

MEETING:	ADULT SOCIAL CARE & STRATEGIC HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE:	21ST MARCH 2011
TITLE OF REPORT:	HEREFORDSHIRE HOUSING LTD: HOUSING STOCK AND SERVICES REPORT
PORTFOLIO AREA:	ENVIRONMENT AND STRATEGIC HOUSING

CLASSIFICATION: Open

Wards Affected

County-wide.

Purpose

To receive a report from Herefordshire Housing Ltd on plans for housing stock and services for those in sheltered housing.

Recommendation(s)

THAT the Committee note the report.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 1 To enable Committee to note the improvement work of the Housing Association and address a number of issues raised by Members.

Introduction and Background

- 2 Whilst it was anticipated that the Director of Customer Services of Herefordshire Housing would be present to address the Committee, she is unable to attend due to circumstances beyond her control. Following a conversation with the Chairman, it was agreed that a briefing paper should be submitted to the Committee, and is attached at Appendix 1

Appendices

- 3 Appendix 1 – Herefordshire Housing Report.

Background Papers

None identified.

Herefordshire Housing Ltd: Housing Stock and Services Report

1 Continuing Investment in Existing Stock

Since transfer in November 2002 HHL has invested heavily in its housing stock, with over 67 million pounds spend improving properties, with the main improvement expenditure having been to meet the Decent Homes Standard (DHS).

The DHS is a minimum standard set by the Government that all social landlords have to meet by December 2010 and ensures that all properties are safe to live in, they are wind and weather tight, warm and have modern facilities. To ensure that we focused on the standard we set up a decent homes improvement programme which was split into three distinct programmes of work:

Internal improvements

- Improving kitchens, bathroom and upgrading electrical systems.
- Installing new boilers and upgrading heating systems
- Undertaking cavity and loft insulation schemes

External improvements

- Fitting new doors and windows
- Re-roofing properties

Health and Safety

- Undertaking structural improvements where identified
- Removing Health and Safety failures, such as relaying paved areas, etc.

In undertaking all of this work as of the end of December 2010 HHL had met the DHS.

2 The Future

Over the next 5 years we will continue with the main improvement elements, such as, internal improvements, roofing, etc., and project works, for instance the maisonette refurbishment, which will be complete by early 2011. However, within the five year programme and contained within our long term financial forecasts there are a number of large scale projects:

1. External insulation to two types of non-traditional properties, REEMA bungalows and BISF houses.
2. External wall insulation and external works to the Wimpey No Fines blocks of flats at Ross Road Hereford .
3. Improvements to the external bathroom/bedroom "Pods" on the College and Hinton estates.

The biggest single improvement to be undertaken within the next 10 years will be the protection of concrete elements and improvements in energy efficiency of the Cornish units. This work will include an external wall insulation package that will both protect the concrete from deterioration and increase the energy efficiency rating of the properties. In addition new double glazed windows will be installed and additional draught proofing

carried out as required. The total cost of this work is estimated to be in excess of £8.5 million.

3 The Oval

The Oval Regeneration Project aims to work in partnership with residents and other stakeholders to develop deliverable proposals which would ultimately transform The Oval neighbourhood, both physically and in terms of the life chances of the residents of the area.

The project has been through an option development and appraisal process which included: the development of an overall concept and strategic approach for the renewal of the estate; the identification of land parcels/subprojects for option appraisal; convening an option development workshop; scoping of the potential physical interventions (refurbishment, new build, environmental) ; assessing relocation/decanting needs; producing option costs and appraisals; valuation of development proposals; option benefits/dis-benefits appraisal; option impact assessment; project budget reality check; exhibition and presentation of options at a community day.

Having carried out a headline appraisal of the individual development areas a financial model has been developed to facilitate the option appraisals assessment which is now necessary to bring the project to a deliverable position in the current economic climate. The model developed takes cost, value, and accommodation inputs and allows option testing of the key variables. To enable decisions to be made about the make up of the preferred development solution, a baseline model has been established to confirm the current scheme position. This baseline includes all the preferred options. A number of options to improve this have then been tested to help guide and shape the delivery strategy.

The testing undertaken thus far and the subsequent analysis are by no means exhaustive. Rather, HHL are using the outputs as a guide, allowing colleagues, tenants and other community stakeholders to understand better the relationship and interplay between different cost and value drivers. HHL in partnership with the local authority and local community is now embarking on the next stage of this project, the aim of which is to refine the proposals to a stage where they can be brought to market as an attractive proposal for developers and so that the costs, balance sheet and risk implications for the association can be clearly identified and informed judgments made by both the organisation and the community.

4 Damp v Condensation

HHL is aware that there are particular property types where tenants experience problems caused by damp or condensation. In some instances it has been established that when properties were originally built, damp-proof coursing was sometimes incorrectly installed or not installed at all. Since the transfer of stock, HHL has instigated improvement work to remedy these problems as soon as we have become aware of problems.

In other instances, where tenants believe they are suffering from damp because of the existence of mould growth, it has been established that a combination of lifestyle (such as unvented tumble dryers and restricted airflow around stored items) and poor thermal values create significant condensation problems. In such cases where there is a question mark over the cause of mould problem we will arrange for an independent damp specialist to attend to give a diagnosis of the problem. In addition we will take whatever supportive remedial action we can to the tenant including: advice on lifestyles; stripping, treating and sealing affected areas, checking effectiveness of extractor fans and heating systems etc.

5 Services for Older and Disabled People

Through consultation with our residents, Herefordshire Disability group and the Local Authority we established an Aids and Adaptation Policy that meets the needs of residents and their families and ensures that annual costs for undertaking adaptations are contained within our long term financial forecasts. Our policy states:

- Works up to £500 will be undertaken by Herefordshire Housing without the need for an Occupational Therapists report
- Works between £501 and £2000 will be undertaken by Herefordshire Housing with the support of an Occupational Therapists report
- Works over £2000 will be undertaken either by Herefordshire Housing if the work is part of an internal improvement programme, such as the installation of a new kitchen or the request will be passed to the Local Authority to undertake the works as part of a Disabled Facilities Grant application.

In partnership with the local authority HHL delivers a housing support service to vulnerable older people across the county to enable them to continue to live independently in their own home. During periods of adverse weather conditions our Housing Support Advisors will continue to visit clients where it is safe for them to be able to do so. To assist older people living in schemes formerly referred to as sheltered housing during these times, our in-house Grounds Maintenance Team visit to clear snow from pathways and access routes and will also grit these areas.