSNo En-Suite Amenities

Single (per night)	5.36		0.27	5.62
Couple (per night)	6.23		0.31	6.54

Partial En-Suite Amenities

Single (per night)	6.87		0.34	7.21
Couple (per night)	7.31		0.37	7.68

Full En-Suite Amenities

Single (per night)	7.95		0.40	8.35
Couple (per night)	8.85		0.44	9.30

FURNITURE CHARGES

Bedsit (Package)	6.88		0.34	7.22
1 Bed Flat (Furniture Only)	8.67		0.43	9.11
1 Bed Flat (Package)	12.52		0.63	13.14
2 Bed Flat (Package)	18.63		0.93	19.57
3 Bed House (Package)	24.90		1.24	26.14
Asylum - 1 Bed Flat	24.06		1.20	25.26
Asylum - 2 Bed Flat	30.69		1.53	32.23

GARAGES

Brick Garage, Council	3.47		0.17	3.64
Brick Garage, Private	5.27		0.26	5.53
Wooden Garage	1.16		0.06	1.22
Commercial Use	7.32		0.37	7.69
Commercial Storage	13.19		0.66	13.85
Parking Bays (Annual Charge)	14.19		0.71	14.90

MULTI STOREY FLATSConcierge and Cleaning

Existing tenants	9.91	0.05	0.50	10.46
New tenants from 1 April 2005	12.56		0.63	13.19

Caretaking and Cleaning

Existing tenants	6.73	0.03	0.34	7.10
New tenants from 1 April 2005	6.87		0.34	7.21

OTHER CHARGESCommunity Care/Hardwired Alarms

Existing tenants				
New tenants from 1 April 2005	2.38		0.12	2.50

Dispersed Alarms/ Lifelines

Existing tenants				
New tenants from 1 April 2005	3.08		0.15	3.24

Legal Fees on abstracts for
Mortgage Advances

60.45		3.02	63.47
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Valuation Fees

Up to £10,000	70.52		3.53	74.05
£10,001 - £15,000	83.12		4.16	87.27
Above £15,000	103.26		5.16	108.43

Mortgage Questionnaire	65.48		3.27	68.75
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Rent Reference Questionnaire	32.76		1.64	34.40
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Gardening Scheme	5.76		0.29	6.05
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Report to the Board

15 January 2009

Title: Kibblesworth New Build – Progress Report

Report of: Chief Executive

Purpose of Report

1. To provide the Board with a progress report on the Kibblesworth New Build project.

Background

2. At its meeting of 22 October the Board considered a number of reports concerning the company's potential role in the provision of new build homes for rent.
3. Following that meeting the reports were forwarded to the Council to consider the implications of progressing the proposals for Kibblesworth and the setting up of a charitable subsidiary of the Housing Company.
4. Cabinet considered the matter at its meeting of 2 December 2008. A copy of the report is attached as an Appendix.
5. Clearly the Council have indicated a strong commitment to taking forward the proposals for Kibblesworth.
6. The Board also approved the establishment of the post of a New Build and Regeneration Manager subject to a successful bid to the Council for a release from the contingency fund. The Council's Director of Finance has confirmed that he is prepared to fund this post from the contingency for an initial two year period.

Links to Values

7. This report links to the corporate values of:-
 - Being positive and responsive - *constantly striving to achieve excellence*
 - Being a listening and learning organisation – *staying in touch with what customers want*

Impact on Customers

8. There will be a significant impact on tenants at Kibblesworth as a result of any rehousing requirements.

Risk Management Implications

9. As part of the next stage in the project a comprehensive risk management strategy will need to be developed to reflect this new area of business.

Financial Implications

10. The financial implications arising from the report will be considered as part of the budget setting process for 2009/10 and beyond.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

11. There are no equality and diversity implications directly arising from this report.

Value for Money Implications

12. Any procurement exercise would need to maximise value for money.

Consultation carried out

13. Consultation with tenants at the Kbblesworth Aireys continues.

Recommendation

14. The Board is recommended to note progress.

TITLE OF REPORT: Building New Affordable Housing**REPORT OF: Margaret Whellans, Group Director, Community Based Services****Purpose of the Report**

1. Cabinet is asked to agree that the Council, through The Gateshead Housing Company (TGHC), progress proposals for building new energy efficient homes in Kibblesworth in line with the business planning exercise undertaken by Housing Quality Network (HQN).

Background

2. TGHC in partnership with the Council has been looking at options for improving the Airey houses in Kibblesworth.
3. On 1 April 2008 Cabinet agreed for the Council, through TGHC, to develop costed proposals for building new energy efficient homes in Kibblesworth. HQN have, therefore, worked with the Council and TGHC to develop a business plan to enable the development of these new homes in Kibblesworth.
4. Following legal advice it is recommended that TGHC set up a charitable subsidiary in order to limit tax liability and ensure that resources are maximised to build new affordable homes and to reduce pressures on the emerging business plan.
5. The business plan identifies that 154 new properties could be built at Kibblesworth with around 100 being designated for new social rented housing to meet the needs of existing and future households.
6. The Council has produced a development brief for Kibblesworth (see appendix 2). This brief will provide the context for TGHC's emerging plans for redevelopment of the Kibblesworth site.
7. The development would be part of an ongoing programme for TGHC to develop new affordable homes across the borough to meet the needs of local people as set out in the Council's Housing Strategy 2007-2012. This supports the recommendations of the Sustainable Communities (Place) Overview and Scrutiny Committee to maximise opportunities for TGHC to build new affordable housing.

Proposal

8. It is proposed that Cabinet agree to the Council, in partnership with TGHC, starting the next phase of the project and enable new energy efficient homes to be built in Kibblesworth.

Recommendations

9. Cabinet is recommended to agree:
- (i) TGHC to establish a charitable subsidiary limited by guarantee;
 - (ii) The transfer of land at nil value to the charitable subsidiary of TGHC at the appropriate time to enable new build plans to progress;
 - (iii) TGHC commence the procurement of a development partner;
 - (iv) New build properties be ring fenced for existing tenants;
 - (v) Priority status be given to those tenants who may want to move to other areas;
 - (vi) Homeloss and disturbance payments be made to eligible tenants on acceptance of a new property;
 - (vii) Voids to be taken out of debit and demolished when appropriate.

For the following reasons:

To ensure that the housing offer in Kibblesworth meets the needs and aspirations of local people and that investment helps to create cohesive and sustainable communities.

Policy Context

1. The Proposals are consistent with Vision 2030, the Sustainable Community Strategy for Gateshead and in particular support the 'Sustainable Gateshead' Big Idea. The proposals also support the achievement of the Council's Corporate Plan, Corporate Priority 6, Ensuring a Sustainable Gateshead. It is also consistent with the Council's Housing Strategy 2007-2012 and TGHC Business Plan 2008-2013.

Background

2. TGHC in partnership with the Council has been looking at options for improving the Airey houses in Kibblesworth.
3. On 1 April 2008 Cabinet agreed for the Council, through TGHC, to develop costed proposals for building new energy efficient homes in Kibblesworth. HQN have, therefore, worked with the Council and TGHC to develop a business plan to enable the development of these new homes in Kibblesworth.
4. Following legal advice it is recommended that TGHC set up a charitable subsidiary in order to limit tax liability and ensure that resources are maximised to build new affordable homes and to reduce pressures on the emerging business plan.
5. The plan identifies that 154 new properties at Kibblesworth could be built with around 100 being designated for new social rented housing to meet the needs of existing and future households.
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7. The development would be part of an ongoing programme for TGHC to develop new affordable homes across the borough to meet the needs of local people as set out in the Council's Housing Strategy 2007-2012. This supports the recommendations of the Sustainable Communities (Place) Overview and Scrutiny Committee to maximise opportunities for TGHC to build new affordable housing.

Consultation

8. The Cabinet Member for Economy, Housing, and Transport, the spokesperson for Housing, the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Communities South, Ward Councillors and Tenants have been consulted on these proposals.
9. A public consultation event was held at the Millennium Centre on 31 January 2008. All tenants and residents not spoken to at this event were then visited individually. Tenants have also visited a local new build scheme to see what type of development would be possible on the site.

Alternative Options

10. Three options were presented to residents. Of the 94 households consulted on these options 72 (77%) households were in favour of the recommended option that would see demolition of existing properties and new homes built on the cleared and existing sites within the village. Therefore Cabinet agreed on 1 April 2008 to progress with tenants preferred option.

Implications of Recommended Option

11. **Financial Implications** – The Strategic Director, Finance and ICT confirms that work is ongoing to finalise the financial implications arising from this report, which will be either met from existing resources or form part of the 2009/10 proposed Capital Programme.

TGHC now have approved partner status with the Housing Corporation and can therefore access funding through the National Affordable Homes Programme. Initial discussions with the Housing Corporation indicated that the scheme at Kibblesworth would be supported for funding.

12. **Risk Management Implication** – A comprehensive risk management strategy will be developed to support the new build business plan and ensure that development risks are mitigated.
13. **Human Resources Implications** – TGHC will appoint a New Build and Regeneration Manager to ensure that this, and future, project(s) are effectively managed.
14. **Equality and Diversity Implications** – All officers carrying out consultation with residents have been through equality and diversity training.
15. **Crime and Disorder Implications** – Future voids and demolitions will be project managed by TGHC to ensure that crime and disorder implications are minimised.
16. **Sustainability Implications** – The proposals will help the long-term sustainability of Kibblesworth.
17. **Human Rights Implications** - The proposals affects Article 8, the right to respect for private and family life. However, the interference is justified as proposals enable residents to help inform future investment decisions.
18. **Area and Ward Implications** – This proposal only affects residents living in the Airey Houses at Kibblesworth in the Lamesley Ward within the South Neighbourhood Management area.

Background Information

Report to Cabinet - Airey Houses – 19 July 2005
Report to Cabinet – Airey Houses – 15 January 2007
Report to Cabinet – Airey Houses – 1 April 2008
Sustainable Communities (Place) Overview and Scrutiny Committee -
Opportunity for Social Housing Provision (Final Report) - 28 April 2008

Kibblesworth Planning Brief

Site Vision

The redevelopment of the Airey housing at Kibblesworth should create affordable and sustainable family housing, and safe and attractive routes to connect with the rest of the village.

Introduction

This site lies within the Kibblesworth village of Gateshead. The housing that is to be redeveloped is situated in Kibblesworth, a village of 656 households (2001 Census), situated at the south end of Team Valley.

Part of the site was identified for housing in the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (2007), this is labelled as housing site H3.30. The remainder of the site has not been identified for housing in the UDP. However, the principle of redevelopment was established through public consultation with the local residents. 94 households were consulted, and 72 (77%) favoured the demolition of existing properties and new homes built on the cleared site within the village. A report to Cabinet in April 2008 approved the development of costed proposals for building new energy efficient homes in Kibblesworth.

Site Objectives

The objectives of this brief are:

- To clarify the policies of Gateshead Council in relation to the redevelopment of Airey housing at Kibblesworth.
- To ensure the high quality of design and layout of the redevelopment.
- To promote sustainable building methods and practices.
- To assist in the regeneration of Kibblesworth.

Site Location and Description

Kibblesworth lies in the South of the Gateshead Town Centre, and is part of the Lamesley Ward.

Kibblesworth was originally a mining village, and the pit closed in 1974. The population of Kibblesworth has been declining in recent years, due in part to a reduction in the number of households and also as a result of some outward migration. This can be seen in the falling rolls in the local primary school. A significant proportion of the housing here is public sector, which is now managed by The Gateshead Housing Company. The remainder is privately owned, and a small number are owned and managed by private landlords. Kibblesworth has one of the highest rates of older people being helped to live at home, and is above the Gateshead average.

Kibblesworth has a stable and close-knit community, which identifies itself very much with the village. It is a tidy and attractive village, surrounded by farmland, and with attractive open space within the village. It is, however, relatively isolated, with poor facilities and poor communication with the rest of the Borough.

Kibblesworth's main assets include:

- an interesting and attractive location, with easy access to the countryside and to the A1, making it a potentially good location for commuting

- an established community with a strong sense of identity, low levels of crime, and few drug problems; and,
- an established and successful primary school

The Airey housing estate is located to the south of the village. To the north is the Primary School and to the south is Kibblesworth Recreational Ground. The estate is currently occupied by 94 Airey homes constructed using concrete frames and external panels, and a number of these houses have already been demolished as a result of structural problems. Surrounding the site is a traditionally built social housing estate, much of which is now privately owned.

There are a number of bus services serving Kibblesworth, linking the village with Gateshead town centre and Newcastle City Centre, and the site has easy access to the A1.

Housing

The Gateshead Housing Company is proposing to redevelop the existing 94 Airey houses and parcels of vacant land, with a new mixed tenure residential development. The redevelopment should be developed at a density between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare net, in accordance with UDP policy H1. At present time, the redevelopment should contain a maximum of 93 affordable homes for the existing tenants of the Airey estate. This is in accordance with Policy H7 of the UDP, which requires that where there is evidence for affordable housing, the Council will seek a proportion of affordable housing on all housing developments on sites of 0.5 hectares or more in size or with the potential for 15 or more dwellings.

In order to deliver affordable housing UDP policy H8 requires that prior to a planning application being approved, an applicant will be required to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Council that the affordability of any units provided will be maintained in perpetuity using:

- a) A management scheme in association with an appropriate body; or
- b) A planning agreement or obligation to control occupancy.

In order to deliver a mixed, inclusive and sustainable community on this development a minimum of 10% of dwellings will be required to be constructed to Lifetime Homes standards, and a minimum of 2% of dwellings are to be built, or to be capable of adaptation without structural alteration, to Wheelchair Housing Standards. This percentage will be applied to both the market and affordable housing elements of the housing schemes.

The Lifetime Homes standard, developed by Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF), is designed to provide housing that is more flexible, adaptable and accessible and which can more easily meet a household's changing needs than that required under Part M of the Building Regulations (2000).

UDP policy H9 provides further details on Lifetime Homes and UDP policy H10 provides further details of Wheelchair Homes standards.

Design Principles

It is proposed that the existing road network is retained to serve the redevelopment site, and the new housing should front onto these roads in order to allow overlooking and

natural surveillance. This will result in the layout being similar to the current layout, and the few gap sites being filled in.

There is the opportunity to create houses with corner turners, which will result in a double aspect and interesting frontages at these corners. These houses will be bigger in scale and would be able to accommodate larger families.

The housing should be developed at a density of between 30-50 dwellings per hectare in accordance UDP policy H12 .

It is expected that the development will be mainly in the form of two and two and a half storey family houses with the opportunity to expand into the roofspace. There is the opportunity to provide bungalows within the site if desired and appropriate.

The surrounding built environment is not made up of one single dominant architectural style; the immediate vicinity consists of 1950s semi detached social housing. The development should be of a high quality, distinctive design that uses similar materials to those already used in the village. It is essential that the new development compliment's the existing social housing that surrounds the redevelopment area.

Any materials used in the development should be sustainable, high quality and durable.

Further reference to general urban design advice for Gateshead can be found in UDP policies DC2, ENV1, ENV2 and ENV3.

UDP policy ENV30 requires that all new developments should assist in reducing opportunities for crime by creating appropriate design and layouts while maintaining a high standard of appearance, amenity and accessibility. Developers will therefore be expected to build security measures into any scheme and to produce a layout that provides distinctive, attractive and well-designed defensible space, with good natural surveillance.

Any proposal must demonstrate at the planning application stage that it has been designed to prevent crime and must show what security measures are to be incorporated as ongoing provision. Further reference can be found in IPA 1: Crime Prevention in New Developments.

Prior to seeking planning permission applicants are encouraged to discuss layouts with Northumbria Police's Architectural Liaison Officer.

Movement and Permeability

Development proposals should create safe and clear pedestrian access to and around the site. It is important that any new routes link well with the existing pedestrian routes leading to and circulating around the site, and that these existing routes are enhanced to provide high-quality, safe and attractive routes, achieving a good level of permeability through the whole site.

It is envisaged that the highway layout will remain in its current form in order to service the remaining social housing around the perimeter of the site. However, small additions of new road layout are likely to be required in order to service some of the new housing. Any new roads must be designed in accordance with the Council's "Designers' Guide for Highways and Sewers" (2nd Edition) which serves as a design guide for access

roads and estate layouts, including traffic calming measures and construction. Any new roads created as part of this development should also be adopted as public highway.

Car parking provision should be made in accordance with the Council's Interim Policy Advice (IPA) 11 - Levels of Car Parking In New Developments, which for C3 (dwelling houses), car parking must not exceed 1.5 spaces per dwelling house, plus 1 space per 3 dwellings for visitors, and for flats/apartments 1 space per dwelling is required. Parking for disabled people and motorcyclists must also be provided as detailed in IPA 11.

The housing to be redeveloped does not provide off street car parking. Given the current problems with on street parking its is necessary for all the new housing to provide off street hard standing space to relieve on street parking problems in this area.

Guidance on car and cycle parking is contained in the adopted UDP Appendix 9 'Car and Cycle Parking Guidelines'. The minimum cycle parking standards have now been adopted into the "Cycling Strategy for Gateshead" (March 2003), a copy of which can be made available.

Gateshead is committed to encouraging cycling as a mode of transport by providing a safe and convenient cycling network, secure cycle storage and parking, by providing facilities which will serve to encourage cycle use.

A Travel Plan and Transport Assessment may need to be submitted with any application for the development of this site in accordance with PPG13. The scope of this assessment will be dependent upon the scale of the final proposals. Please go to <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/regional/transportassessments/guidanceonta> for more guidance on Transport Assessments and <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/travelplans/work/makingptpworkessential> for Travel Plans.

Open Space

The Council's standards for local open space provision are met in Kibblesworth, particularly with the Kibblesworth Recreational Ground being directly south of the development there is not a requirement for open space on this site (for more details see UDP policy CFR 20). However, given the lack of toddler play facilities in the local area and the housing numbers proposed as part of this development there is a requirement for approximately five new toddlers' play areas, with at least one of these having equipped play provision. Provision should be made on-site, and there is also a need to provide a contribution to teenage play facilities due to the lack of facilities within Kibblesworth village. These may be off-site if a suitable location can be found.

New play areas should be designed and maintained for the needs of the age group. Further advice on the design and layout of these can be found in UDP policies H15 and CFR28 and CFR30, and Interim Policy Advice Note 2: Children's Play Area Standards (published as Supplementary Planning Guidance note 4). Potential developers are strongly advised to contact the Council's Fixed Play Officer, Kevin Robson at an early stage.

Public Art

Developers are strongly encouraged to consider opportunities for new public art. Public art promotes legibility and can be used as a landmark to attract people to certain areas,

provide a focal point at gateways and define routes and connect locations (see UDP policy ENV 6).

Sustainable Development

In line with national and international priorities, the Council has several policies in place, which reflect the move towards sustainability for all developments e.g.: Sustainable Communities Strategy, Local Agenda 21 Strategy, and the Unitary Development Plan. Furthermore the council recognises the contribution that established standards such as BREEAM, Code for Sustainable Homes, and Building for Life will have in ensuring the highest standards in design on this redevelopment site.

The developer will need to consider the environmental performance of the proposed development, taking particular account of the climate the development is likely to experience over its expected lifetime.

Developers will need to have regard to the Supplement to Planning Policy Statement 1: Planning and Climate Change, and the forthcoming supporting practice guide, to ensure that the proposed development is consistent with new national planning policy. Gateshead Housing Company will aspire to meet at least level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes on this site.

It is now mandatory for all new homes to be assessed against the Code for Sustainable Homes, and by 2010 all developments will be required to meet the level 3 energy and carbon standards of the Code for Sustainable Homes under Part L of the (Building Regulations 2006).

Based upon the Supplement to PPS1 (para. 35) the Council will:

- expect applicants to use landform, layout, building orientation, massing, density, mix and landscaping to minimise energy consumption including maximising cooling and avoiding solar gain in the summer and maximise natural ventilation taking account of the likely local noise environment and ambient air quality;
- expect substantial new development to gain a significant proportion of its energy supply on site from renewable sources and / or be connected to a decentralised, renewable or low carbon, energy supply where available;
- require the provision of public and private open space as appropriate so that the development offers accessible choice of shade and shelter;
- ensure that new development does not create adverse local environmental conditions for people or undermine biodiversity;
- secure sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS), pay attention to the potential contribution to be gained to water harvesting from impermeable surfaces and encourage layouts that accommodate waste water recycling;
- require provision for sustainable waste management; and ensure full consideration is given to creating and securing opportunities for sustainable transport in line with PPG13 including: through the preparation and submission of travel plans; providing for safe walking and cycling, including appropriate secure cycle parking and changing facilities; and an appropriate approach to the provision and management of car parking.

The Council encourages an approach consistent with the first part of policy MWR 35 to incorporate measures that will promote micro-renewables, energy efficiency and sustainable design, including the sub-points (a) to (d) included in the policy. Regard

should also be given Policy JE4 Sustainable Economic Development, particularly criteria c, d, e and f.

The BREEAM and Eco Homes ratings will assist developers in demonstrating compliance with environmental and planning requirements in accordance with Policy 39b of the emerging RSS. BRE will continue to maintain and operate the Eco Homes scheme during the transition to the Code for Sustainable Homes for new houses.

Developers will be required to demonstrate how major schemes will generate a major proportion of the site's electricity or heat needs from renewables, where feasible. Any new development of 1,000m² or 10 or more residential units must incorporate renewable energy production equipment to provide at least 10% of the predicted energy requirements, subject to the type of development proposed, its location and design (UDP policy MWR35). The North East Micro Renewables Toolkit was commissioned by the North East Assembly and One North East, and should assist with the feasibility assessment.

Sustainability research has been undertaken on this site and has identified that photovoltaic, solar thermal, and ground source heat pumps technology are all feasible to be used on this site. A large wind turbine and/or roof mounted wind turbine's could also possibly be introduced on this site, it is hoped that further research undertaken by the Council will clarify this further.

Prospective developers should refer to the guidance in 'Building-in Sustainability' – A guide to sustainable development and construction in the North East' produced by Sustaine (see <http://www.durham.gov.uk/> click 'environment' and then 'sustainable development').

Flood Risk

Gateshead's current Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2007) identifies that Kibblesworth is located within a low risk area for fluvial and tidal flooding on the Environment Agency's flood zones map (flood zone 1). However, localised flooding has been observed at Grange Estate during the November 2000 floods due to the backing up of sewers and drains and flooding from the fields.

Gateshead Council has commissioned further work on its Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, which is expected to be completed by Autumn 2008. This will include further information regarding areas with potential for flooding from other sources including overland flow routes and areas prone to surface water flooding caused by intensive rainfall and local watercourses. It will also provide further detail regarding impacts of climate change and areas defined as functional floodplain. Further additional work may also be undertaken to meet the recommendations of the Pitt Review following on from the lessons learnt from the Summer 2007 flooding.

Any planning application will need to have regard to Policy ENV57 of the UDP and Gateshead's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and national planning policy PPS25 and PPS25 Development and Flood Risk Practice Guide. Any planning applications for development proposals of 1 hectare or greater in Flood Zone 1 (low risk) will need to be accompanied by a flood risk assessment (FRA) and the Environment Agency would need to be consulted (PPS25 para 26 and E9). This includes development of sites in Flood Zone 1, which could have implications for downstream flooding due to increased run-off as well as the effects of surface water run-off within the site itself. The flood risk

assessment would need to be meet the requirements of Annex E3 and the Environment Agency guidance note 1 (<http://www.pipernetworking.com/floodrisk/fra1.html>). The FRA will need to assess the risk and mitigation of all sources of flooding, including surface water and sewers, and demonstrate how flood risk will be managed for the lifetime of the development taking into account climate change. A flood risk assessment will also be required if any development is located with the area to be known to subject to drainage problems.

Surface water management issues should be covered within the FRA. Surface water management is a material planning consideration and a key component design and will need to be considered at the earliest stage in the planning and design process, in consultation with the Council, Northumbrian Water and Environment Agency. Run-off from previously developed sites should be compared with existing rates, not greenfield rates for the site before it was developed. However, developers are strongly encouraged to reduce the run-off rates from previously developed sites as much as is reasonably practicable. Sustainable Drainage Systems will be encouraged where practicable reflecting PPS25 and Policy ENV57 of the UDP to improve environmental quality and as well as control surface water run-off. Further guidance can be found within the PPS25 Practice Guide.

Ground Contamination

Most parts of the Borough have a long history of underground and surface working for coal and other minerals. The recreation ground to the south west of the redevelopment site is identified in the Council's Contaminated Land Survey as potentially contaminated land. The site is identified as a priority area 3, as a site suitable for present use, and action is unlikely to be needed whilst the site remains in its present use.

General Requirements

Noise

Housing is considered to be noise-sensitive development. Any development proposal should therefore comply with noise exposure categories as set out in UDP policy ENV60 and PPG24: Noise.

Refuse Collection

Adequate facilities must be provided within the built form of each unit for the storage of wheeled refuse bins and recyclable material for kerbside collection.

Cable

An underground broadband cable television service is gradually being provided throughout the Borough. Whilst it is not a requirement of obtaining planning permission, developers are urged to contact the relevant cable operator. This will enable consideration to be given to the installation of underground cable and the provision of apparatus placement during the development's construction. It is desirable that provision be incorporated at the outset to avoid unnecessary disturbance and costs at a later date.

Pre application Procedures

Developers of this site can make use of Gateshead Council's 'Development Team Approach'. This approach brings together every service provided by the Council that contributes to the development process – planning, building control, environmental health, economic development, landscape design, highways and structural engineering,

legal services and property. The Development Team will guide developers and their consultants through the whole development process including seeking planning permission, obtaining the building regulations approvals and environmental health consents.

Planning Application Requirements

On the 1 April 2008 the Government introduced new national arrangements for the making of planning applications. These relate firstly to the use of standard planning application forms (known as 1APP), and secondly to new information requirements for the validation of planning applications.

A document named The Validation of Planning Applications in Tyne and Wear has been prepared by all of the Councils in Tyne and Wear to provide anyone submitting a planning application with the requirements for planning application submissions. Using this document, the Kibblesworth redevelopment will require the following to be submitted as part of a planning application:

- Flood Risk Assessment
- Travel Plan
- Daylight/Sunlight Assessment
- Landscaping Details
- Design and Access Statement
- Affordable Housing Statement
- Statement of Community Involvement

Section 106 Obligations

The following obligations are likely to be sought but the exact requirements will be dependent on individual submissions:

- Highways improvements
- Play areas contribution
- Public Art
- Affordable housing in perpetuity

Essential Criteria

- Affordable housing
- Housing to be at 2/2.5 storeys
- Provision of toddler play areas and a contribution to teenage play areas.
- Meet the lifetime homes standards
- Provide well designed family housing
- Off road parking spaces for each house
- Creation of secure/lockable and weatherproof cycle storage
- Provide any necessary supplementary documentation

Desirable Criteria

- Carbon neutral development
- Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3 and above

Report to the Board

15 January 2009



Title: Ravensworth Road Update

Report of: Director of Housing Management

Purpose of Report

1. To update the Board on the strategy for the Ravensworth Road area in Dunston and outline the steps that will be undertaken to support the redevelopment.

Background

2. In 2005 the Company in partnership with Social Regeneration Consultants carried out a survey of the tenants living in Derwent Tower, Cleveland Mews, Tower Court and Cheviot Green. The results showed a strong demand for accommodation in the Dunston area but dissatisfaction with the suitability of the current properties, in particular the maisonettes.
3. The Council in September 2007 approved the rehousing of the tenants in Derwent Tower on health and safety grounds. This process was completed on 20 November 2008.
4. In January 2008 The Council in partnership with GVA consultants and the Company commenced formal consultation with tenants and the wider community to develop options for Ravensworth Road.

Summary

5. The report to Gateshead Councils Cabinet 13 January 2009 (See Appendix) sets out the Master Plan and delivery strategy for the Ravensworth Road area of Dunston which includes:
 - The phased rehousing of tenants from Cleveland Mews, Tower Court and Cheviot Green
 - The phased demolition of these properties, the retail units and Derwent Tower
 - Redevelopment of the area including the replacement of retail units.
6. As a consequence of the plans, employees currently based in the former Dunston Housing Office in Ravensworth Road will need to be relocated to the Dunston Activity Centre.

Link to values

7. This report links to the following company values: -
- Being a listening and learning organisation – staying in touch with what customers want.
 - Being customer focused, innovative and professional - involving customers in what we do.
 - Being honest, accountable and transparent – delivering excellent services with integrity.

Impact on tenants

8. A total of 99 tenants living in Cleveland Mews, Tower Court and Cheviot Green will be given Band 1 priority under HomeChoice. The date of the award of band 1 will reflect the agreed phasing programme.
9. The tenants will have the support of a dedicated Estate Regeneration Officer who will be based in Dunston.
10. Tenants who qualify will be eligible for a Homeloss payment, currently £4700 and a Disturbance payment of up to £500 from the date that the Cabinet report is approved.
11. As part of this project it is proposed to develop an evidence base to inform a health inequalities impact assessment focusing on how housing and urban design impact on the health of residents.

Risk Management Implications

12. The Council has subjected the plans for the area to a full risk assessment in terms of funding, resources and deliverability.

Financial Implications

13. The relocating of tenants will incur the costs itemised below.
- Homeloss and Disturbance payments, payable to eligible tenants.
 - Provision of security to the void properties and associated decommissioning costs.
14. Local Environmental Services currently provides CCTV coverage to the area as part of a Service Level Agreement with the Company. The demolition of these properties will result in the loss of this income for LES.
15. The housing office relocation to the Dunston Activity Centre is the subject of a capital bid to the Council.
16. The Cabinet have been asked to approve funding of the Estate Regeneration Officer post until at least March 2011.

Equality and Diversity Implications

17. The Estate Regeneration Officer post will provide a support and advice role to tenants supporting those individuals and families with specific needs.

Value for Money implications

18. The dedicated Estate Regeneration Officer post will ensure that the project is managed effectively and any risks to achieving the milestones will be identified at an early stage.
19. The Estate Regeneration Officer will ensure that the management of empty properties is effective and that associated costs are minimised.

Consultation carried out

20. Consultation has taken place throughout this process. This has included:
- In January 2008 one to one interviews with tenants living in Cleveland Mews, Tower Court and Cheviot Green.
 - A drop in event was held during February 2008 for the wider community.
 - An exhibition showing the different development options was held in March 2008.
 - All tenants of the retail unit's have been individually consulted.
 - The Inner West Area Forum has been updated and consulted at each stage. The information contained within this report will be presented to next Area Forum meeting to be held on 21 January 2009.
21. Ward members have been consulted and involved in the development of the plans through regular briefings.
22. When the rehousing of residents commences the Estate Regeneration Officer will provide monthly progress updates to the ward members.

Recommendations

23. The Board is recommended to note the content of the report and receive updates on progress at future meetings.

TITLE OF REPORT: Dunston –Achieving the Neighbourhood Vision

REPORT OF: Derek Quinn, Group Director, Development & Enterprise
Margaret Whellans, Group Director, Community Based
Services

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to recommend that Cabinet considers and approves the option appraisal, masterplan and delivery strategy of the Ravensworth Road Study as a regeneration framework and agrees the next steps to enable its implementation.

Background

2. Dunston is included within the Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder (HMRP) area of Gateshead. The aim of the initiative is to bring about the sustainable renewal of areas with weak housing markets and transform neighbourhoods into thriving, cohesive communities, where people will choose to live and stay.
3. At its meeting on 2 October 2007 Cabinet agreed to decant tenants from Derwent Tower into alternative accommodation due to health and safety concerns (Minute C154(i)). This process is now complete with no tenants remaining in the property.
4. At the same meeting it was also agreed to undertake an option appraisal of Derwent Tower and the associated maisonettes, namely the properties in Cleveland Mews, Cheviot Green and Tower Court (Minute C154 (ii)). The option appraisal undertaken as part of the Ravensworth Road study commissioned GVA Grimley to look at 4 options:
 - (i) Demolition of Derwent Tower
 - (ii) Demolition of Derwent Tower and the maisonettes
 - (iii) Retention of Derwent Tower and maisonettes and undertake improvement works
 - (iv) Retention of Derwent Tower and partial demolition of maisonettes

The options were each assessed against the following key objectives:

- Ability to create a sustainable stronger community
- Support from existing tenants and the wider community
- Deliverability

The community consultation included one-to-one interviews with the tenants in the maisonettes as well as consultation with the wider community in the form of a

public exhibition. The feedback showed that 99% of tenants in the maisonettes supported the demolition of Derwent Tower and 78% also supported the demolition of the maisonettes. Among the wider community the results showed that 96% were in favour of the demolition of Derwent Tower and 92% also supported the demolition of the maisonettes.

5. The option appraisal shows clearly that the option entailing the demolition of Derwent Tower and the maisonettes with the subsequent redevelopment of the site performed best against the key objectives and was therefore the preferred option. Within the scope of the Ravensworth Road study, this option was further developed in consultation with the local community into a Masterplan and Delivery Strategy. An 'Urban Village' concept has been identified by the community as a preferred redevelopment solution.
6. As part of the study consultants were commissioned to prepare a comprehensive assessment to evaluate the heritage value of Derwent Tower and the maisonettes. The assessment indicates that Derwent Tower and the maisonettes do not meet the listing criteria in order that demolition can take place, it is proposed to apply for a Certificate of Immunity from Listing. A Certificate of Immunity from listing is valid for 5 years and will provide certainty to the Council and any potential partners that redevelopment can progress.

Proposal

7. Within the Ravensworth Road Study, the Masterplan and Delivery Strategy provide the framework for new residential development, improved retail provision and environmental improvements to frontages and open space. It is proposed that Cabinet agrees the demolition of Derwent Tower, Cleveland Mews, Tower Court and Cheviot Green in principle subject to a Certificate of Immunity from Listing being granted thereby enabling the comprehensive redevelopment of the site.
8. The proposals for redevelopment include mainly residential use, a supermarket, the opportunity for a Medical Practice and a number of shop units. The residential part of the development will include affordable housing in the form of social rent. The proposals include a phasing plan that ensures that a supermarket is provided on site prior to the demolition of the existing supermarket building. The Head of Property Services will continue to manage the Tower Court Retail Parade with a view to obtain possession at an appropriate time. We will be working with the Inner West Area Forum and the local community in taking the proposals forward. The implementation of the redevelopment is expected to take place over a time period of approximately 5-6 years subject to funding.
9. "Health Inequalities Impact Assessments" have been included as part of the Service Improvement Plans. As part of this project it is proposed to develop an evidence base to inform an intermediate level health and health inequalities impact assessment in particular in terms of how housing and urban design impact on health.

Recommendations

10. It is recommended that Cabinet

- (i) approves the option appraisal, Masterplan and Delivery Strategy of the Ravensworth Road Study as a regeneration framework;
- (ii) confirms that all tenants living in Cleveland Mews, Tower Court and Cheviot Green receive priority for re-housing giving preference to tenants in line with the phasing plan. This will be effective from the date of this report in accordance with the lettings policy eligibility criteria.
- (iii) confirms that where appropriate, homes managed by TGHC are advertised within Dunston with preference to tenants from this scheme.
- (iv) confirms that those households displaced, are entitled to apply to the Council for statutory Home Loss and Disturbance Payments from the date that this report is approved;
- (v) agrees the submission of an application for a Certificate of Immunity from Listing to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in order to retain control over the future of Derwent Tower and the maisonettes.
- (vi) agrees that void properties are taken out of debit and demolished when appropriate within the phasing programme subject to funding and a Certificate of Immunity from Listing being granted.
- (vii) agrees that a health and health inequalities impact assessment be undertaken

for the following reason(s)

- (i) To improve the choice of housing for current and future residents;
- (ii) To improve the quality of housing in Dunston;
- (iii) To achieve the vision of an urban village;
- (iv) To create a safer, stronger community;
- (v) To improve health and reduce inequalities.

Policy Context

1. Within the scope of the Ravensworth Road Study the Master Plan and Delivery Strategy will provide the framework for the regeneration of the Dunston Neighbourhood, particularly the Ravensworth Road area in accordance with the objectives of the Government's Sustainable Communities Agenda. This is consistent with the Council's Sustainable Community Strategy Vision 2030 and the Corporate Plan, in particular with the Corporate Priority to build stronger communities and the Council's "Big Idea" of a Sustainable Gateshead that provides attractive housing that meets local needs. The plans are also consistent with the Unitary Development Plan 2007 and The Housing Strategy 2007-2012.
2. The Ravensworth Road Masterplan and Delivery Strategy also support the Council's Older Persons Strategy by offering the opportunity to provide older persons accommodation on the site for rent.

Background

3. In 2005, The Gateshead Housing Company (TGHC) commissioned consultants to undertake a survey among its tenants in Derwent Tower, Cleveland Mews, Tower Court and Cheviot Green ("the maisonettes"). The results showed that the demand for all types of housing in Dunston is high, but there is a lack of housing offer in this location and households have limited choice. The consultation showed that 60% of the tenants did not feel that the properties had a long-term future.
4. Within the scope of the Ravensworth Road study an option appraisal has been undertaken. Consultation on the different options showed clear support from the tenants and within the wider community for the demolition of Derwent Tower and the maisonettes, and the redevelopment of the site. The Ravensworth Road study includes a Masterplan and Delivery Strategy that have been developed together with the community and sets the context for the redevelopment programme.

Consultation

5. Ward Members have been consulted and involved in the development of the plans through regular briefings. Their views have informed the identification of key issues and have shaped the emerging objectives and proposals within each area. In particular, the vision of an "Urban Village" has been identified by Ward Members.
6. The consultation with the community took place in three stages. The first stage in January 2008 entailed one-to-one interviews with tenants of the maisonettes by TGHC. The results from this survey showed that the majority (78%) wanted the maisonettes demolished and all except one person were in support of Derwent Tower being demolished. The second stage of the consultation in February 2008 included a public exhibition. This exhibition showed the different options for the area and officers were present to answer any questions. The results of the questionnaires that residents filled in showed that 92% were in support of the redevelopment of the whole site and the demolition of Derwent Tower and the maisonettes. The third stage in March 2008 included examples of housing, retail and open space. Different options were presented to the residents who could give

their comments on questionnaires. This helped to inform the development of the Masterplan and Delivery Strategy for Ravensworth Road.

7. All tenants in the retail units were visited before the first public exhibition to have an initial conversation about their business, their business plan and to inform them about the option appraisal the Council was undertaking. Additionally, a survey and copies of the exhibition boards were sent to the retailers. The survey asked about their needs as a business and for any comments on the exhibition boards. There was great support for the regeneration of the area.
8. The Inner West Area Forum has been updated and consulted at every stage. The exhibition boards were presented and the results from the questionnaires explained. Likewise the Portfolio holder for Employment, Housing and Transport has been consulted.

Alternative Options

9. A full option appraisal exercise was undertaken with the four options examined against the following criteria:
 - Ability to create a sustainable, stronger community
 - Support from existing tenants and wider community; and,
 - Deliverability.

The options were each scored with the option to demolish Derwent Tower, Cleveland Mews, Tower Court and Cheviot Green performing best against the criteria. Alternative options have therefore been examined but have been ruled out on the basis of their performance against the scoring criteria.

Implications of Recommended Option

10. Financial Implications -

Funding will need to be formally agreed before any scheme can be implemented. The estimated cost of implementation is £7.68m, which includes Homeloss and Disturbance payments of £514,000 and retailer compensation of £176,000.

There is a proposal of £7m in the Housing prudential borrowing programme for 2010/11 in respect of this strategy and a separate allocation for Homeloss in the 2009/10 programme. Both of these resources are subject to the approval of the Capital Programmes by Council for these respective financial years.

Disturbance payments are paid from revenue and would need to be met from existing resources from within the HRA.

Furthermore the demolition of Cleveland Mews, Cheviot Green, Tower Court and Derwent Tower would result in an estimated annual net loss of rental income and subsidy allowances, if fully occupied, of £635,563. The loss of the Tower Court shops would result in an annual loss of income to the HRA of £38,000. Additionally, the removal of CCTV on the estate will result in an estimated loss of annual income to Local Environmental Services of £60,000.

The implementation of the Ravensworth Road Masterplan and Delivery Strategy is suggested to be delivered by the Joint Venture Vehicle, which is scheduled to reach financial close in September 2010.

The Council will also need to continue funding the Regeneration Worker post within TGHC for a period of up to April 2011 to assist in the relocation of tenants.

11. Risk Management Implication -

The plans and options contained within the Ravensworth Road Study have been subjected to a full risk assessment in terms of funding, resource and deliverability. Risks associated with all aspects of implementation have been identified and will be developed, using a project management approach, into a risk log that will be regularly monitored over the lifetime of the plans with appropriate action identified to ensure delivery.

One risk is the listing of Derwent Tower. The Council is working together with English Heritage to find the best way forward to give the Council certainty about the future listing status of Derwent Tower. The grant of a Certificate of Immunity from Listing backed by a thorough analysis of Derwent Tower and the maisonettes would give certainty to the Council and the local community.

12. Human Resources Implications -

Current staff levels would have to be retained to ensure the delivery of the masterplan. However, there are no implications in terms of additional capacity. LES employees will need to be redeployed from Dunston. Also, TGHC staff will have to be relocated within Dunston from Ravensworth Road.

13. Equality and Diversity Implications -

The Ravensworth Road Masterplan and Delivery Strategy contain proposals which cater and provide opportunity for a diverse population and improve access to goods and services for people with a range of disabilities. The Health and Health Inequalities Impact Assessment will also ensure that health is improved and health inequalities reduced.

14. Crime and Disorder Implications -

The Masterplan and Delivery Strategy propose the creation of a high quality development where design makes a major contribution towards the reduction of crime. The CCTV currently operating in Dunston maisonettes will be decommissioned through this process.

15. Sustainability Implications -

The Masterplan and Delivery Strategy propose that regeneration is carried out in a sustainable manner, with specific recommendations in accordance with local and national policies.

16. Human Rights Implications -

The proposal affects Article 8, the right to respect for private and family life and Article 1 of the First Protocol, entitlement to peaceful enjoyment of one's possessions. However, if these proposals do contravene Human Rights the interference is justified in that, the proposals will result in long-term benefits to the wider community.

17. Ward Implications -

The proposals impact on the Dunston & Teams Ward.

18. Background information

- GVA Grimley, Ravensworth Road Final Report November 2008
- GVA Grimley, Ravensworth Road Final Report Appendices November 2008



Report to the Board

15 January 2009

Title: Housing Quality Network's Pre-Budget Report – Implications for the Housing Sector
Report of: Chief Executive

Purpose of Report

1. To inform the Board of the Housing Quality Network's pre-budget report, which covers the implications that this report has for the housing sector.

Background

2. Housing Quality Network issued a pre-budget report in December 2008 on the implications for the housing sector.
3. The report covers the following areas: -
 - The supply and maintenance of affordable housing
 - Health, welfare and personal finance measures which may affect tenants
 - Regions and regeneration
 - Other measures involving housing and property
 - Efficiency savings.
4. The pre-budget report is attached as an Appendix to this report.

Link to Values

5. This report relates to the company values of being honest, accountable and transparent – delivering excellent services with integrity.

Equality and Diversity Implications

6. There are no equality and diversity implications directly arising from this report.

Financial Implications

7. There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

Impact on Customers

8. There was no impact on customers as a result of compiling this report.

Risk Management Implications

9. Reduction in stock/stock availability and failure to achieve delivery of decent homes have been identified as strategic risks. The pre-budget identifies controls which will help to reduce these risks.

Value for Money Implications

10. There are no value for money implications directly arising from this report.

Consultation carried out

11. No consultation was necessary when compiling the information in this report.

Recommendation

12. The Board is asked to note Housing Quality Network's pre-budget report on the implications for the housing sector.

**Pre-Budget (PBR) report
Implications for the housing sector
DECEMBER 2008**

Pre-Budget (PBR) report Implications for the housing sector

The supply and maintenance of affordable housing

The government has pledged to bring forward by a year certain capital funding projects. This includes £775m of housing and regeneration funding which will be used to support the following programmes:

- Major repairs to council housing. Council tenants will benefit as £175m is brought forward from 2010-11 to 2009-10 to carry out repair and maintenance work. This acceleration of upgrade work to council housing will mean that in some cases councils will be able to avoid doing piecemeal repairs and instead start on major replacement programmes
- New homes for social rent. £150m will be available in 2008-10 for the provision of around 2,000 new homes for social rent in addition to the £400m (for around 5,500 new homes) brought forward as part of measures announced in September
- Bringing forward Decent Homes work. £250m will be available to fund improvements in 25,000 homes. These properties will benefit early from home improvements including measures to make homes more energy efficient. £130m will be available for planned improvements in 2008-09 and £120m brought forward to 2009-10. £60m will provide 16,000 social houses with energy efficiency and heating measures.

Moreover the 2.5% VAT cut could effectively mean a saving of up to £80m for housing associations with regard to repair and service costs.

Health, welfare and personal finance measures which may affect tenants

- A Child Poverty Bill will be introduced next year and there will be consultation on local authorities' role in eradicating child poverty and changes to the national indicator set relevant to child poverty
- The PBR sets out a number of measures to address unemployment. The government is setting aside an additional £1.3 billion for the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) over the next two years to deliver effective support for the unemployed.
- NB: the day after the Pre-Budget Report, the DWP and the Department of Health announced a number of measures to help people stay in work rather than 'drifting into sickness leave'. The package will support disabled people or those who become ill to return to, or stay in, work by helping them manage their condition and get the right help to keep their jobs. Measures include proposals to replace the paper-based 'sick note' with an electronic 'fit note' and pilots for 'Fit for Work' services which will support people on a period of sickness absence to return to work

1

- The Housing Benefit (HB) review, announced in the Budget 2008, is looking at ways to ensure households receiving HB are no better off than working households in the same area who are not receiving HB. The government is concerned that the costs of the local housing allowance (LHA) are greater than had been anticipated. From April 2009, the maximum amount of LHA that can be received will be the five-bedroom rate, and the government will be urgently looking at the scope to constrain these costs
- To ensure work continues to pay, the government will maintain the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit (WTC) and uprate all other elements in line with the Retail Prices Index (RPI). To ensure that all people on low incomes will benefit from the uprating of WTC, from April 2009 the disregard for tax credits in HB will increase by RPI
- A 0.5% increase in all National Insurance (NI) contributions from 2011. To ensure this increase does not fall on those on modest incomes, the government will also raise the starting point for NI to align it with that of income tax, meaning no one earning under £20,000 will pay any more NI contributions
- A one-year cut in standard-rate VAT from 17.5% to 15%, from 1 December, for 13 months
- The temporary £120 assistance to those who lost out from the abolition of the 10p starting rate of tax will be made permanent, and will rise to £145
- There will be £15m of new funding for free debt advice, available to everyone, regardless of circumstances, available across the country
- The government is setting up a 'Saving Gateway' – meaning that the government adds money to every pound saved. From 2010, up to eight million people on low incomes who put money into the Saving Gateway, will get 50 pence added for each pound they save. The Saving Gateway will be widely available through a range of banks, building societies, credit unions and the Post Office
- The standard minimum income guarantee in Pension Credit will have an above indexation increase, rising by £5.95 to £130.00 a week for single pensioners and by £9.10 to £198.45 a week for pensioner couples
- To support pensioners more broadly, the level of the full State Pension will rise in line with prices by £4.55 to £95.25 a week in April 2009. For those women whose entitlement is based on their husbands' pension, the full couples' rate increases to £152.30
- To provide further support for pensioners during the economic downturn, the government announces that it will make a payment in the New Year of £60 for each pensioner, equivalent to bringing forward uprating of the basic State Pension from

April to January. Around 12.5 million pensioners will benefit. A £60 payment will also be made to 2.5 million individuals who are in receipt of certain other benefits.

Regions and regeneration

- Regeneration projects. £100m funding will be brought forward to complete key transport projects in the Growth Areas and support regeneration projects which might otherwise not go ahead in the current market. This will help maintain the momentum of key projects in the regions and national regeneration priorities
- Regional Development Agencies. The government is working with RDAs and regional partners to consider how they may bring forward up to £100m from future years to support priority projects in the regions
- Devolution to city-regions. Building on the sub-national review, the government will agree a package of devolutionary measures with city-regions to increase their ability to drive forward sustainable economic growth. Building on multi-area agreements, these new agreements will give participating authorities greater freedoms to better adapt to their particular economic circumstances. For example, working with employers, city-regions could have the opportunity to exert greater influence over skills provision in their areas. The government intends to announce new agreements with at least two forerunner city-regions in the Budget 09.

Other measures involving housing and property

- Further support for those at risk of repossession. This includes bringing forward the government's £200m Mortgage Rescue scheme to start early in a number of local authority areas. More than 60 councils throughout England will be 'fast tracking' the set up of the Mortgage Rescue scheme and will start taking applications from the beginning of December; enhancing the Mortgage Rescue scheme to cover vulnerable families at risk of repossession because of additional loans secured on their home
- Support for Mortgage Interest schemes for eligible homeowners in difficulty and a commitment from major mortgage lenders not to initiate repossession action within at least three months of an owner-occupier going into arrears
- A new Lending Panel will improve monitoring of lending to households and businesses lending, as well as drive up best practice across the mortgage market and promote awareness of initiatives to support households against repossessions
- Empty Property rate relief. From April, there will be a temporary increase in the threshold for empty property rate relief, so that empty commercial properties with a rateable value below £15,000 – an estimated 70% of empty properties – will be exempt from empty property rates. A three-month exemption will still apply for

empty commercial properties with rateable values above £15,000, and a six-month exemption is still in place for empty industrial properties.

Efficiency savings

- The government has over-achieved against the targets set by the Gershon Efficiency Programme, including delivering £26.5 billion in savings and a reduction of 86,700 civil service posts between 2004 and 2007
- Given the over-achievement against the 2004 target, and the scope for these additional efficiency savings, the government announced an additional £5 billion value for money target for 2010-11.

HQN is the largest independent housing training and consultancy company in the UK. Over 680 housing organisations nationwide subscribe to The Housing Quality Network which provides high quality briefings and workshops on a wide range of issues affecting the sector. We also run a number of specialist networks, provide bespoke consultancy and research, in-house training, interim management (The Pool) and executive recruitment (The Source) services and host a comprehensive programme of conferences and seminars.

For further information, please contact:

Consultancy: Jason Lukehurst – jason@hqnetwork.co.uk

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The Source: David Ganz – dave@hqnetwork.co.uk

Or call any of the above on 0845 4747 004 For further information: www.hqnetwork.co.uk



Report to the Board

15 January 2009

Title: Right to Manage

Report of: Assistant Chief Executive

Purpose of Report

1. To provide the Board with information on The Housing (Right to Manage) (England) Regulations 2008 which came into force on 1 October 2008. See Appendix to this report for summary information on changes.

Background

2. The existing Tenants' Right to Manage Scheme has been in place since April 1994 and allows tenants of a Council to serve notice upon their landlord that they wish to take over some or all of the duties involved in managing the housing stock.
3. Take up of this option has not been widespread across the country and there are currently only 45 Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs) registered with the Chartered Institute of Housing. By far the largest of these is the "whole organisation" TMO at Kensington and Chelsea that is also an ALMO.
4. Within the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008, the Tenants Right to Manage procedures have been simplified and the timescale involved shortened. This has been done to encourage more tenants to become actively involved in the management of their estates.
5. In Gateshead there is currently one TMO – Clasper Village Estate Management Board (EMB). The was set up to ensure the sustainability of significant investment works carried out via estate action funds in the early 1990's.

Summary

6. The new regulations aim to give tenants an 'easy entry' into tenant management without the need to take on full responsibility.
7. The key changes brought in by the new regulations allow:
 - TMOs to be set up in as little as 15 months and make it quicker and simpler for tenants to be involved

- New shorter route whereby tenants take on one or more elements of the service via local management agreements e.g. Communal Cleaning, Grounds Maintenance
- New voluntary route to full service management that removes the need for tenants to serve notices (but issues remain outstanding such as EU procurement limits)
- Number of ballots reduced from two to one so that the process will be quicker and less complicated
- Team of Approved Agents will act as Lead Advisors to tenants funded by the Tenant Empowerment Programme
- Team of Approved Assessors will determine the competency of the TMO
- Tenant Services Authority will manage the process.

Impact of the Key Changes to the Process

8. The following changes are designed to make the process simpler and quicker: -

- Feasibility and development stages will be combined into a 15 month period, unless tenants and the Council agree a longer period
- No Ballot needed at the end of the feasibility stage
- Competence Assessment carried out by the Independent Approved Assessor rather than the Agent
- Council will have to complete an offer to tenants within three months of the independent assessment rather than providing a summary of proposals to all tenants with two months to arrange a ballot following the offer to seek tenants' acceptance
- A majority of tenants voting in favour will allow the TMO to proceed. The original procedure took account of the number living in the area
- As the ballot is earlier there will be a period of up to nine months after the ballot to enter into a management agreement.

Potential impact on the company

9. Potentially we would lose some of our Management Fee and there would also be an impact upon staffing. Although the TMO itself would require staff to carry out the various functions, TUPE regulations would apply to staff transferring or a TMO may ask for staff to be seconded to the organisation.
10. There may be an impact upon service costs because of the loss of economies of scale if the TMO only takes on specific elements of management. Setting various priorities for repair and improvement programmes could also be more difficult if this conflicts with TMO members' views.
11. It is too early to give a proper assessment of the potential impact of TMOs being set up in Gateshead. An assessment of this should be done when any TMOs come forward.
12. It is likely the potential interest in setting up TMOs will be limited as this involves significant commitment of time and effort by tenants to achieve a successful outcome.
13. Currently, discussions are taking place on the future of Clasper Village EMB due to key members moving out of the area and the lack of interest about the EMB in the

community. Gateshead Council has received no recent enquiries regarding the establishment of further Tenant and Resident Associations, Estate Management Boards or Tenant Management Organisations.

Our approach to potential TMO interest and tenant management

14. Although notice would be served upon the Council, we would take a close interest in any potential TMO being set up.
15. We would aim to establish effective liaison between ourselves, the Council, the potential TMO and its Approved Agent and could provide landlord training on any options chosen by the TMO.
16. We would also encourage the TMO members to visit established TMOs and would provide access to our services so that they were well informed.
17. Regardless of the emergence of any TMO we should continue with our efforts to ensure that tenants enjoy a range of opportunities to get involved in the running of the company. Our 2008 Annual Survey highlights our high levels of satisfaction with opportunities to get involved 94.58% and satisfaction with changes following involvement 92.99%

Link to Values

18. This report relates to the following company values: -
 - Being customer focused, innovative and professional – involving customers in what we do.
 - Being a listening and learning organisation - staying in touch with what customers want.

Impact on tenants

19. Tenants if inclined and assessed as capable are now able to access easier entry into tenant management without the need to take on full responsibility of managing all housing services.

Risk Management Implications

20. Some or all of the services the company delivers to all or part of the housing stock could be undertaken by a TMO if it chose to do so and was deemed to have the capability and capacity.

Financial Implications

21. There are currently no financial implications resulting from this report. However there will be financial implications should a TMO apply, have a successful capability assessment and get an agreement through a ballot to take control of some or all services and or stock.

Equality and Diversity Implications

22. There are no equality and diversity implications arising from this report

Value for Money implications

23. There are no value for money implications arising from this report.

Consultation carried out

24. The Department for Communities and Local Government undertook substantial consultation when developing the new regulations

Recommendation

25. The Board is recommended to note the updated Regulations.

Right to Manage Regulations 2008

Changes are summarised in the table below.

Stage	Previous Regulations	New Regulations
Requirements on Tenants Organisation (TO) serving notice for right to manage	Inform all tenants. Satisfied that members support proposal and has membership of at least 20% of tenants and 20% of secure tenants.	No changes except to simplify wording.
Serving a notice	Various requirements on serving a notice	No changes except to simplify wording.
Accepting a notice	Local authority (LA) has to refuse or accept the notice within 28 days	No changes except to simplify wording.
LA support for TO following notice	LA has to respond to request for support within 2 months	LA has to respond to request for support within 28 days
Feasibility stage	Carried out by an 'approved person' within 9 months	No requirement for work to be carried out by an 'approved person' Feasibility and development stages rolled into one stage to be carried out within 15 months
Assessment of TO's competence	Currently carried out by the 'approved person'	Process the same but carried out by an approved assessor (see below)
End of feasibility study ballot	Can only go to development stage if there is clear support through a ballot or poll	Ballot requirement removed.
Development stage	Support provided by an 'approved person'. Development report within 2 years	No requirement for support from an 'approved person' Feasibility and development stages rolled into one stage to be carried out within 15 months
Assessment of TO's competence	Currently carried out by the 'approved person' – the same 'approved person' who has provided support	Process the same but carried out by an independent approved assessor (see below)
Summary of proposals sent to all tenants	LA has to do this within 2 months of 'approved person' report	LA has to do this within 3 months of competence assessment
Ballot	LA has to conduct ballot within 2 months. Proposals have to have approval of majority of tenants and majority of secure tenants living in the area.	LA has to conduct ballot within 3 months. This brings the process into line with other tenant ballot processes. Proposals have to have the approval of majority of tenants and secure tenants voting.
Implementation	LA must enter into the management agreement within 2 months of a positive ballot.	LA must enter into management agreement within 9 months of a positive ballot. The overall timetable is still reduced by the removal one stage.
Timescales	All timescales can be extended by mutual agreement	No change

Report to the Board

15 January 2009



Title: The Tenant Services Authority

Report of: Assistant Chief Executive

Purpose of Report

1. To inform Board of the introduction of a new independent regulator, the Tenant Services Authority (TSA), charged with promoting and championing tenants' interests.

Background

2. The Housing and Regeneration Act, passed in July 2008, paved the way for the TSA to become the regulator for housing associations and accredited private landlords on the 1st December 2008 and, subject to completing the necessary parliamentary process, it will become the same for local authorities and ALMOs during 2010. It intends to promote excellence and challenge mediocrity through the establishment of a national standards framework.
3. The TSA will:
 - Champion tenants needs and aspirations, standing up for what tenants want and making sure they have the information they need
 - Challenge housing providers to constantly improve, deepen and accelerate their engagement with tenants and to remain viable and well governed
 - Shape the direction of future housing, working to create more choice about the way housing is managed and the landlords who provide it
4. It plans to do this by putting tenants at the centre and ensuring landlords do the same; by acting fairly, independently and decisively; and by encouraging excellence and a focus on real performance, both from the landlords it works with and the people they employ.

National Conversation

5. In order to inform the development of the national standards framework, the TSA is about to launch a National Conversation. The primary objective of the National Conversation is to capture the views of a wide range of tenants, prospective tenants, other service users and providers. It seeks to involve all types of social landlords, shared owners and other key stakeholders.

6. It is envisaged that the National Conversation will involve three phases: -
- Phase One – “What Tenants Want” will seek to engage, inform and record the views of tenants as to what they want from their landlords. This will be done through a series of events and a parallel research programme
 - Phase Two – “Developing Our Response” will use the feedback from Phase One to engage tenants’ groups and landlords in a discussion about how the framework should operate and what should be in it
 - Phase Three – “Formal Statutory Consultation” about the final proposed framework

What Tenants Want

7. A dedicated research agency is drawing up a research questionnaire which will be used to structure and gather much of the information. The same questionnaire will provide the structure for a series of co-ordinated events taking place in the first three months of 2009. This will involve:
- Eighteen half-day regional events for tenants, led by the TSA, with up to 200 delegates per event – The nearest one will be held at Ramside Hall Hotel, Durham on 5 February 2009 with a session in the morning from 10:00 – 12:00 and an afternoon session from 14:00 – 16:00. Details of how to book and how many places are available to each organisation’s tenants will be sent out shortly by the TSA.
 - ‘Franchised events’ led by social landlords and others. Every social landlord with over 1,000 properties will be asked to hold at least one event
 - Five one-day regional events for landlords, led by the TSA, with up to 100 delegates per event
8. There will be a standard resource pack for all the events, with the TSA approving the final design to ensure consistency. These events will be designed to raise awareness of the TSA and its new approach and to seek feedback on tenants’ views and priorities. As well as landlords the TSA wants other stakeholders such as the Chartered Institute of Housing, the National Housing Federation, the National Federation of ALMOs, the Local Government Association and the Tenants and Residents Organisations of England (TAROE) to become involved.
9. The TSA is keen to maximise tenant involvement across all groups with a real push to reach people from all ethnic and cultural backgrounds, younger people, homeless people and rural as well as urban tenants. Landlords need to begin to make tenants aware of the National Conversation and to publicise the opportunities they will have to make their views known to the TSA. With that in mind the company has included an article relating to the National Conversation in our January Tenants Newsletter as well as on our website.
10. Three expert agencies have been recruited to help the TSA in its delivery of the National Conversation. Housing Quality Network and the Northern Housing Consortium have formed a partnership to deliver the comprehensive events programme. Researchers from GfK NOP, a major international market research company’s Social Research Division, will be analysing responses from all the events, from a self-completion survey available as both a paper and an on-line questionnaire, and from their additional independent one to one, face-to-face, in-home survey programme. Creative engagement specialists, Engage Group, are

developing a range of on and offline communications to promote the National Conversation and encourage tenant participation and involvement.

Links to Values

11. This report is in line with the following values of the company: -
- Being a listening and learning organisation – *staying in touch with what customers want.*
 - Being honest, accountable and transparent – *delivering excellent services with integrity.*
 - Being positive and responsive – *constantly striving to achieve excellence*
 - Being customer focused, innovative and professional – *involving customers in what we do.*

Equality and Diversity Implications

12. The company needs to play its part in ensuring publicity for the National Conversation reaches all tenants but also proactively works to ensure those client groups that are more difficult to engage with are able to make their views known.

Financial Implications

13. There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

Impact on Customers

14. There was no direct impact on customers as a result of compiling this report but all customers will have the opportunity to contribute to the National Conversation and all will be affected once the national standards are agreed and the TSA takes up its regulatory role for ALMOs from 2010.

Risk Management Implications

15. There are no risk management implications directly arising from this report.

Value for Money Implications

16. There are no Value for Money implications directly arising from this report.

Consultation Carried Out

17. There has been no consultation carried out in compiling this report. Tenants will be consulted directly on behalf of the TSA as part of the National Conversation.

Recommendation

18. The Board is recommended to note the contents of this report.

Report to the Board

15 January 2009



Title: Clasper Village Estate Management Board - Evaluation of the Partnership Working Arrangements

Report of: Director of Housing Management

Purpose of Report

1. To inform Board of the evaluation of the revised procedures to govern the future operation of Clasper Village Estate Management Board (EMB).

Background

2. In October 2007, the Council's Cabinet agreed that new procedures should be introduced and an evaluation undertaken. In November 2007, the Board received a report outlining the new procedures and agreed to receive a further report following the evaluation. This evaluation was carried out following a six month pilot of the new procedures from April to October 2008.
3. Following the Housing Right to Manage Regulations (1994) Clasper Village EMB was created to enable residents to take an active role in the delivery of housing management in Clasper Village. The EMB is a Tenant Management Organisation (TMO) and is the only one in Gateshead. It is a member of the National Federation of TMO's and is one of only 200 operating across England.
4. The operation of the EMB is determined by the Modular Management Agreement (MMA) which governs all aspects of the relationship between the council, company and the EMB. Support for the EMB has been provided by the council's Neighbourhood Management Team and the company's local Housing Manager.
5. In December 2006 the EMB met with the Chief Executive of The Gateshead Housing Company along with Group Directors of Community Based Services and Local Environmental Services. Discussions were held to ensure that the MMA is modernised and that it reflected the operational changes needed since the establishment of the company and the aspirations of both the Directors of the EMB and residents living in Clasper Village.
6. The new protocols were introduced and the council's Cabinet agreed that these should be evaluated over a six month period, with a view to determining their effectiveness in managing the activities of the EMB. The Housing Right to Manage Regulations (1994) requires that the Council on completion of this evaluation will commence a 'resident referendum' to seek residents' approval for

the continuation of the EMB. The council is responsible for the administration of the process including the provision of information for residents. A majority in favour to continue will provide the community endorsement for the EMB to continue its partnership work and role for a further five years.

Update

7. Active involvement in the EMB from the local community is limited. During the evaluation period of the new MMA there were three active members of the EMB who have been involved. It was intended that the introduction of the protocols would raise the profile of the EMB and encourage wider participation. However, the introduction of the new MMA has not encouraged wider involvement and the management functions piloted are therefore unlikely to be sustainable in the longer term.
8. A more fundamental review of how resident involvement is carried out in Clasper Village and Teams area is required to ensure wider involvement and participation of the local community.
9. A report was presented to the council's Cabinet on 16 December 2008 (see attached Appendix to this report) where it was agreed that an option appraisal would be developed to determine the future resident involvement in Clasper Village and Teams. The findings of this appraisal and recommendations for consultation with residents will be reported to the council's Cabinet and subsequently the company's Board following this exercise.

Link to values

10. This report relates to the following values of the company: -
 - Being a listening and learning organisation – staying in touch with what customers want.
 - Being customer focussed innovative and professional – involving customers in what we do.
 - Being positive and responsive – constantly striving to achieve excellence

Risk Management Implications

11. There are no immediate risk management implications arising as a result of this report.

Financial Implications

12. The Director of Finance and ICT confirms there are no financial implications arising directly from the recommendations of this report.

Equality and Diversity Implications

13. The new protocols were developed to provide residents with the opportunity to become more involved in the role of partnership working, assessing, creating and developing services for the community. The option appraisal approach will determine future opportunities for participation.

Value for Money implications

14. The involvement of tenants and the wider community can result in value for money savings as service managers develop an insight into customer's needs and priorities. Working alongside customers, resolving issues, and getting things right first time ensures efficient services are delivered.

Consultation carried out

15. Ward councillors have been involved in discussions and all protocols have been discussed at relevant board meetings. The Cabinet Portfolio and ward members have been consulted. Further consultation will need to be undertaken with the council, company and local residents as part of the option appraisal process.

Recommendations

16. The Board is recommended to
 - note the contents of the report;
 - agree to receive a further report following the option appraisal undertaken by the Council.

TITLE OF REPORT: Evaluation of the partnership working arrangements for Clasper Village Estate Management Board

REPORT OF: Margaret Whellans – Group Director, Community Based Services

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet of the evaluation of the revised procedures to govern the future operation of Clasper Village Estate Management Board. On 16 October 2007 Cabinet agreed that new procedures should be introduced and an evaluation carried out. This evaluation was carried out following a six-month trial of the new procedures from April to October 2008.

Background

2. Following the Housing Right to Manage Regulations (1994) Clasper Village Estate Management Board (EMB) was created to enable residents to take an active role in the delivery of housing management of the 279 properties in Clasper Village. The EMB is a Tenant Management Organisation and is the only one of its kind in Gateshead. It is also a member of the National Federation of Tenant Management Organisations and is one of only 200 operating across England.
3. The operation of the EMB is determined by a set of procedures called the Modular Management Agreement (MMA) which governs all aspects of the relationship between the council and the EMB. Support for the EMB has been provided by the council's Neighbourhood Management Team and the local housing manager.
4. In December 2006 the EMB requested discussions with the Chief Executive of The Gateshead Housing Company along with Group Directors of Community Based Services and Local Environmental Services. The EMB explained how their loss of role had affected their support within the community and that residents did not understand the purpose of the EMB, above and beyond the management of the centre. In order to tackle this issue the EMB put forward a proposal to create a clear set of working arrangements that would demonstrate to residents a more tangible role for the EMB in the delivery of estate management for Clasper Village.
5. At this meeting it was agreed to revise the working arrangements that govern the operation of the EMB. On 16 September 2007 Cabinet agreed that new protocols should be introduced and evaluated over a six month period with a view to determining their effectiveness in managing the activities of the EMB.

6. The Housing Right to Manage Regulations (1994) requires that the Council on completion of this evaluation will commence a “resident referendum” to seek residents approval for the continuation of the EMB. The Council is responsible for the administration of the process including the provision of information for residents. All those eligible to vote from the 270 households of Clasper Village will be afforded an opportunity. A majority in favour to continue will provide the community endorsement for the EMB to continue its partnership work and role for a further five years.

Outcome of the evaluation

7. Active involvement in the EMB from the community of Clasper Villlage is limited. During the evaluation period of the new MMA there were 3 active members of the EMB who were involved. It was intended that the introduction of the protocols would raise the profile of the EMB and encourage wider participation. However, the introduction of the new MMAs has not encouraged wider involvement and the management functions piloted in the MMA are therefore unlikely to be sustainable in the longer term.
8. A more fundamental review of how resident involvement is carried out in Clasper Village and the Teams area is required to ensure wider involvement and participation of the community.

Proposal

9. It is proposed that Cabinet agree that an option appraisal is developed to determine the future of resident involvement in Clasper Village and Teams. The findings of this appraisal and recommendations for consultation with residents will be reported to Cabinet following this exercise.

Recommendations

- 10 It is recommended that Cabinet agree:
 - (i) that an option appraisal of alternative resident involvement models is developed for Clasper Village and a future report is presented to Cabinet.
 - (ii) that residents are consulted on the option appraisal along with a referendum on the continuation of the EMB.

Policy Context

1. The proposals in this report are consistent with the Sustainable Community Strategy Vision 2030 and in particular the outcome relating to Involvement of local people in the shaping and delivery of services. This report is also consistent with the Neighbourhood Management approach in Gateshead, relating directing to the Best Value Review Services to Neighbourhoods, Neighbourhood Plan for Teams. The report reinforces the aspirations within the Corporate Plan, building stronger communities by enhancing engagement with neighbourhoods and communities to deliver locally responsive services.

Background

2. The six aspects of the MMA were reviewed from April to September 2008. Details of these are included in Appendix 2. Visits to The Gateshead Housing Company headquarters at Keelman House were also arranged so that members of the EMB could meet staff working in the repairs and lettings sections.
3. All of the management protocols were carried out with the three active members of the EMB. Each of the protocols was piloted for a one month period. The six protocols covered the main management functions that the EMB felt would maximise their role in the management of the estate. Progress was reported to the EMB members and council ward members through monthly board reports.
4. Since September, two of the three tenants involved in the evaluation have left the EMB and are no longer resident in Clasper Village. At the present time the EMB does not have any capacity to carry out a management or governance role.

Consultation

5. Ward Councillors have been involved in the discussions and all protocols have been discussed at board meetings. The relevant Cabinet Portfolio and Ward members have been consulted.

Alternative Options

6. Alternative resident involvement models need to be considered with a view to further consultation with members, TGHC and residents.

Implications of Recommended Option

7. **Financial Implications** – The Strategic Director, Finance and ICT confirms there are no financial implications arising directly as a result of this report.
8. **Risk Management Implication** – There are no immediate risk management implications.

9. **Human Resources Implications** – There are no HR implications.
10. **Equality and Diversity Implications** – The new protocols were intended to provide residents of Clasper Village with the opportunity to become more involved in the role of partnership working, assessing, creating and developing services for the community. However, the introduction of the new protocols has not led to greater or wider involvement from the local community.
11. **Crime and Disorder Implications** – An effective resident involvement model is essential in dealing with crime and disorder in the area.
12. **Sustainability Implications** – An effective resident involvement model will improve sustainability for the estate. The evaluation of the new Modular Management Agreement suggests that the EMB does not have the capacity or long term sustainability in its present format to carry out its role.
13. **Human Rights Implications** – There are no human rights implications directly arising from this report.
14. **Area and Ward Implications** – This report has implications for the Inner West Area, in particular the Dunston and Teams Ward.
15. **Background Information**

‘Option appraisal on the future of council sheltered schemes’ - Report to Cabinet 16 September 2007

Neighbourhood Plan for Teams

Modular Management Protocols

1. Inspecting Void Properties

This procedure ran between 25 August to 26 September 2008.

The EMB carried out inspections to void properties in conjunction with The Gateshead Housing Company. Members of the EMB who carried out inspection of voids found it a useful exercise in enabling residents to understand the issues related to bring properties up to a standard that are fit to let.

2. Letting Properties

This procedure ran from 25 August to 26 September 2008.

A member of the EMB carried out one pre-termination inspections with the TGHC to identify potential breaches of tenancy in relation to rechargeable repairs and unauthorised alterations. It is unlikely that the organisation has the capacity to ensure that a tenant member is always available to carry out inspections.

3. Accompanied viewings

This procedure ran from 16 June to 22 July 2008.

14 accompanied viewing of properties with prospective tenants were carried out to introduce the EMB and to give a resident's perspective of the local area. On 2 occasions no one was available from the EMB.

It is unlikely that the organisation has the capacity to ensure that a tenant member is always available to carry out accompanied viewings.

4. HomeWelcome Visits

This procedure ran during July 2008.

A member of the EMB visited new tenants with the local housing officer to ensure that they were moved in and any outstanding repairs or issues and been resolved. During July only 3 of the 9 visits carried out to new tenants were accompanied by a member of the EMB.

It is unlikely that the organisation has the capacity to ensure that a tenant member is always available to visit new tenants.

5. Estate Tours

Estate tours were carried out on 27 May, 29 July and 30 September 2008.

The EMB carried out estate tours in partnership with Local Environmental Services, The Gateshead Housing Company and residents.

6. Anti – social behaviour

This procedure was carried out between 28 May to 17 September 2008.

During the evaluation period the EMB held regular meetings with the police, neighbourhood wardens, The Neighbourhood Relations Team and staff from the local housing office to discuss anti-social behaviour, with regards to enforcement, prevention and early intervention.

The EMB found that there was no systematic reporting mechanism and that reports from the police and neighbourhood wardens were not put into an understandable context . Sometimes verbal reports were given and at other times statistical reports were presented without any real explanation.



Report to the Board

15 January 2009

Title: Stakeholder Engagement Action Plan – Progress Report

Report of: Director of Finance

Purpose of Report

1. To report to the Board progress against the Stakeholder Engagement Action Plan.

Background

2. The Board agreed, at its meeting on 13 March 2008, the adoption of a Stakeholder Action Plan. This followed a Board Away Day facilitated by Housing Quality Network on 18 January 2008 that considered the development of an action plan which will assist in the development of its relations with its key stakeholders.

Progress to date

3. The Appendix to this report gives an update of progress to date against each of the actions for every stakeholder.

Link to Values

4. This report relates to the following company values: -
 - Being honest, accountable and transparent – delivering excellent services with integrity.
 - Being positive and responsive - constantly striving to achieve excellence.

Equality and Diversity Implications

5. The development of a Stakeholder Action Plan strengthens the company's commitment to equality and diversity.

Financial Implications

6. There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

Impact on Customers

7. There was no impact on customers as a result of compiling this report.

Risk Management Implications

8. There are no risk management implications directly arising from this report.

Value for Money Implications

9. There are no value for money implications directly arising from this report.

Consultation carried out

10. No consultation was necessary when compiling the information in this report.

Recommendation

11. It is recommended that progress to date against the Stakeholder Engagement Action Plan be noted.



Stakeholder Engagement Action Plan

Stakeholder	Knowledge	Who	Mode of Communication	How Often	Lead Officer	Progress to date
Ward Councillors	Staff need to understand role of Councillors We need to keep them informed	All	Five quarterly area newsletters with opportunities to comment on them	Quarterly	Communications Manager	COMPLETE Company Newspaper now has dedicated pages to each of the five areas. First edition issued in September 2008.
Council	Staff who have been TUPED across Communication between relevant departments and officers is critical Must work together Need to map service relationships first		Annual General Meeting Mapping of relationships with Council Posters; attendance at company/external events; company newspaper; annual diary of	Annually - As and when necessary	Director of Finance / Company Administrator Company Administrator Communications Manager / Company Administrator	COMPLETE Annual General Meeting held on 25 September 2008 COMPLETE Reported to Board on 3 July 2008 Board poster updated June 2008 and distributed to all local housing offices and posted throughout the

Stakeholder	Knowledge	Who	Mode of Communication	How Often	Lead Officer	Progress to date
			events			<p>company's headquarters. The poster will continue to be updated as and when new Board Members are appointed/resign.</p> <p>Board Members are invited to forthcoming openings around the Community Fund and Decent Homes Programme.</p> <p>All Board Members are invited to the NFA and CIH Annual Conferences and will continue to be invited to other events of interest.</p> <p>Board Members publicised in At Home (staff newspaper).</p> <p>Christmas message in At Home to include message</p>

Stakeholder	Knowledge	Who	Mode of Communication	How Often	Lead Officer	Progress to date
						from the Board thanking them for achievements during the past year
Local Strategic Partnerships (health, police, area forums etc)	Officer representation on most partnership boards – need to understand their strategic objectives	Each member of CMT	Attend meetings – opportunity to make better use of these fora. Need to feed back to the Board.	Quarterly	CMT	COMPLETE CMT feed back to Board as appropriate.
	Members of Corporate Management Team (CMT) on each of the Council's Area Forums	Each of member of CMT	Report key issues to the Board	Quarterly	CMT	COMPLETE Members of CMT attend Area Forums quarterly and report key issues to the Board and internal management meetings.
Service Delivery Partners (Morrison, FHM, LES)	Work with each other	Senior staff	Invite partners to committee meetings, particularly if there are problems with performance	As and when necessary	Director of Property and Technical Services	COMPLETE There have been no instances where it has proved necessary to invite partners to committee meetings. However, partners will be invited if there are problems with performance.

Stakeholder	Knowledge	Who	Mode of Communication	How Often	Lead Officer	Progress to date
Local MPs	Inform them and update regularly in the same way as councillors	Chief Executive and Chair of Board	Need to formalise relationships, invite them to company's new offices to meet with Board Members and senior staff	Official opening of Keelman House	Chief Executive	Official opening of Keelman House took place on 3 July 2008. All local MPs were invited, however none attended.
Government Departments (mainly CLG)			<p>Invite to opening of new office premises.</p> <p>Write to ask if they would like regular consultation / communication with us and what they might be particularly interested in</p> <p>Invite MPs to award ceremonies and celebration events</p>	<p>Official opening of Keelman House</p> <p>To be progressed</p> <p>As and when they take place</p>	<p>To be agreed</p> <p>Chief Executive</p> <p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>Official opening of Keelman house took place on 3 July 2008. CLG invited, however nobody attended.</p> <p>COMPLETE As and when they take place</p>
Other Housing Providers	Need to co-ordinate / research plans in other strategic	Chief Executive	Various CX meetings and NFA/CIH Annual	As and when they take place	Chief Executive	COMPLETE As and when they take place

Stakeholder	Knowledge	Who	Mode of Communication	How Often	Lead Officer	Progress to date
	partnerships. Who is best placed to do this? Need to carry out environmental scanning and identify partners we could have closer relationships with		Conferences CIH and other such conferences Mapping of existing partnerships in order to identify partners we could have closer relations with	As and when they take place -	Chief Executive Company Administrator	COMPLETE As and when they take place COMPLETE Reported to Board on 3 July 2008
Audit Commission	Inspection in November 2008	CMT	Invite Audit Commission member who sits on housing committee to Official Opening of Keelman House	Official Opening of Keelman house	Chief Executive	COMPLETE Audit Commission inspection took place in November 2008. Inspectors very impressed with company's headquarters.
Local Business Community		Director of Property and Technical Services	Develop relationships with B&Q and Dulux – Investigate their Corporate Responsibility Strategy	-	Service Improvement Manager	B&Q have agreed to fund Annual Gardening Competition and delivery DIY training for tenants.
NFA/CIH	Develop a national Communication Strategy	Communication Team	Get as much press coverage as possible as often as possible	Ongoing	Communications Manager	COMPLETE Press releases are sent to all national and local media and publications (i.e.

Stakeholder	Knowledge	Who	Mode of Communication	How Often	Lead Officer	Progress to date
						<p>Company News) are sent to relevant press contacts. The team has access to Mediadisk, a database of all UK trade and media publications, as well as TV and radio</p>

Report to the Board

15 January 2009



Title: Petitions Update

Report of: Chief Executive

Purpose of report

1. To provide the Board with progress with petitions received since the protocol for the handling of petitions was agreed.

Background

2. The Board agreed, at its meeting on 13 April 2006, a protocol for the handling of petitions received by the company.
3. The protocol requires that a quarterly progress report be submitted to the Board for information. Progress with outstanding petitions is detailed in the Appendix.

Link to Values

4. This report relates to the following company values: -
 - Being customer focused, innovative and professional – involving customers in what we do.
 - Being honest, accountable and transparent – delivering excellent services with integrity.
 - Being positive and responsive – constantly striving to achieve excellence.
 - Being a listening and learning organisation – staying in touch with what customers want.

Risk Management Implications

5. There are no risk management implications directly arising from this report.

Value for Money Implications

6. There are no value for money implications directly arising from this report.

Equality and Diversity Implications

7. There are no equality and diversity implications directly arising from this report.

Financial Implications

8. There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

Consultation carried out

9. The protocol for handling petitions received by the company requires that the Chief Executive or Strategic Employee will arrange for the ward Councillors to receive a copy of the petition and seek their views on the content. The Councillor who submitted the petition will also be consulted if he or she is not one of the ward Councillors.
10. The protocol also requires that it will be appropriate to undertake one or more of the following actions: -
 - holding a meeting with the (lead) petitioner/s and/or any other relevant parties, e.g. ward Councillors, the police, strategic partners;
 - holding a site visit;
 - carrying out a consultation exercise with tenants on the issues raised by the petition.

Impact on Customers

11. Depending upon the outcome of a petition submitted, there could be an impact on customer, for example a change in policy.

Recommendation

12. The Board is asked to note the contents of the report.



PETITIONS SUBMITTED TO THE GATESHEAD HOUSING COMPANY

Date received	Ref	From	Issue	Action to date
11 September 2008	12/08	Residents in Teams	Sub-Letting of property	The person residing in the sub-let property has been offered and accepted a tenancy. Local ward councillors and the petitioner have been updated. This petition will be removed from the schedule.
9 October 2008	13/08	Residents at Stephenson Way, Blaydon	Request for extension of car park	Gateshead Council previously considered an extension to the car park was not appropriate. Transport and Highways Service have advised us not to provide hardstanding by removing grass and we have no powers to instruct any works to take place on the highway. Petitioners and local ward councillors to be informed. This petition will be removed from the schedule.
2 October 2008	14/08	Residents of Seaburn and Wallace Gardens, Wrekenton	Request for windows to be renewed under Decent Homes	Petitioners and local ward councillors have been provided with an update on the works to be undertaken under the Decent Homes programme together with an explanation as to why the windows will not be replaced as part of this work. Petitioners have been advised that Gateshead Council has agreed to provide additional funding to replace timber external doors that have not to date been identified for replacement through Decent Homes funding. The petitioner has been advised that full details of the proposals will be provided once the programme for door replacement is finalised. This petition will be removed from the schedule.

Date received	Ref	From	Issue	Action to date
24 October 2008	15/08	Residents of Leeming Gardens, Sheriff Hill	Replacement of windows and roof tiles under decent homes programme	Petitioners and local ward councillors have been provided with an update on the works to be undertaken under the Decent Homes programme together with an explanation as to why the roofs and windows will not be replaced as part of this work. This petition will be removed from the schedule.



Report to the Board

15 January 2009

Title: Outstanding Issues

Report of: Chief Executive

Purpose of Report

1. To inform the Board of outstanding issues it has requested a further report on.

Background

2. From time to time, the Board requests further information at a later date on a particular issue it has considered.
3. In order for the company to be seen as being open and transparent, a quarterly report of any outstanding issues will be presented to the Board for information.
4. The report gives details of when the issue was considered by the Board and the date members can expect a further report.
5. A number of issues are also referred to the appropriate committee.

Link to Values

6. This report relates to the company value of being honest, accountable and transparent – delivering excellent services with integrity.

Equality and Diversity Implications

7. Implications will be addressed separately in outstanding reports.

Financial Implications

8. There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

Impact on Customers

9. There was no impact on customers as a result of compiling this report.

Risk Management Implications

10. There are no risk management implications directly arising from this report.

Value for Money Implications

11. There are no value for money implications directly arising from this report.

Consultation carried out

12. No consultation was necessary when compiling the information in this report.

Outstanding Issues

13. The following issues are currently outstanding: -

Title	Date considered by Board / Committee	Report to Board / Committee
Sub-Regional Choice Based Lettings Scheme - development of further bid to the Regional Challenge Fund	January 2008	Successful Tyne and Wear bid – further report to Board after consideration by Council
Equipment and Adaptations Service – Annual Report	July 2008	July 2009
Implementation of the updated Grounds Maintenance Service Agreement and outputs in terms of service delivery for customers during 2008/09	July 2008	July 2009
Payment of Directors – Review by Council’s Independent Remuneration Panel	September 2008	September 2009
Lift Maintenance Contract - Tender Arrangements for a subsequent Term Lift Maintenance Contract	September 2008	March 2009
Outcome of Cabinet Meeting on review of Lettings Policy	October 2008	March 2009
Review of Board Membership	November 2008	Further report to Board after next Annual General Meeting

Recommendation

14. The Board is asked to note the report.