

REPORT TO: HOUSING COMMITTEE – 16 MAY 2005

REPORT ON: HOUSING INVESTMENT GROUP – ACHIEVING THE
SCOTTISH HOUSING QUALITY STANDARD

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF HOUSING

REPORT NO.: 296-2005

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To seek Committee approval of the Scottish Housing Quality Standard Delivery Plan submitted to Communities Scotland on 29 April 2005.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Housing Committee:

- 2.1. Agree the Scottish Housing Quality Standard Delivery Plan submission.
- 2.2. Agree to the preparation of a Communication Strategy in order to further consult on the Delivery Plan with tenants and staff.
- 2.3. Remit the Director of Housing to submit a bid for Housing Estate Regeneration Funding 2005-8 to cover the cost of the initial programme of surplus house demolition and associated necessary regeneration works.
- 2.4. Remit the Director of Housing to approach the Scottish Executive to request a continuation of debt servicing for the Ardler housing stock.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

It is estimated that £140.8m of capital investment is required to achieve the Scottish Housing Quality Standard by 2015, and this expenditure will be provided for in future Housing Capital Plans.

4. SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

- Resources are used efficiently and waste is minimised.
- Local needs are met locally.
- Removal of vacant and derelict buildings will provide an opportunity to enhance immediate environmental conditions for the betterment of residents.
- All sections of the community are empowered to participate.

5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IMPLICATIONS

The achievement of the Scottish Housing Quality Standard will assist equality of access to quality housing.

6. BACKGROUND

6.1. Scottish Housing Quality Standard

In February 2004 the Scottish Executive announced the application of the Scottish Housing Quality Standard to all Local Authority and Registered Social Landlords' Housing Stock. In July 2004 Communities Scotland issued formal guidance for the preparation of Delivery Plans to demonstrate how the Scottish Housing Quality Standard can be achieved. The submission date for these Delivery Plans was 29 April 2005 and Dundee City Council's plan was submitted on this date subject to Housing Committee approval.

6.2. Content of the Standard

The content of the Scottish Housing Quality Standard is as follows:

- Compliant with the tolerable standard.
- Free from serious disrepair.
- Energy efficient.
- Provided with modern facilities and services.
- Healthy, safe and secure.

These priorities are broadly those that the Council has been committed to since the early 1990s through the Capital Investment Strategy. As a result of this the thrust of investment throughout the Delivery Plan period will continue much as in the recent past. However, there are some areas of investment that the Council will have to accelerate in order to meet the standard by 2015. These are:

- Controlled entry installation.
- Bringing bathroom installations up to the Scottish Housing Quality Standard.
- Bringing kitchen installations up to the Scottish Housing Quality Standard.

Initial proposals for these programmes will be included in the 3-year Capital Plan for 2005-2008 that is due to be submitted to the Policy and Resources Committee in the early Summer.

6.3. Housing Estate Regeneration Fund

The Scottish Executive had announced additional finance for regeneration for local authorities that are pursuing a retention strategy for their housing stock. Funding is limited to £50m for Scotland as a whole, over the period 2005-08 and will be subject to bids from Local Authorities.

This funding is available for initiatives such as demolitions, Housing Association new build and environmental improvements. Any new build option would have to include a registered social landlord as a partner.

The assessment of bids will be linked to criteria which include:

- A robust and acceptable Scottish Housing Quality Standard Delivery Plan being in place.
- How the proposals fit with local regeneration needs.
- How the proposals fit with the Local Housing Strategy.
- Deliverability including engagement with communities affected and other stakeholders.

The earliest date for bids is July 2005, however, no decisions will be made on the outcome of these bids until October 2005.

It is proposed that a bid is submitted in line with the above guidance in July 2005. The estimated requirement over the 10 year plan period is £10m.

6.4. **Assumptions in the Delivery Plan**

Some key assumptions have been made in arriving at a Delivery Plan that is affordable over the next ten years:

- 1849 surplus houses will not be brought up to the Scottish Housing Quality Standard although investment will be targeted to ensure that they are kept wind, watertight and safe.
- Around 1300 additional houses will not be brought up to the Scottish Housing Quality Standard although investment will be targeted to ensure that they are kept wind, watertight and safe. Other repairs and improvements **may** be carried out to this stock depending on condition and their long term future.
- No allowance has been made within the Delivery Plan for demolition costs. This will be included in the bid to the Scottish Executive through the Housing Estate Regeneration Fund. Demolition costs are estimated at £10m inclusive of home loss and buy back costs.
- It has been assumed that the debt servicing for the Ardler housing estate will continue to be serviced by the Scottish Executive after December 2006.

These assumptions are all risks to the successful delivery of the Scottish Housing Quality Standard and as such have been highlighted in the Delivery Plan.

6.5. **The Dundee Standard**

The Dundee Standard was agreed with the Dundee Federation of Tenants' Associations as part of the original Financial Viability Study process. The Dundee Standard identified repairs and improvements that were important to tenants as part of any major investment plan.

The Scottish Housing Quality Standard includes the majority of the priorities identified as part of the Dundee Standard with the exception of the installation of showers over baths and new bin stores for flats.

Although these items are not part of the initial Delivery Plan it is proposed that every effort should be made to invest in these elements during the 10 year Delivery Plan period. It is hoped to achieve this via both existing programmes and applications for matched funding through, for example, the Local Community Regeneration Fund and the Estate Regeneration Fund.

6.6. **Tenant and Staff Consultation**

The Guidance on the Scottish Housing Quality Standard from Communities Scotland states that Councils have a requirement to consult with tenants on their Delivery Plans and its preparation. Due to the short timescale to complete the Delivery Plan and its complexity, the Dundee Federation of Tenants Associations have agreed that the Delivery Plan be submitted to Communities Scotland subject to further consultation on its content.

It is proposed that the Housing Investment Working Group through its Communications Sub Group bring forward a Communication Strategy to enable consultation with both staff and tenants over the Summer. This Communication Strategy will be agreed with Dundee Federation of Tenant Associations and Trade Unions and may involve presentations at the Housing Staff Conference, workshops for Registered Tenants' Organisations and a seminar for all tenants' groups to come together to discuss the Delivery Plan.

It may be necessary to amend the Delivery Plan as a result of these consultations. If this is the case then this will be reported to Housing Committee in due course.

7. **SUMMARY**

The Scottish Housing Quality Standard has been submitted to Communities Scotland on 29 April subject to Committee approval. The Plan allows for £185.8m expenditure over the period to 2015. This includes £140.8m of capital investment to meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard and an additional £45m to finance mainly revenue works which fall outwith the Scottish Housing Quality Standard but are still a priority for the Council, e.g. cyclical maintenance and community care investment.

Copies of the Delivery Plan have been lodged in the Councillors lounge.

8. **CONSULTATIONS**

The Dundee Federation of Tenants Associations and all Chief Officers have been consulted on the content of this report.

9. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.

ELAINE ZWIRLEIN
DIRECTOR OF HOUSING

10 May 2005