

REPORT TO: HOUSING COMMITTEE – 20 JUNE 2005

REPORT ON: HOUSING DEPARTMENT SERVICE PLAN PERFORMANCE
REPORT 2004/5

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF HOUSING

REPORT NO.: 401-2005

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. To report on performance of the Housing Department against targets and projects identified in the Housing Service Plan 2003-2007.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. It is recommended that the Housing Committee notes performance of the department against targets which can be seen in Appendices 1 and 2.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. There are no financial implications arising from the recommendation of this report.

4. LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. The Housing Service Plan will ensure; that resources are used efficiently and waste minimised; that local needs are met locally and; that all sections of the community are empowered to participate in decision making.

5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. The actions identified in the Service Plan will contribute positively to equal opportunities through specific measures of service delivery.
- 5.2. The Plan will also ensure that the Anti-Poverty Strategy is progressed by targeting resources and delivering services where there is greater need (for example by implementing the Fuel Poverty Strategy and the Homelessness Strategy).

6. BACKGROUND

- 6.1. The Housing Department's Service Plan 2003-2007 was written in the context of the Council Plan 2003-2007 and reflects the vision of the Community Plan, the City Vision for Dundee and the Modernising Government Agenda.

- 6.2. The Service Plan has, and will continue to be amended annually to take into account new strategies and initiatives.
- 6.3. The priorities for service delivery and project development detailed within the Service Plan (and its annual reviews) are consistent with both the Housing Department's and the Council's vision and objectives.
- 6.4. The Housing Department's Objectives have been translated into clear, measurable actions and progress against these are detailed within this report.
- 6.5. **Key Achievements in 2004/05**
- i. **Repairs Contact Centre** – The Council's innovative approach to service delivery in this area was given national recognition at the UK Housing Awards for Outstanding Achievement for Social Housing in Scotland 2004.
 - ii. **Financial Viability Study Working Group** – This Working Group which included representatives of all political parties on the Council, together with the Dundee Federation of Tenants' Associations completed its consideration of the options of stock transfer or retention of Council Housing. After a full deliberation of options the Council surveyed tenants and a clear majority of those who expressed an opinion voted to retain the stock in Council Management.
 - iii. **Housing Investment Working Group** – In 2004 the Financial Viability Study Working Group was re-constituted as the Housing Investment Working Group to develop a Delivery Plan to meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard. The Group's target was to submit a delivery plan to Communities Scotland by the end of April 2005.
 - iv. A new and revised Tenant Participation Strategy was developed and agreed in Partnership with the Dundee Federation of Tenants' Associations.
 - v. **Owners' Charter** – This has been developed between the City Council, Dundee Association of Council House Owners and Pentland Owners' Association. Believed to be the first of its kind in Scotland, the Charter aims for a positive culture change, recognises customers' needs and is committed to customer satisfaction.
 - vi. **Fuel Poverty** – Dundee Community Energy Partnership (DCEP) reported that by 31 March 2005, 173 households in Dundee had been removed from fuel poverty over a 3 year period as a result of the partnership's work. The project has now been completed and a Fuel Poverty Forum has been established with its own action plan to carry the Fuel Poverty Strategy forward. In addition a third Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) progress report was submitted to the Scottish Executive and this report a 4% energy efficiency improvement over two years.
 - vii. **Provision of Women's Refuge** – Newly built refuge accommodation for seven households was completed in Partnership between the Council, Abertay HA and Communities Scotland. The refuge became operational in December 2004.

Evaluation of Core Performance Indicators (See Appendix 1)

- 6.6. Performance against indicators was generally good. Challenging targets were set and these were exceeded in many areas. At a time when there are considerable amounts of new legislation in housing it can be expected that some targets become unachievable. An examination of areas of outstanding achievement and areas for improvement have been highlighted below.

- i. **Responsive Repairs** – In four of the six categories of repairs we have shown an improvement over previous years. Changes to the categories of repair and the collection of information has resulted from the best value review of the repairs services and so direct comparison with performance in previous years is not always possible.
- ii. **Secure Tenancy Signing** – Though not all tenants were signed up by the target date, the approximately 2% still outstanding will be picked up as part of day to day workloads and the specialist signing team has been disbanded.
- iii. **Letting Council Houses** – The target percentage of Council houses let was met but it is taking longer to re-let houses. The fact that the overall target has been met can be viewed as a success given reducing demand for Council housing.
- iv. **Tenant Arrears** – The 2004/2005 Financial Year target was exceeded as the final year end figure is 11.8%. The Housing Department's Area Arrears Teams continue to pursue rent recovery action as detailed in the revised Rent Arrears Policy, which was reviewed to reflect the amended practice as a result of legislative changes and concerns of Elected Members that some tenants were pursued for rent arrears which may be covered by a full or part-entitlement to Housing Benefit that was subject to an outstanding assessment. Consequently, no arrears action has been pursued beyond Notice of Proceedings stage for cases where there is an outstanding HB claim to be assessed or an HB issue to be resolved. Communities Scotland have carried out a provisional inspection of the eviction and rent recovery process and noted the significant reduction rate in evictions over the past 2 years. It is also recognised that there are comprehensive policies and procedures operated in the Housing Department with a clear escalation process in the recovery of rent arrears. Communities Scotland note that Dundee City is ranked 3rd in the Scottish Executive's Index of Deprivation and that 73% of tenants are in receipt of full or partial Housing Benefit entitlement.
- v. **Homeless Service** – There has been a significant increase in the use of temporary accommodation owing to new duties to homeless people arising from new legislation, and an increase in the support needs of clients. Additional new build temporary accommodation and introduction of new referral arrangements to housing associations in 2004/5 should help performance.
- vi. **Housing for Particular Needs** – The target for minor adaptations was significantly exceeded. Only one whole house adaptation was achieved owing to a shortage of Council housing which is suitable to adaptation.
- vii. **Equal Opportunities** – Targets for access to housing have been exceeded.
- viii. **Council House Sales** – Performance has shown a significant drop, where only 58% of sales are completed within 26 weeks. This can be explained by a large increase in applications and a longer time for tenants to respond to valuations (perhaps due to increased purchase prices).

Evaluation of Key Projects (Appendix II)

- 6.7. Significant progress and considerable successes have been achieved against key projects identified in the service plan. Some of the key objectives are detailed at Paragraph 6.5, in addition we have achieved the following:

- i. **Extending the Anti-Social Team** – The service is now available across all tenures, operates a 24 hour hotline, and provides surveillance equipment.
- ii. **Allocations Policy** – A number of “Early Action” items were identified to improve delivery of the Letting Services. This included extending the “Property Shop” concept to all area letting teams.
- iii. **Common Housing Register** – A working group of officers from the Council and Housing Associations has been set up and an information seminar for tenants, Committee Members and Elected Members was held in March 2005.
- iv. **Every Council Housing to Have Central Heating** – All low rise housing now complete. A programme for replacement of central heating is now underway.
- v. **Support Target Hardening** – Windows for All programme complete.
- vi. **Electronic Service Delivery** - Repairs Review Group has almost completed a web enabled Housing Repairs Service. This will be completed in 2005/06.
- vii. **Install Solar Panels** - A total of 29 solar panels have been installed in Council housing.
- viii. **Implement Homelessness Strategy Action Plan** - A total of 33 units of new temporary accommodation have been provided by April 2005. A further 37 units of furnished accommodation were provided.
- ix. **Submit LHS and Fuel Poverty Strategy** - The Local Housing Strategy (LHS) and Fuel Poverty Strategy were submitted to Communities Scotland on the target date after extensive consultation.

Shifting Resources to Deliver Improvement

- 6.8. The achievement of Council and Departmental goals has required innovation in working practices. Examples of this have included; better joint working and joint management of the repairs service with Dundee Contract Services; and increased resources for tackling Anti-Social Behaviour as a result of customer demands.

Consultation and Participation

- 6.9. The Housing Department consults on all its activity which results in significant changes to services to customers. These commitments are set out in the Tenant Participation Strategy and Owners Charter.
- 6.10. The Department has included tenants on working groups and best value reviews, eg Repairs Review and Best Value Review of Sheltered Housing Warden Service.
- 6.11. We consult tenants on satisfaction with services through a comprehensive set of Customer Satisfaction Surveys.
- 6.12. The Department also consults with wider stakeholders through various forums such as: The Homelessness Co-ordinating Group; Dundee Housing Association Forum and Dundee Community Energy Partnership.
- 6.13. The Department reports performance against targets and gives information to its tenants through its “Housing News” which is issued to all tenants in September/October every year.

New Projects for 2005/06

- 6.14. In our efforts to achieve continuous improvement in the Housing Service a number of new projects for the coming year have been identified:
- i. **Best Value Review of Sheltered Housing Warden Service** - A comprehensive review of this service should be completed in 2005/06.
 - ii. **Customer Contact Centres** - The Department will undergo further re-structuring to enable improved service delivery through contact centres for:
 - House Letting
 - Capital Contracts
 - Rent Recovery
 - iii. **Anti-Social Behaviour** - Recruitment of a Victim Support Officer, ASBT Solicitor and ASBT representative in Community Intelligence Tayside Police.
 - iv. Agreement of a Capital Programme to start the delivery of the Scottish Housing Quality Standard.
 - v. Reviewing the Department using the European Foundation of Quality Management - Business Excellence Model.
 - vi. Implement Phase II of the Repairs Contact Centre and completion of Repairs Review.

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1. The Chief Executive and all Chief Officers have been consulted on this report.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1. Housing Committee Report No 47-2004 – Housing Service Plan 2003-2007.
- 8.2. Housing Committee Report No 492-2004 – Housing Department Services Plan Performance Report 2003/04.

ELAINE ZWIRLEIN
DIRECTOR OF HOUSING

14 JUNE 2005

APPENDIX 1

Theme	Objectives	Assessment	Performance 2003/2004									
BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES	Satisfaction with tackling neighbour problems – cases resolved (target 70%).	53% satisfaction in 2004/2005.	70.6%									
BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES	Satisfaction with tackling neighbour problems – all cases (target 65%).	Survey not completed in 2004/2005.	55.8%.									
BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES	Expenditure of Private Sector Grant Budget. – target 100%.	Projected overall total PSHG expenditure 80.66%, made up as follows: Base Line Grant Expenditure 97.09% Bid Element Grant Expenditure 11.67% Other Non Grant Expenditure 40.64%	86.4%									
COMMUNITY SAFETY	Provide support for victims of harassment.	<table style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><u>Victims</u></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><u>Callouts</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td>24 Hour Hotline</td> <td style="text-align: center;">151</td> <td style="text-align: center;">322</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Support & Advice</td> <td style="text-align: center;">251</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>Victim Support Officer to be in post by July 2005.</p>		<u>Victims</u>	<u>Callouts</u>	24 Hour Hotline	151	322	Support & Advice	251		<p>September 2003 – Introduction of Out of Hours Service.</p> <p>October 2004 – Advice Hotline.</p>
	<u>Victims</u>	<u>Callouts</u>										
24 Hour Hotline	151	322										
Support & Advice	251											
CUSTOMER FOCUS	Response repairs carried out within target.	Repairs Management Board (Housing, DCS, I.T., Finance) regularly reviews response repairs performance and reports quarterly to the Repairs Partnership Board. Performance information for the new financial year has yet to be presented to the Board. Performance on relet and emergency repairs likely to remain the focus of attention and are scheduled for examination as part of the ongoing Review of the Repairs Service.										
CUSTOMER FOCUS	Tenant satisfaction with the repairs service – target 90%.	88% satisfaction in 2004/2005.	88.1%									
CUSTOMER FOCUS	Tenant satisfaction with the operation of the housing waiting list – target 82%.	Survey not completed in 2004/2005.	84.8%									
CUSTOMER FOCUS	Tenant satisfaction with the rehousing service – target 80%.	Survey not completed in 2004/2005.	79.6%									
CUSTOMER FOCUS	Tenant satisfaction with advice on rent payment difficulties.	85% satisfaction in 2004/2005.	85.2%									
CUSTOMER FOCUS	Satisfaction that Housing staff treat customers in a professional manner – target 92%.	89% satisfaction in 2004/2005.	91%									
CUSTOMER FOCUS	Satisfaction that enquiries are handled efficiently – target 90%	84% satisfaction in 2004/2005.	87%									

Theme	Objectives	Assessment	Performance 2003/2004																												
CUSTOMER FOCUS	Satisfaction that Housing staff are friendly – target 94%.	91% satisfaction in 2004/2005.	93%																												
CUSTOMER FOCUS	Customer satisfaction with Private Sector Grant Service – target 90%.	98% satisfaction in 2004/2005.	98.2%																												
CUSTOMER FOCUS	Tenant satisfaction with handling of capital contracts – target 84%.	79% satisfaction in 2004/2005.	-																												
CUSTOMER FOCUS	Satisfaction with the Care & Repair Service – target 98%.	98% satisfaction in 2004/2005.	98.4%																												
CUSTOMER FOCUS	Satisfaction with the Tenant Participation Service – target 85%.	83% satisfaction in 2004/2005.	-																												
EQUALITIES	Ethnic Minority representation on the housing waiting list – target 3.33%.	332 on waiting list which is 4.3% of total list.	4.04%																												
EQUALITIES	Proportion of Council houses let to ethnic minorities – target 3.33%.	3.35% of lets to ethnic minorities.	2.6%																												
FINANCIAL RESOURCES	Maintain Housing Rent increases at a maximum of inflation + 1%.	Budgets set in compliance with Council Policy. 2005/2006 rent set at 4.1% increase (inflation +1%).	-																												
FINANCIAL RESOURCES	Letting Council houses within timescales: Under 2 weeks – target 30%. 2-4 weeks – target 30%. Over 4 weeks – target 40%.	Under 2 weeks – 13%. 2-4 weeks – 15%. Over 4 weeks – 72%. New targets set for 2005/06 in accordance with requirements of Audit Scotland.	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Target</th> <th>%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Under 2 weeks</td> <td>30%</td> <td>29.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2-4 weeks</td> <td>30%</td> <td>21.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Over 4 weeks</td> <td>40%</td> <td>49.8</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Target	%	Under 2 weeks	30%	29.1	2-4 weeks	30%	21.1	Over 4 weeks	40%	49.8																
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FINANCIAL RESOURCES	Expenditure of total Capital Budget – target 100%.	97.4% of budget spent in 2004/2005.	Spend 0/3-04 – 100%.																												
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HEALTH & CARE	Number of minor house adaptations for people with particular needs – target 200 per year).	469 minor adaptations for 2004/2005.	<u>Target</u> 200	<u>Performance</u> 319
HEALTH & CARE	Number of whole house adaptations for people with particular needs – target 2 per year.	1 whole house adaptation for 2004/2005.	4.	
HEALTH & SAFETY	HMO License Monitor.	Scottish Executive target: 1,750 licences in force by 31 March 2006. Licences in force at 31 March 2005 – 663. Applications in process at 31 March 2005 – 148.	HMO Licences	<u>Target</u> Licences 900 663
PROPERTY	Responsive Repairs: Out Of Hours Emergency. Day time emergency. 3 day urgent. 10 day priority. 15 day normal . Within 24 hours. 10 day empty property. Inspection.	Emergency – 94%. quick fix urgent – 78%. routine priority – 85%. miscellaneous priority – 84%. relets – 71% Inspections – 94% Total – 87% New priorities introduced for new service.	Emergency – 99.6%. 3 day urgent – 76%. 10 day priority – 67.9%. 15 day priority – 69.1%. 10 day empty – 74.9% Inspections – 89.3%	
BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES	Deliver an investment strategy for Council housing that aims to meet the Dundee Standard.	Scottish Housing Quality Standard delivery plan reported to Scottish Executive on target. Reported to Housing Committee in May 2005. Dundee Standard will be delivered through alternative funding sources.		
BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES	Create a new early action initiative to tackle anti-social behaviour across tenures while continuing to support successful initiatives such as Dundee Families Project and Community Mediation.	Advice and assistance is available across all tenures with additional services including Out Of Hours Service & Surveillance Equipment. 24 Hour Hotline is available to all residents. 74 referrals were made to Mediation 2004/2005. 15 families were referred to Dundee Families Project 2004/2005. The city-wide strategy for anti-social behaviour is due to be implemented by the end of June 2005.	Out Of Hours Service was introduced in September 2003. 24 Hour Advice Hotline introduced in October 2004.	
FINANCIAL RESOURCES	Current Tenant Arrears – target 8.5%.	<u>Performance 2004/2005</u> 11.8%	<u>Target</u> 8.5%	<u>Perf.</u> 11.3%

APPENDIX 2

Theme	Objectives	Assessment
BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES	Deliver an investment strategy for Council housing that aims to meet the Dundee standard.	Scottish Housing Quality Standard delivery plan reported to Scottish Executive on target by 29 April 2005. Reported to Housing Committee in May 2005. Dundee Standard will be delivered through alternative funding sources.
BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES	Create a new early action initiative to tackle anti-social behaviour across tenures while continuing to support successful initiatives such as Dundee Families Project and Community Mediation.	Advice and assistance is available to Council tenants, tenants of private lets and owner occupiers. The Anti-Social Behaviour Team has evolved into providing a competent service across all tenures with additional services to RSL's, making Out of Hours Service and Surveillance Equipment available to them as and when required. 24 Hour Hotline is available to all residents. Anti-Social Behaviour Team continue to support initiatives making regular referrals to Mediation Service and also Dundee Families Project. 74 referrals were made to Mediation 2004/05 and 15 families were referred to Dundee Families Project 2004/05. The final draft of the citywide strategy for anti-social behaviour is in the final stages of consultation and is due to be implemented by the end of June 2005.
BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES	Every Council house to have central heating by March 2005.	All 'low rise' housing complete. Replacement Heating Programme now underway.
BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES	Develop a Common Housing Register for social rented housing.	A Working Group comprising all local housing associations and the Council has been set up. A Development Officer has been recruited and a workplan agreed to deliver a Common Housing Register by June 2006.
COMMUNITY SAFETY	Facilitate the provision of a refuge for women fleeing domestic abuse.	The refuge has been completed and handed over to Dundee Women's Aid.
CUSTOMER FOCUS	Establish Housing Repairs Customer Contact Centre and develop a joined-up Housing Repairs Service.	Housing Repairs Centre operational March 2004. Links between HRC, Housing Area Offices and DCS continue to be built upon. Operations monitored monthly by City Housing Manager. Phase 2 of Repairs Review underway and to be complete 2005/06.
CUSTOMER FOCUS	Develop Customer Contact Centre for Capital Contracts and Council House Sales.	Customer Contact Centre Working Groups set up for: House Letting; Capital Contracts; Rent Recovery.
HEALTH & CARE	Deliver Dundee's Homeless Strategy Action Plan.	Quarterly reports endorsed by Homelessness Co-ordinating Group. Achieved 2004/05 target of 37 units of furnished accommodation.
ICT INFRASTRUCTURE	Design and create an on-line web enabled Housing Repairs System on the basis of the outcome of the Repairs Review Group.	Task almost complete – majority of IT work complete, some work still required on back-end processes.

Theme	Objectives	Assessment
LEARNING & WORKING	Support the Dundee Community Energy Partnership's Employment and Training Project.	DECP now complete and project ended. Staff returned to substantive post.
BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES	Work with tenants' groups to improve the Council's property maintenance and service delivery.	Repairs Development Team (Housing, DCS and DFTA) continues to meet on Phase 2 development issues. Independent Advisor for tenants funded to end of October 2005. Tenants continue to be involved in Repairs Partnership Board.
BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES	Number of people removed from living in fuel poverty.	Dundee Community Energy Partnership (DECP) reported that by 31 March 2005, 173 people in Dundee had been removed from fuel poverty over the 3 year period as a result of the projects work. The project has now ended. Fuel poverty forum has been established and an action plan agreed. Discussion on how to measure this in future required.
CARING FOR DUNDEE'S ENVIRONMENT	Achieve Home Energy Conservation Act efficiency targets.	Third HECA progress report (1 April 2001 to 31 March 2003) submitted to Scottish Executive by deadline of 16 July 2004. Reported to Housing Committee August 2004. Reported 4% energy efficient improvement over the 2 year period.