

Meeting:	Tenant and Leaseholder Consultative Forum
Date:	9 January 2008
Subject:	Decent Homes Delivery
Key Decision:	No
Responsible Officer:	Gwyneth Allen, Divisional Director for Housing
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Camilla Bath
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	None

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out progress made against the Decent Homes Programme.

Recommendations:

The Forum is recommended to:

1. Note the progress being made on delivering the Decent Homes programme
2. Note the proposal that properties excluded from the DHS programme are undertaken as void works or deferred to a later programme
3. Note the recommendation that past promises made to tenants to provide aids and adaptations, as part of their DHS works, will be honoured.

Reason: (For recommendation)

To ensure the DHS programme is flexible enough to enable delivery within the Government's timescales

Section 2 – Report

2.1 BACKGROUND

2.2 In 2001 the Government introduced a requirement that all public sector landlords must bring their properties up to the Decent Homes Standard (DHS) by 31 March 2010. In 2005 it was agreed, following consultation with the Decent Homes Options Appraisal Working Group, that Harrow would adopt its own Harrow Standard.

2.3 POSITION AS AT 1 APRIL 2007

2.4 As at 1 April 2007, there were 3680 (72%) Council homes that failed the Harrow Decent Homes Standard.

2.5 PROGRESS BETWEEN 1 APRIL AND 30 NOVEMBER 2007

2.6 Elsewhere on this agenda there is a separate paper on proposals to change the 2008/09 and 2009/10 DHS programme from the enhanced Harrow standard to a revised Harrow standard. This report is, however, solely about progress to date in delivering the existing Harrow standard.

2.7 As the Forum is aware, Apollo's contract to deliver the DHS programme was terminated early at the end of March 2007, rather than on 30 June 2007 as originally planned. Kier took over responsibility for delivering the DHS programme from July 2007. This meant that there was a three month period during which no DHS works were undertaken.

2.8 Unfortunately, Kier's start date on DHS works (planned for early August) also slipped and performance to the end of November has not been as either Kier or the Council would have wished. Kier has, however, committed extra resources to ensure that the 2007/08 programme is, nonetheless, delivered as planned by 31 March 2008. Senior officers in housing and property services are meeting weekly with Kier to closely monitor progress.

2.9 Given the early problems being experienced with Kier, it was agreed with Kier that in order to expedite improved performance on the delivery of new windows and doors, the Council would continue to contract direct with the supplier Radways for the remainder of the 2007/08 financial year. There are a number of properties where the only elements requiring attention to make them DHS compliant are doors and windows.

2.10 This has meant that during the year to date, three contractors (Apollo, Kier and Radways) have contributed towards the delivery of decent homes.

2.11 DHS works to the sheltered stock due in 2007/08 was deferred pending a decision on whether or not the Capital Programme could meet the costs of showers rather than baths. This issue is discussed further in the separate report on the Capital Programme.

2.12 POSITION AS AT 30 NOVEMBER 2007

2.13 The number of homes completed as at 30 November 2007 were:

Apollo	356
Radway ¹	112
Kier	40
Total	508

2.17 The Council's target for 2007/08 is to complete DHS works to 1720 properties. This means 1,212 homes have to be completed between 1 December 2007 and 31 March 2008 if this target is to be achieved.

2.18 OTHER ISSUES

2.19 A number of issues, which can delay progress, include situations where:

- a) **Tenants do not provide access:** a protocol has now been put in place which will remove the property from the DHS programme² and transfers the property to another programme, for follow up when the property becomes vacant or, if the tenant is agreeable, as part of a follow-up contract.
- b) **Tenant does not provide access but the stock condition survey indicates that the property requires rewiring:** in such instances the protocol requires that the tenant must give access to enable a health and safety inspection to be undertaken. If no health and safety risk is found, the property is removed from the DHS programme as in (a) above. If a health and safety issue is discovered, the tenant will be required to have works, needed to overcome the health and safety problem, undertaken. If required, the provisions relating to tenants' obligations to provide access under their Conditions of Tenancy Agreement, will be used
- c) **The tenant says they do not wish works to be undertaken:** in such instances (a) above will apply
- d) **The tenant says they do not wish works to be undertaken but the stock condition survey indicates that the property requires rewiring:** in such instances (b) above will apply. Provided any health and safety works are undertaken, the tenant will thereafter be able to opt for no further works. After the health and safety works have been completed (a) above will apply
- e) **Tenant has requested new aids and adaptations:** it has been found that prior to this year some tenants, who had not previously sought aids and adaptations, had been promised

¹ The numbers below relate only to those properties, where the only elements requiring attention to make them DHS compliant, are doors and windows

² The Government's guidance permits properties to be removed from the statistical count of non decent homes if the tenant refuses DHS works

installations as part of their decent homes works. This has created a number of problems:

- It has unwittingly enabled tenants having DHS works to 'jump' the aids and adaptations queue to the detriment of those who have applied for aids and adaptations through normal channels and joined a waiting list for such works
- The DHS budget does not include any money for aids and adaptations and money spent on such works reduces the amount available for actual DHS works
- The need to have aids and adaptations (particularly in bathrooms) is delaying completion of the DHS works and is, therefore, having an adverse effect on the statistical returns the Council is obliged to make to the Government on progressing the DHS programme

Past promises made to tenants that aids and adaptations would be undertaken as part of their DHS works will, however, be honoured. These will be funded from the Adaptations capital provision.

2.20 RISK

2.21 If the Council does not contain its DHS budget to DHS-qualifying works there is a risk that there will be insufficient budget to enable all the DHS works needed, to be provided.

2.22 There is also a risk that unless the Council can recover time spent on works e.g. by restricting works undertaken to DHS-only qualifying works, it will over-run the Government imposed timescales for the completion of the DHS programme.

2.23 Although Kier are increasing their resources to ensure that slippage is recovered, a risk must remain, at least for the time being, that the Council will not meet its DHS target for 2007/08 putting further pressure on the remaining two years' of the DHS programme.

2.23 EQUALITIES IMPACT, LEGAL ISSUES, COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

2.24 There are no implications arising from the details contained in this report.

2.25 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

2.26 The HRA capital programme in relation to Decent Homes and Adaptations totals £23m over the two financial years 2008/09 to 2009/10. It is anticipated at this stage that the financial pressures on the housing capital programme can be contained within the existing provision, the detail of which is covered elsewhere on this agenda under the report on the Capital programme.

2.27 PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

2.28 **BVPI 184(a) and (b)**, which form part of the CPA block for Council housing, are affected by the proposals contained in this paper.

BVPI 184(a)

Non decent homes as a percentage of the total stock

The CPA lower threshold is:	47%
The CPA upper threshold is:	16%
Harrow as at the end of Q2:	66%
Harrow as at the end of Nov.	62.5%
Target for the year end is:	38.5%

BVPI 184(b)

Percentage change in proportion of non decent properties

The CPA lower threshold is:	3.5%
The CPA upper threshold is:	28.3%
Harrow as at the end of Q2:	9%
Harrow as at the end of Nov.	14%
Target for the year end is:	38%

2.29 Both targets are underperforming against local targets with BVPI 184(a) in the red CPA band and 184(b) in the amber band as at the end of November 2007. BVPI 184(a), which has been calculated against the Harrow standard, is fixed as at the start of the year. Resources are being directed at re-calculating the numbers, in accordance with the government standard, as it may be that the level of non decency will shift from red to amber. Without the movement from red to amber, the service is likely to be scored at a one star rating. This is likely to have a negative impact on the Council's overall CPA score resulting in the Council being down rated from a two to a one star authority.

Section 3 – Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Donna Edwards	X	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
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Date: 18 December 2007

Name: Helen White	X	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
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Date: 18 December 2007

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact:

Lorraine Dallas, Interim Service Manager, Partnerships for Housing
Tel: 020-8424-1339 Email: lorraine.dallas@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers: none