

HEREFORDSHIRE HOUSING POST TRANSFER IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITY: SOCIAL CARE ADULTS AND HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT AND STRATEGIC HOUSING

CABINET

11TH OCTOBER, 2007

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To provide an update to Cabinet of the progress made in delivering improvements to housing stock transferred to Herefordshire Housing.

Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision.

Recommendations

- THAT (a) **Cabinet notes the progress made by Herefordshire Housing to date in delivering against the programme of repairs and improvements identified within the Formal Consultation document; and**
- (b) **Cabinet should receive a summary report after 26th November, 2007 on repairs and improvements delivered in the first five years following transfer.**

Reasons

The transfer contract between the Council and Herefordshire Housing Ltd (HHL) contained a series of promises relating to qualifying repairs and improvement to be carried out within the first five years following a successful stock transfer. The Council monitors progress made by HHL in delivery against those promises since the transfer date of 26th November, 2002.

Considerations

1. 'Your Home Your Choice', the transfer document provided to tenants in the lead up to transfer confirmed that if transfer went ahead, HHL promised to undertake a programme of repairs, improvements and planned maintenance to the housing stock. At the point of transfer, HHL entered into a legally binding contract with the Council committing the company to honour the promises made within the formal consultation document.
2. This is the third monitoring report to be considered by Cabinet, the first report covering progress against the promises since transfer up to 31st March, 2004 having been presented at the Cabinet meeting of 25th November, 2004

3. The promise to tenants included an undertaking that HHL would spend £41m on repairs and improvements in the first five years following transfer and would spend £41 million in the subsequent five years following that on a planned repair, improvement and maintenance programme.
4. The formal consultation set out a list of Repairs and Improvements that would be carried out where required. Taking into account the change in stock numbers since the consultation was undertaken, assumptions about component condition have had to be constantly reviewed by Herefordshire Housing Limited.
5. As a result, promise figures have been revised to reflect the loss of stock through Right to Buy between the date of the consultation document and now. Additionally, physical inspection aligned with tenant consultation has identified which specific components are not in need of renewal/replacement. All works are on a cyclical basis, therefore, if a new kitchen was put in a property six years ago (e.g. before transfer), this will be scheduled to be replaced within a specific future timescale under Herefordshire Housing Limited's rolling programme.
6. The table below, provided by Herefordshire Housing Ltd, sets out progress achieved to date and remaining for completion up to November 2007 against each consultation promise. Promises are to be completed within five years of stock transfer, i.e. by 26th November, 2007.

Improvement element	Promise made	Properties completed	Left to satisfy promise	On target to complete by
Kitchen replacements	2182	2260	0	Promise kept
Bathroom replacements	1243	1423	0	Promise kept
*Homes rewired	2102	1,920	182	November 2007
Homes double glazed	1309	1335	0	Promise kept
External doors (properties)	3492	3936	0	Promise kept
Central heating	1309	1912	0	Promise kept
<p>*Note - Promise reduced by 80 (from 2182) in July because there are no further properties that need rewiring.</p>				

7. Herefordshire Housing confirm that the programme of works was designed to concentrate on rewiring and external doors in this, the last year of the 5 year initial programme. The Company is confident that it will complete all the improvement promises ahead of time.
8. Herefordshire Housing have provided the following additional information to update Cabinet on the development of the Company and its services since the last update report.

- a. HHL reports significant improvements in customer satisfaction. Results for 2006 found that 85% of respondents were 'quite' or 'very satisfied' with HHL – compared to 76% reported in the first post-transfer survey conducted in 2004. 83% considered their rent provides value for money (80% in 2004); 86% considered staff helpful compared to 74% (2004). 'Repairs' and 'Improvements' to homes is identified as a key priority for their customers, with HHL reporting satisfaction levels running at 95% and 96% respectively. HHL report that this suggests HHL is continuing to move in the right direction and putting the right things in place to satisfy tenants requirements.
- b. Overall, in 2006/2007, the Company improved its position by comparison to other similar organisations, with 80% of the performance measures above average (i.e. a good or excellent performer) compared to 70% previously.
- c. Since transfer, the company has factored in an additional £23m, over 30 years, to improve the condition of existing stock. The Company reports that it is confident of meeting the government's Decent Homes Standard by 2010, having estimated that, currently, 84% of properties meet the standard and having made provision for the £1m to £1.5m investment required to enable the standard to be met.
- d. In service improvement terms, HHL reports that it has conducted a complete review of the way it manages the provision of disabled aids and adaptations for tenants resulting in a significant reduction in waiting time. It has changed the arrangements for gas servicing increases the proportion of services completed within set timescales. Void property standards have been reviewed and an appointments system for repairs implemented.
- e. Herefordshire Housing continues to be a key partner in the Home Point Herefordshire choice-based lettings partnership, which now covers 97% of all social housing in Herefordshire. It is also part of the Spectrum Development Partnership, led by West Mercia Housing Group, through which the Company accesses Housing Corporation grant funding for affordable housing development.

Financial Implications

None

Risk Management

HHL are contracted to complete the improvement works specified in the report as promised to tenants prior to transfer. The Council has a responsibility to ensure these obligations are delivered and will continue to monitor progress through subsequent reporting to Cabinet and through ongoing transfer review meetings.

Alternative Options

There are no Alternative Options.

Consultees

Tenants are being kept informed of progress through regular newsletter updates. Herefordshire Housing Limited's Regulators and Funders are being kept updated on progress through financial and performance returns and regular liaison meetings.

Appendices

None identified.

Background Papers

None identified.