

**Spire Community Homes
Delivery Plan
2004 -2007**

SPIRE COMMUNITY HOMES DELIVERY PLAN

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Executive Summary

Spire Community Homes (SCH) is the arms length management organisation set up by the London Borough of Harrow to manage its council owned housing stock. The company has been set up to improve the standards of service offered to the boroughs' tenants and leaseholders; and improve the care and repair of the homes that they live in.

LB Harrow and SCH have negotiated a Management Agreement which details the contract made between the two parties; this Delivery Plan brings alive the agreement and explains how the relationship will practically achieve the objectives set for the future.

This Delivery Plan has been jointly developed by the Council and SCH; however in future SCH will take the lead in ensuring that the Plan is subject to regular review and meets the annual requirements of the Council. Through a partnership approach and joint working the Council and SCH will ensure that the needs of residents are met.

SCH is a company limited by guarantee and is wholly owned by the LB Harrow. The company is managed by a board composed of 15 members drawn equally from council nominees, tenants and leaseholders and independent community members.

Creation of SCH will release additional funds for the renovation of the housing stock so that by 2008 all homes will meet the decency standard.

This Delivery Plan has been jointly developed between the council and SCH and will be subject to an annual review. The Delivery Plan, supported by a range of appendices, contains the following sections:

1. Objectives
2. Governance
3. Service delivery
4. Finance
5. Investment Programme
6. Performance Management

The Delivery Plan will be formally agreed and monitored by the LB Harrow in partnership with SCH.

The Delivery Plan is part of a suite of documents that detail the agreement and working arrangements between the Council and SCH. These documents and their particular role are as follows:

| Document | Responsibility | Role | Review Date | Comments |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Management Agreement | | | | |
| Memorandum and Articles of Association | | | | |
| Delivery Plan | | | | |
| Section 27 Agreement | | | | |
| Service Level Agreements | | | | |
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Objectives

Spire Community Homes

SCH has developed a vision, mission and values that will deliver and support the vision and objectives contained within key council policies.

Community Strategy

The Harrow Partnership was re-launched as a local strategic partnership in May 2003 and a new Community Strategy is currently being consulted upon. At the heart of the strategy is the future vision of Harrow which is as follows:

'A borough that is safer, cleaner, healthier and more prosperous with equal life opportunities for all – a friendly, vibrant place to be.'

SCH will ensure their resources and services contribute to the achievement of the Community Strategy. **In order to participate as a key stakeholder in the development and delivery of the Community Strategy SCH will seek representation on the Local Strategic Partnership.**

Urban Living

Service Plan document

West London Housing Strategy

The West London Housing Strategy which was launched in July 2003. This provides a framework for sub regional working in pursuit of common priorities and issues and is also intended to help the development of the forthcoming London Housing Strategy.

The underlying objective of the partnership is to ensure that the Boroughs make maximum use of existing resources and attract new resources, whilst achieving economies of scale. SCH believe that continued cross borough co-operation will be essential in delivering the targets which are being set for it.

Both the Council and SCH wish to pursue the benefits of working more closely with their West London partners. In particular SCH is working with other ALMOs to explore the potential for joint procurement.

Housing Strategy

Harrow Housing set out its long term strategy in the Housing Strategy Statement 2002 – 2007, Quality and Choice – A decent Home for all in Harrow. This set the context for the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan which reflects the role of the authority's own stock in meeting key strategic objectives and priorities identified in the housing strategy for the borough. The mission for housing in Harrow is:

'To enable choice and access to a range of good quality, homes, including affordable homes, for all the people of Harrow'

The Housing Strategy aims to achieve this vision by working to:

- Maximise the supply of affordable housing
- Deliver excellence in housing services
- Build quality and choice into housing options across all tenures
- Combat poverty, social exclusion and increase community safety
- Ensure housing meets the needs of all groups in the community
- Make best use of the resources available – people, property, finance, information technology and other assets – in support of strategic priorities
- Work in partnership with customers, service providers and other stakeholders to meet strategic and service objectives
- Contribute to more sustainable communities in social, economic and environmental terms
- Ensure equal access to all services

The following cross-cutting themes are also important in the delivery of all aspects of the Housing Strategy. They are:

- Equalities
- Sustainability
- Partnership and inter-borough working
- Choice, consultation and customer-focus

The Housing Strategy is developed and managed by the council who undertake to fully involve SCH in its annual review and revision. The timetable for this is contained in **Appendix 1** Annual Work Programme.

The Housing Strategy will take full account of the West London Housing Strategy.

HRA Business Plan

The Housing Strategy sets objectives for the HRA Business Plan which will be developed and managed by the council with a substantial contribution from

SCH. SCH has adopted the current plan and the key objectives it contains for the first eighteen months of its operation. These are:

- 1. Maximise rental income
- 2. Tackle anti social behaviour and nuisance effectively
- 3. Assist in sustaining communities in social economic and environmental terms
- 4. Effectively tackle all forms of harassment
- 5. Effectively support survivors of Domestic Violence
- 6. Achieve the highest standards of Customer Care
- 7. Provide an efficient, high quality reliable and cost effective, responsive repairs service
- 8. Achieve the Decent Homes Standard by 2008
- 9. Provide a clean safe tidy environment around our homes
- 10. Offer residents the opportunity for real influence and involvement in the management of their homes
- 11. Provide an efficient, cost effective tenancy and lease management service
- 12. Provide quality homes which are clean and in a good state of repair

These objectives are reflected within the operational team and individual plans that SCH staff work towards achieving. The timetable for the revision of the HRA Business Plan is contained in **Appendix 1** Annual Work Programme.

Delivery Plan

This first Delivery Plan has been jointly developed between the Council and SCH, however in future the responsibility for the revision and development of the plan will rest with SCH.

The Delivery Plan sets output based targets for SCH and is not a detailed specification of how SCH will achieve those targets. This is a reflection of the degree to which SCH will have autonomy in conduct of its affairs. The Delivery Plan sets out the vision of the Board of SCH to deliver a high quality service to Council tenants.

SCH will prepare an Annual Performance Plan as required by the Management Agreement containing:

- An analysis of SCH objectives
- A review of the previous 12 month's performance
- An analysis of the causes for success and failure
- Performance targets for the next year
- A timetable for best value reviews

- An action plan and supporting analysis of effect on the Delivery Plan
- Any other matter as specified by the Secretary of State under Section 6 of the Local Government Act 1999 or any subsequent legislation

The Annual Performance Plan will form part of the Delivery Plan as set out in Clause 7.3 of the Management Agreement.

SCH Business Plan

SCH will prepare its own business plan which will focus on the delivery of the HRA Business Plan, the targets set out in this Delivery Plan and look at the wider development opportunities for SCH.

The SCH Business Plan will contain income and cash flow projections for the company and will set out new business opportunities and methods that SCH can work with the Council to meet the housing and support needs of residents.

The SCH Business Plan will set out the short and long term objectives of SCH and be a point of reference for the management of the organisation. SCH will be providing front line housing management services through its three District Teams. Each team will be responsible for development of a District Service Plan in consultation with neighbourhood representatives and consistent with this Delivery Plan, the SCH Business Plan and the HRA Business Plan.

Governance

Governance Standards

The SCH Board is responsible for delivering the services delegated to Spire Community Homes under Section 27 of the Housing Act 1985. The Board also has clearly defined constitutional and legal duties under the company's Memorandum and Articles and the Companies Act 1985. It is therefore essential that the Board exercises its duties effectively to ensure the objectives of the organisation are met.

The Council requires SCH to demonstrate that it has in place effective systems to deliver the high standards of governance required for the financial responsibilities and management freedoms the Council has delegated. It must be able to demonstrate that it is a viable and properly managed organisation and that is promoting high quality governance, financial probity and is enhancing the reputation of local authority housing.

Finally the Board of SCH must be able to demonstrate that is an effective organisation that knows how well it is performing, what its strengths and weaknesses are and has processes in place to deliver continuous improvement.

Governance Framework

The SCH Board will take primary responsibility for ensuring their compliance with the Delivery Plan.

SCH has a duty of good faith to notify the Council through the monitoring meetings of any non-performance or significant operational problems. In referring problems to the Council the Board will demonstrate how it intends to address any shortfalls or performance failure. The Management Agreement provides a range of methods to deal with poor performance, however in the first instance it will be the responsibility of the SCH Board to ensure it is delivering services according to the standards agreed.

The Council will therefore want to ensure that the SCH Board has effective controls in place to meet this obligation and will expect SCH to meet the standards set out below.

| Standards | Requirements |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Properly Governed | |
| Spire Community Homes operates according to its constitution. | The Board will meet regularly to make sure that Spire Community Homes acts within its constitution and all relevant legislation. The Board has established effective arrangements to comply with the relevant |

| Standards | Requirements |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | statutes and regulations |
| Spire Community Homes Board should be effective with a wide range of expertise –supported by appropriate governance and executive arrangements that give leadership and exercise control | <p>The Business Support Manager will have responsibility for ensuring that SCH Board procedures are followed and that all applicable statutes and regulations, and other relevant statements of best practice are complied with.</p> <p>The Board has a wide range of skills, expertise and up to date knowledge.</p> <p>Organisational management structures reflect Spire Community Homes 's objectives</p> <p>The Board seeks to reflect the diversity of the community it represents.</p> <p>Individual Board members act in a personal capacity.</p> |
| Spire Community Homes deals with the Council in an open and co-operative manner, notifying anything that might be a breach of these requirements or which affect the ability of Spire Community Homes to fulfil its obligations | Any areas where there is a need for improvement must be considered by the Board and actions agreed with the Council. |
| Spire Community Homes maintains the highest standards of probity in all their dealings. | <p>A Code of Conduct for the Board and staff is in place including an expenses policy.</p> <p>The Board has established appropriate mechanisms to ensure that members and employees of the body are not influence by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest.</p> <p>Spire Community Homes make publicly available the register of Board member interests.</p> |
| The Board protects the public investment it is responsible for. | <p>Sound procurement practices are in place and partnerships with other organisations are clearly defined and documented.</p> <p>Any material change of policy direction are considered by the Board; will be contained in the Delivery Plan and reported to the Council</p> |
| Financially Viable | |
| Spire Community Homes will operate as a viable business | <p>The Board has established formal procedural and financial regulations to govern the conduct of its business.</p> <p>Budgets, accounts and returns are submitted</p> |

| Standards | Requirements |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | <p>to the council and Companies House as appropriate in accordance with agreed and demonstrate Spire Community Homes is and will remain solvent</p> <p>Financial policies and procedures are in evidence and the Board has timely financial information to inform its decision making process.</p> <p>Through the HRA Business Plan Spire Community Homes demonstrates its priorities and strategy for achieving its objectives including commitments to the Council, tenants and other stakeholders</p> <p>Spire Community Homes' business planning process is informed by asset management information which is reviewed regularly.</p> |
| <p>Spire Community Homes operates a framework that effectively identifies and then manages any risks that might prevent Spire Community Homes meeting its objectives</p> | <p>Spire Community Homes' risk management framework identifies key risks and how they are managed.</p> <p>The Board will regularly review activities and policies (including new business opportunities) and a clear case will be developed for the proposed or existing direction and will be reported to the council as necessary.</p> <p>Approved terms of reference for committees and delegations are in place</p> <p>There are internal control systems and their effectiveness is regularly reviewed by the Board.</p> |
| <p>Properly Managed</p> | |
| <p>Spire Community Homes has management arrangements, resources, systems and skills that are appropriate for the circumstances, scale and scope of the operation.</p> | <p>The Board receives reports on all areas of Spire Community Homes' performance.</p> <p>The Board has established clearly documented management processes for the development, implementation and review of internal policy and for decision-making, monitoring, control and reporting.</p> |
| <p>Spire Community Homes ensures its activities are monitored, deliver Best Value and are backed by proper systems of assurance for internal control.</p> | <p>Services and structures are regularly subject to challenge and the principles of Best Value.</p> <p>Spire Community Homes can demonstrate that it is actively considering alternative ways of organising and providing services as</p> |

| Standards | Requirements |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | appropriate. |
| Engaged and Communicating | |
| Spire Community Homes seeks and is responsive to tenants and residents views. | Information about Spire Community Homes is regularly published and distributed to tenants and other stakeholders |
| Spire Community Homes regularly gives tenants and leaseholders the opportunity to comment on their performance. | An effective complaints system is publicised and operated. Complaints are reviewed on a periodic basis to ensure that common themes are identified and resolved. |
| Spire Community Homes enables tenants to play and active part in decision making. | Spire Community Homes continues to consult and involve the HFTRA. Spire Community Homes use a range of methods of consultation consistent with the Tenant Compact. Tenants are supported and encouraged to play an active part in the Board and all other management activities. Meetings of the Board are open and accessible Tenants and other stakeholders have access to the AGM and all reports to the AGM. The process followed for appointments to the Board are reported publicly. |
| Spire Community Homes develops policy and plans in partnership with stakeholders. | Seeks the views of other stakeholders in the development of new policies and initiatives |

The National Federation of ALMOs is developing guidance on good governance and the SCH Board will take note of the recommendations yet to be made.

SCH Board Arrangements

Governance is a vital part of the success of the ALMO and resources committed have been to the selection and development of the Board. The Shadow Board held its first meeting in September 2003 and developed considerably since this time.

The Board will meet monthly or more often if required and will form sub-committees with appropriate delegated powers to oversee particular parts of the business, or projects, as it see fit.

The Board recognises the need for extensive discussion **with the SCH management team** during the establishment phase of the ALMO; however it will also be necessary to meet without the presence of **the** management team from time to time.

Board Membership

The main aim in the initial composition of the Board was to ensure both that the Board, as a whole, had appropriate levels of relevant skills and experience to give strategic direction to the fledgling company and that the Council's commitment to diversity and equality of opportunity were reflected at Board level.

The tenants and leaseholders are represented on the Board in the ratio of four to one which reflects the mix of tenants and leaseholders in residence.

Council nominees have been appointed on the basis of the political make up of the Council. Board members will stand down as required by the constitution of SCH, as set out in Articles 15 and 16 of the Articles of Association of SCH.

Our Independent Board members bring a fresh perspective to SCH which will challenge how things are done and bring ideas formed in the greater community and commerce.

The Board now has significant experience from amongst its members in:

- Knowledge of the needs and aspirations of Harrow residents
- Business and management
- Financial control
- Human resources, including TUPE, training and development
- Change management / performance management
- Knowledge of the public housing sector
- Housing maintenance
- Housing management
- Housing policy
- Equality of opportunity
- Customer care

The current SCH Board reflects the ethnic diversity of the borough. When vacancies arise on the Board, SCH will make sure that the BME community is represented and that business skills and professionals with specialist skills are appointed to ensure that differing and challenging perspectives are brought to the Board. The Board shall operate within the constraints set in Article 17 of the Articles of Association of SCH.

Currently two vacancies remain to be filled; one tenant and one independent member. **Recruitment exercises are underway to fill the vacancies by the 1st September 2004.**

Development of the SCH Board

The Board are committed to their ongoing development of skills and knowledge and are undertaking a structured development programme. During 2003/04 Board members attended training sessions on:

- Principles of Governance
- Learning from the first housing ALMOs
- The Management Agreement
- The Constitution
- The Delivery Plan

Following an initial training event held in early October 2003 for Shadow Board Members to identify existing skills, knowledge and experience, and training priorities, an ongoing training programme has been introduced. A budget of £11,250 has been earmarked for shadow board training during 2003/04 and a further £XXXX has been identified for 2004/05 .

Further training is planned to include:

- Asset management and HRA business planning
- Ethos, mission and branding
- Risk management
- Finance – how the money works
- Tenant involvement and customer focus
- Equal opportunities and diversity
- Working strategically with the local authority
- Performance and information management
- Housing inspection and regulation
- Partnering and contracts
- Human resources management
- Legal issues

New Board members will be provided with an appropriate induction and specific training and development activities to enable them to fulfil their role as quickly as possible.

The Board are also committed to the regular review of their own performance of as a Board and as individuals. Based on these reviews appropriate training activities will be planned to remedy any areas for development and enhance the capability of the Board.

Board Member Expenses

Board members will be able to claim expenses for attending meetings, or as incurred, on other business on behalf of SCH and a simple procedure will be put in place **prior to 1st September 2004** to ensure that expenses are paid expeditiously. Expenses will not exceed those which would be paid to a board member of a registered social landlord under the Housing Act 1996 or as limited by Article 7(3) of the Memorandum of Association of SCH and Article 24 of the Articles of Association of SCH.

Conflicts of Interest

The Board will work to ensure that at all times it works in the best interests of SCH, Harrow Council, its tenants and leaseholders and that any conflicts of interest are openly declared by Board members, in accordance with Article 29 in the Articles of Association of SCH and Article 7 of the Memorandum of Association of SCH.

Board members will register all other interests with the Company Secretary in compliance with Articles 25 and 26 of the Articles of Association of SCH.

Delegation Arrangements

The services to be delegated to SCH are detailed within **Appendix 2**. Where responsibilities are shared between the Council and SCH this plan sets out clear operational responsibilities for those tasks within Section X: Service Delivery.

Sub-Committee Structure

SCH will consult on the scheme of delegation for responsibility for delivery of its services between the SCH Board and its sub-committees with the Council. The delegation of responsibilities is governed by Article 22 of the Articles of Association of SCH. The Board will adhere to the principle that it will be responsible for:

- Company functions such as the trading account; audit and the returns set out in the finance section of this Delivery Plan.
- The employment of staff
- Co-ordination of services
- Liaison with Council on strategic issue
- Liaison with Council on cross-cutting issues
- Standardisation of service quality
- **Corporate Governance according to Nolan principles**

Issues to be delegated to sub-committees will be allowed within the SCH constitution and a Board sub-committee structure will be formed to cover the following issues:

- Organisation development and remuneration, which will oversee the human resources aspect of the business
- Finance, which will oversee the financial management of SCH
- Audit, which will be responsible for establishing an internal an statutory audit capability and risk management
- Investment, which will oversee the management of the investment programme
- Performance Management including oversight of the service contracts with the Council.

Service Delivery

Best Value and Service Improvement

The council completed a whole service Best Value Review in June 2003. The whole service was inspected by the Audit Commission in **November** 2003 and awarded two stars with promising prospects for improvement.

The Performance Improvement Plan arising from the review was structured in such a way that SCH could take forward the housing management service elements. **Appendix 3** contains the Performance Improvement Plan which details the service improvements to be delivered by SCH, has been updated to include the action points arising from the inspection.

SCH will be re-inspected in March 2005 and at this time our aim is to achieve...

Service Structure

During the Best Value Review the housing management service structure was reshaped in order to provide a more locally accountable, customer responsive service. This reshaping has been updated further to establish a suitable organisational structure for SCH.

The management team of SCH will be led by the Managing Director and a senior management team of four whose main responsibilities are summarised as follows:

- **Resident Services Manager** responsible for: Estate services; Leasehold services; RTB processing; tenancy management; rent and FTA collection; resident participation and garages and parking
- **Business Support Manager** responsible for: company secretary role; governance; personnel and training; ICT; reception services; complaints monitoring; risk management and performance reporting
- **Finance Manager** responsible for: **all financial management including company accounts; payments; rent accounting; reconciliations budget preparation, and exchequer functions, liaison with the council on financial matters**, monitoring and audit requirements.
- **Property Services Manager** responsible for: Asset Management; Procurement; Major works; Cyclical repairs and maintenance; Responsive repairs; Planned maintenance; Repairs reporting and completion; Gas servicing; Voids processing and letting;

The full organisational structure for SCH is contained in **Appendix 4** and recruitment to any vacancies within this structure is underway **and completed by 1st September 2004.**

All staff will transfer to the organisation under the Transfer of Undertaking (Protection of Employment) Regulations and full consultation has been

undertaken with staff to meet the legal requirements. SCH will abide by the provisions of the TUPE regulations, under which the London Borough of Harrow staff transferred to its employment, and will honour any additional undertakings given to Council staff transferring to its employment.

Service Standards

SCH is committed to providing the revised service standards introduced through the **First Contact** and **Your Home Your Needs** Best Value Reviews in 2003. The service standards are contained in **Appendix 5**.

The general customer care standards which residents can expect from SCH cover the following core areas of service delivery:

- Courtesy in service
- Telephone contact standards
- Interview and reception standards
- Opening hours
- Response to letters
- Response to e-mails
- Clarity of language in response to customer queries
- Use of translations, assistance for visually impaired or hearing impairment

The service specific standards that SCH will deliver cover operational performance in the following areas:

- Repairs
- Estate environment
- Major repairs
- Home ownership and services to leaseholders
- Tenancy management
- Resident participation

SCH will monitor performance against these standards to ensure that they are achieved and provide the minimum service level which residents can expect.

Policy and Procedures

A full range of policies and procedures are set out in **Appendix 6** many of which have been recently reviewed and updated during the Best Value Review of Housing Services. SCH have undertaken to work to these procedures in the first year and have established a policy review timetable commencing in their second year of operation.

Resident Consultation, Participation and Information

SCH has adopted the Council's Tenant Compact and will develop it over time ensuring that sufficient resources are allocated to meet the objectives it contains. SCH will review the Tenant Compact annually and will consult with tenants on the contents of the Tenant Compact during the review process.

The Council has had a well-established tenants' movement, the Harrow Federation of Tenants' and Residents' Associations (HFTRA) is the umbrella organisation which works very closely with the Council on a whole range of issues. Since April 2002 the Council has devolved responsibility to HFTRA for the management of part of the Tenant Participation budget. These arrangements will continue and the Board of SCH are keen to work in partnership with HFTRA in improving services to tenants and residents.

The HFTRA currently has its own office on the Civic Centre site. It has been agreed with HFTRA that they will move from this base and occupy space within the new offices with SCH.

The HFTRA currently works closely with the local Tenants' and Residents' Associations (TRAs) in the Borough, providing support and advice; taking an active role in developing new associations. Where areas do not have a local association, the HFTRA provides direct support to residents as required. The HFTRA holds open committee meetings every other month, and has introduced a regular newsletter. SCH staff will work closely with Resident Representatives to foster good working relationships at all levels.

SCH will continue the practice of holding an annual Tenants Conference, which will be an opportunity to further consult and inform residents about the development of SCH and its future programme and projects. This will be followed by local meetings at district level. A tenants' annual report will be published by SCH.

The Council's Tenants' and Leaseholders' Consultative Forum will continue to provide the opportunity to update resident representatives on SCH progress and consult on issues that remain the Council's responsibility.

A Leaseholders' Forum will meet, at least, twice yearly, with a Sub Group meeting more frequently.

Since the decision to proceed with the ALMO there has been a good response from BME residents who want to work with SCH and the Board will pursue the development of a Borough wide BME forum to explore their views.

Not all residents want, or are able to participate by attending meetings and the Housing Division of the London Borough of Harrow set up HINT (Housing Information Networking Team). This group of residents indicated that they are prepared to get involved, either by postal survey, email, or telephone, periodically, to give their views on new initiatives, policies, service delivery issues etc. **This council run forum, will also give SCH a further network to canvass the opinion of residents on matters do to with the ALMO.**

SCH Board are determined that the initiatives, started by its predecessor, will continue to be developed and they will seek new ways of reaching out to residents and their families in line with good practice.

SCH will investigate with the HFTRA the possibility of setting up three District Consultative Forums, which will be an appropriate forum for local issues to be discussed, and for local priorities to be determined. It is further envisaged that the District Forums will have responsibility for identifying service priorities for their area, with particular reference to the environmental improvements programme. These Forums will inform the District Service Plans which will be developed.

The Council has one potential Tenant Management Organisation (TMO). The Council will delegate, to SCH, the ongoing development of the TMO initiative, as part of the promotion of tenant participation, with reference as appropriate to the Council at key stages in the process.

Customer Care and Access to Services

The SCH Board know that the development of services in line with customer needs and expectations is the key to effective delivery. The Customer Care standards the organisation will adhere to have been detailed earlier in this section.

SCH will provide a drop in and appointment reception facility at XXXXXXXX and will ensure that the reception area is at all time welcoming, informative and comfortable. Opening hours will be XXXX

A full telephone service will be provided from XX to XX during the day and an Out of Hours emergency service will be provided via XXXXXXX from XX to XX.

Surgeries?

The following hotlines/free phone numbers will be provided

The next Status Survey will be undertaken during 2006 -2007 and will be the responsibility of the Council.

SCH will produce quarterly copies of Homing In and distribute to all tenants and leaseholders. SCH will ensure that the council are given ample opportunity to place items of interest within the newsletter.

Complaints and Enquiries

SCH will adopt the Council's complaints policy, although this will be amended to reflect the new organisational arrangements. The three stages will culminate with the SCH Managing Director.

Ombudsman enquiries will be managed by SCH who will provide a full response within the agreed time limits to the Executive Director for Urban Living who will make a formal response on behalf of the council.

Elected members and the local MP will be encouraged to contact SCH directly on behalf of their constituents; however any received by the Executive Director for Urban Living will be forwarded to SCH to provide a direct reply.

Tenancy Management

SCH will be responsible for the enforcement of all tenancy conditions.

SCH will minimise rent arrears, collected on behalf of the Council, from current and former tenants will be a key objective of SCH.

The aim of SCH is to provide a good estate management service, to resolve disputes before it becomes necessary to resort to formal process. However, in order to protect the Council's interests, and to allow tenants the quiet enjoyment of their tenancy it will be necessary to enforce tenancy conditions in a firm way. SCH are conscious that the Council is concerned to support victims of any form of nuisance / harassment and that firm action is taken against perpetrators. SCH will adequately resource the provision of specialist staff to minimise nuisance and harassment to and from residents and tenants.

SCH will manage the Council's obligations relating to actual, or potential, breaches of tenancy agreement sensitively and fairly. The Council has undertaken to consult SCH on proposed changes in tenancy conditions.

All cases of potential, or actual, breach of tenancy agreement will be recorded and investigated within five working days. Individuals involved will be kept informed of progress.

SCH will adopt a partnership approach to dealing with antisocial behaviour both by Council tenants and on the estates. SCH will liaise with other agencies, including the Police, Youth Offending Team, Drugs Action Team, Drug Treatment Services, **National Offenders Management Services (NOMS)**, RSLs and Environmental Health Officers, in cases of antisocial behaviour and work with them to resolve the issues. SCH will work with the specialist anti-social behaviour co-ordinator, in the Council's Strategic Partnership Unit, to address priority themes within the Council's Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy 2002 – 2005.

If necessary SCH will co-operate with other agencies in the prosecution of Anti Social Behaviour Orders and co-operate in subsequent actions following the breaking of any such order.

SCH will continue to implement the Council's policy of crime prevention, particularly relating to hate crime and domestic violence. As required, properties will be equipped with additional security measures, thus enabling residents to remain in their own home.

Any incident of harassment which includes violence, or the threat of violence, will be investigated immediately.

SCH will support the objectives of the Domestic Violence Forum of the Harrow Partnership which leads multi-agency action on domestic violence, as part of the Harrow Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy. SCH will contribute to

the Housing sub-group set up to respond to the Domestic Violence Action Plan.

Estate Management and Caretaking Services

The Board of SCH recognises the importance of achieving high standards in the communal areas of the housing estates under its management, so that the local community is encouraged to invest, as a partner, in maintaining the shared areas.

SCH will continue to run four mobile caretaking teams each containing three caretakers each focussed on a specific geographical area of the Borough. Each caretaking Team will be led by a senior caretaker, who will have responsibility for identifying and responding to local estate issues, such as graffiti, fly tipping and abandoned vehicles, liaising as necessary with local residents and Council departments to resolve problems quickly.

SCH will ensure that estates are well managed, with high environmental standards and carry out estate inspections with TRA representatives on a quarterly basis. Where inspections result in work being identified to meet agreed standards, an improvement plan will be agreed between SCH and tenant representatives within 10 working days.

SCH will manage the garages owned by the Council and allocate them according to the Council's policies.

Empty Properties and Lettings

SCH will let Council dwellings in accordance with the Council's Allocation Policy, which may be changed from time to time.

SCH will seek to minimise both the number of empty (void) properties and the period during which they are empty. In the case of hard to let properties SCH will work in partnership with the Council to provide alternative solutions.

SCH will clean and repair void homes to a standard set by the SCH Board. It will report on the number of offers made to let property and reasons for refusal. New tenants will be surveyed to measure their level of satisfaction with the level of cleanliness and state of repair of their property.

SCH staff will visit all new tenants within 15 working days of them taking up a new tenancy and undertake a rolling programme of tenancy checks.

Homelessness assessment will not form part of SCH's responsibilities. However, SCH will provide initial information and advice to all enquirers and applicants and to identify those people who may be found in priority need within homelessness legislation and will work with the Council to review its homelessness strategy and provision.

SCH will continue to promote the LAWN initiative and encourage tenants to move out of the Borough to alleviate some of the local pressure on housing.

Harrow Council have co-operated with four other west London Boroughs (Brent, Ealing, Hillingdon and Hounslow) and three RSLs (PCHA Housing Association, Ealing Family and Paradigm) in operating the Locata scheme which publicises local authority and RSL stock vacancies across their areas of operation. SCH will continue to use the common allocations policies and advertising system use adopted by Locata members.

Repairs and Maintenance

SCH will operate a cost effective and efficient responsive repairs service and out of hours emergency service. SCH will ensure that the ordering of materials and contractors is efficient and accurate and that the day to day management and organisation of the service is carried out within budget.

SCH will be responsible for the repair and maintenance of dwellings and any tenant claims for failure to repair, or disrepair, will be the responsibility of SCH. Claims related to any disrepair prior to 1 September 2004 will be subject to good faith negotiations between the Council and SCH.

SCH will require its contractors to attend all repair appointments and that the quality of work complies with the technical specification.

Leasehold Management

Leasehold management is an area of growing activity because of the increase of the number of leaseholders and with the additional ALMO funding there will be an even greater pressure to collect higher levels of major works charges.

Service charges

Section 20 Consultation

Lessee Forum

Community Halls

SCH will assume the management of the nine community halls from Harrow Council.

It will work with HFTRA and individual tenants associations to increase the use of these facilities. SCH will seek to identify other local needs for the facilities in conjunction with what other similar community facilities are also available in the local neighbourhood.

The SCH Board anticipate finding a range of potential demands for these community facilities and envisage a need to discuss general principles and local specific arrangements with HFTRA. Any loss of income to the HRA will be carefully considered and balanced against the benefits of providing reasonable resources to TRAs in support of their work within their local communities.

Equality and Diversity

SCH will promote equality, fairness and respect. In delivering their business they will fully engage with the boroughs multi-cultural and diverse communities. SCH will take care to assess their policies, procedures and services and their impact on race, religion or belief, gender, disability, sexual orientation and age.

SCH will create a working environment where diversity is recognised, valued and celebrated. SCH will:

Currently (2001 census) the population at Harrow comprises 41% of households from the BME communities. However, 26% of tenant households define themselves as from the BME community from the responses to a recent tenant census.

In staffing terms, 27% of current permanent staff define themselves as from the BME communities and they are spread fairly evenly within the middle ranges of the salary bandings.

A key objective of SCH will be to reflect better the perspective of the BME community in Harrow as a whole. SCH will actively seek to increase the representation of BME employees.

SCH will develop a BME forum specifically to better assess the needs of the large BME community in the Borough and will actively work to address the issues raised in the forum.

SCH will prepare its publicly available literature in:

- English
- Arabic
- Gujarati
- Hindi
- Punjabi
- Bengali
- Tamil
- Urdu
- Farsi
- Somali
- Chinese

SCH will extend its multilingual versions of available information to include posters, leaflets, tenant hand books and web site.

SCH will monitor the mix of languages in use in the Borough to ensure that its information is available in languages which reflect those in use in the community.

SCH will employ bi and multi lingual staff in tenant facing roles where possible. SCH will use Language Line interpretation if appropriate.

SCH will monitor the ethnic origins of new tenants to assess which parts of the community may not be accessing the service and if found will respond to ensure that policy and practice can be developed to assist those groups in accessing the service.

Service Quality

SCH is committed to providing a high quality, cost effective service to its customer and client.

Staff Training

The Board recognise that SCH staff is its primary and key asset. SCH will operate a system of individual performance assessment reviews with staff, where, not only will past performance be assessed, but future performance targets set, training and development needs agreed and career development planned. It is planned to achieve IIP accreditation during 2004.

SCH management will be required to undertake training in staff appraisal and counselling and it will be a key target that all staff members are appraised at least once per year.

A service contract will be put in place with the training function within the Council, which will provide for basic staff training. The SCH Board recognises that the business will have to operate in a more commercial manner than as a local authority and that staff will have to develop into this new way of working. Management will be tasked to ensure that staff have appropriate training and development to meet the challenges of working commercially.

In seeking IIP accreditation SCH Board recognise the need for robust and staff centred development and training programmes and will ensure that these are developed and implemented.

Support Services

The Council provide a number of services to SCH which are detailed within a Trading Agreement **and associated schedules** are:

- Human Resources
- Occupational Health
- Training and Development

- Central Finance
- Cashiers
- Creditor Income
- Accounts Payable
- Contracts and Accounts
- Payroll and Pensions
- Information and Technology
- Switchboard
- Legal Services
- Design and Build
- Facilities Management
- Insurance
- Grounds Maintenance
- Risk Management
- Internal Audit

The contracts for these support services are renewed on an annual basis (for a total of three years), with 180 day termination **or as detailed within the schedules** on either side. Failure to perform by the supplier any material service to be supplied allows SCH to terminate with 30 days notice.

Each service supplier will report on their performance to SCH on a monthly basis through formal contract monitoring arrangements.

SCH will undertake an annual review of all services provided via service agreements with the Council to ensure that they provide Best Value and the detail of this review is given in the SCH Procurement Strategy. Each of the functions within the Council will also provide details of how they intend to review their own services in an annual service plan provided to SCH.

Trade Union Recognition

SCH will uphold the rights as they apply to Trade Union membership, which transfer with staff under TUPE. SCH will establish an appropriate consultation framework for unions to assure their ability to represent their members.

The Strategic Function

The Council will continue to have a role in consulting with its tenants directly on certain matters, specifically housing strategy, and overarching policy

matters such as on rents and anti-social behaviour. It will be SCH responsibility to work to the direction of the Council in implementation of its strategic plan, for example in increasing tenants' rents.

The Council will carry out its strategic housing function within the organisational restructure being brought about by the New Harrow Project in 2003/04. This is a Council initiative, which started in June 2002 and which involves a major reorganisation of functions, to provide more customer focused services and district based delivery, where appropriate.

The new organisational structure is based on four directorates Urban Living, People First, Business Connections and Organisational Development. The Directorate of Urban Living will include housing strategy, enabling and RSL liaison, housing needs and homelessness strategy, private sector housing and strategy, planning and a number of other environmentally related functions. It will also be responsible for monitoring the performance of SCH.

As the strategic housing role will be carried out within the Urban Living directorate it will enable close working links between housing strategy and enabling and other related activities e.g. planning, economic development and regeneration and environmental strategies.

Within the housing strategy and enabling functions to be retained by the Council it is envisaged that there will be a significant staffing resource. This is in recognition of the fact the Council will maintain responsibility for dealing with private sector housing, allocations, homelessness, enabling and setting housing strategy across all tenures. These are all key issues for Harrow, as set out in its 2002 Housing Strategy. It will also enable adequate resource for setting high level strategy to be implemented by SCH e.g. in relation to rents, anti-social behaviour and for monitoring SCH performance.

SCH will work with the staff remaining with the Council who will be responsible for continuing its strategic oversight of its housing responsibilities.

Finance

Investment Programme

Asset Management Strategy

Considerable progress has been made in developing the Asset Management Strategy and SCH will build on the strategy and technical standards developed by the Council.

Stock Profile

The residential stock comprises 5258 tenanted properties, and a further 1148 leasehold properties **as at XXXXX**. The table below shows the tenanted stock profile against age and bedroom size.

| | No of B/rooms | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------|---------------|------|------|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|------|-------|
| Year Built | 1900 - > | 39 | 45 | 65 | 81 | 84 | 85 | 87 | 88 | 89 | 90 | 91 | 97 | 2000 | Total |
| | 1 | 83 | 496 | 1291 | 48 | 27 | 43 | 22 | 6 | 0 | 50 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2067 |
| | 2 | 271 | 622 | 616 | 0 | 2 | 19 | 0 | 19 | 18 | 0 | 17 | 5 | 0 | 1589 |
| | 3 | 771 | 464 | 239 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 14 | 1 | 8 | 1 | 0 | 1503 |
| | 4 | 25 | 30 | 25 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 90 |
| | 5 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 5 |
| | 6 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| | 7 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total | | 1155 | 1613 | 2173 | 49 | 29 | 62 | 22 | 32 | 36 | 51 | 28 | 7 | 1 | 5258 |

Stock Condition

The general condition of the housing stock is good, having been well maintained with a regular programme of prudent investment.

While the portfolio contains no large system built estates, the Council does own dwellings of a non-traditional construction. However, it is not anticipated that these properties will require excessive investment in future years. The residual stock of BISF houses have been refurbished to deal with the construction issues and the PRC houses are regularly inspected to monitor any deterioration in the main elements. The housing estates with non-traditional flatted accommodation do require a greater investment in environmental works than average due to the 1970's design, for example Grange Farm Close.

The stock data, obtained primarily from the recent stock condition survey (April 2003) is currently held on a stand alone database but will be integrated within the housing management ICT system with links to the existing planned maintenance and responsive repairs modules. SCH will complete the integration of the two systems by XXXXXX.

The software will enable SCH to carry out scenario planning to ensure that it achieves best value in its contract programming and packaging. Other functions such providing information in different formats will support meaningful consultation and planning events with residents and other stakeholders.

Capital Programme

to be amended to agree with the approved council capital programme submitted to cabinet in March 2004.

Supporting text?

| Sources (£ 000s) | 2004/05 | 2005/06 | 2006/07 | 2007/08 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| Major repairs allowance | 3,981 | 3,979 | 4,017 | 4,054 |
| Revenue contribution to capital outlay | 873 | 825 | 1,210 | 677 |
| ALMO payment for decent homes | 1,000 | 3,407 | 3,500 | 3,375 |
| Sub-total – Funding for 5 year programme | 5854 | 8,211 | 8,727 | 8,106 |
| ALMO payment for Grange Farm | 500 | 93 | | |
| Capital receipts to be re-invested specifically at Mill Farm | 1,000 | 0 | 1,000 | 2,406 |
| Disabled adaptations (bid to be made to corporate capital pot) | 400 | 400 | 400 | 400 |
| Total | 7,754 | 8,704 | 10,127 | 10,912 |
| | | | | |

Note:

- The ALMO payment in 2005 – 2005 includes £500,000 to be spent on environmental improvements to Grange Farm available for investment in anything else.
- The capital receipts funding is from the sale of land at Mill Farm Close specifically to fund the redevelopment of that estate and is ring-fenced.
- Disabled adaptations are currently funded from the corporate capital programme, it is assumed that this funding will continue.

Delivering Decent Homes

The standard set for decent homes in Harrow, is split into four sets:

- Inside the home – the design and standard of the inside of each dwelling
- The buildings - the external elements of each house, block of flats or maisonettes
- Communal areas of buildings - where flats or maisonettes share common parts, or services within a building (this will not apply to houses)
- The estate environment - the external areas of estates or neighbourhoods

Each standard has a basic definition and a target deadline by which the whole of the stock should reach that standard. The standards set have the endorsement of HRTRA, which has been consulted during their formulation.

The following four tables detail the key elements of the standard.

| INSIDE THE HOME | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Building Element | Standard | Deadline |
| Kitchens | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less than 15 years old • To have adequate space and layout • New kitchens to modern standards | 2010 |
| Bathrooms | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less than 20 years old • To be appropriately located (e.g. not accessed off a bedroom) • New bathrooms to modern standards, including showers over baths • Adequate WC provision for the size of property | 2010 |
| Mechanical ventilation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To all kitchens and bathrooms, where physically possible • Fans to be humidifiers | On-going |
| Heating and hot water | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full house central heating (including hot water) • All gas boilers to be replaced before they are 12 years old • All electric heating systems to be efficient and fit for purpose | 2008 |
| Electrical fixtures and fittings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wiring and fittings to be less than 25 years old • When rewiring, lighting and socket outlets to reflect current level of use of | 2010 |

| INSIDE THE HOME | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Building Element | Standard | Deadline |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> electrical appliances Mains powered smoke detectors | |
| Internal design and layout | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A good standard of internal design, layout and space standards (This may involve the need to “remodel” some properties e.g., older shared housing) | 2006 |
| THE BUILDINGS | | |
| Building element | Standard | Deadline |
| External walls | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be structurally sound Generally to be in good condition | Constant 2010 |
| Roofs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be structurally sound To be completely secure and weather tight Replacements to be undertaken before serious deterioration Where practical change flat to pitched | Constant |
| Chimneys | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be structurally sound To be in a good finished condition | Constant |
| Windows | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Double glazed UPVC Safe and secure | 2008 |
| External doors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong, secure doors and frames | 2010 |
| Rainwater goods | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watertight Aesthetically acceptable All fittings to be UPVC | 2010 |
| Insulation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum 200mm roof space insulation Cavity wall insulation where applicable Over cladding, or dry lining, where required | 2004 2004 2012 |
| Noise insulation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adequate internal sound insulation between dwellings (to Building Regulations Standards) Adequate sound insulation for external airborne noise | 2010 |
| Asbestos | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To know exactly where it exists To ensure it is safe in situ, or removed | Constant |
| Energy efficiency | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be measured by SAP ratings (Standard Assessment Procedure) Continual improvement to: An average SAP of ???????? No dwellings to fall below a minimum SAP of ???????? | 2010 2006 |
| Services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of individual water main to each property | 2008 |

| COMMUNAL AREAS OF BUILDINGS | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Building Element | Standard | Deadline |
| Communal access arrangements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be well designed and laid out To be safe, secure and well lit To be finished to a high standard To be easily accessible | 2005 |
| Internal common parts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be well designed and laid out To be safe, secure and well lit To be finished to a high standard To be easily accessible | 2005 |
| Lifts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be less than 15 years old, or fully refurbished in last 15 years | 2006 |
| Refuse disposal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be accessible To be well designed To be safe To be finished to a high standard | 2006 |
| Electrics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wirings and fittings to be less than 25 years old Good standard of efficient lighting Emergency lighting, where applicable | 2010 |
| Fire safety | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fire risk assessments by consultants to each block All blocks to have implemented recommendations from specific fire surveys | 2004 2008 |
| Communal TV aerials | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communal digital systems within blocks | 2005 |

| THE ESTATE ENVIRONMENT | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Building Element | Standard | Deadline |
| Roads and footpaths | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be well designed and accessible To be finished to a good standard | 2010 |
| Car parking | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be adequate for the prevailing needs of the community | 2010 |
| Estate lighting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be well designed, to ensure a safe and secure environment | 2006 |
| General security | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locally assessed solutions (e.g. door entry systems, CCTV etc) | To be agreed locally |
| Open space and landscaping | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be well designed and maintained To reflect local needs and aspirations | To be agreed locally |
| Communal facilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To reflect local needs and aspirations | To be agreed locally |
| Play areas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To reflect local needs and aspirations | To be |

| THE ESTATE ENVIRONMENT | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Building Element | Standard | Deadline |
| | | agreed locally |
| Garages | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued provision only where: Demand from local residents is proven Garage areas are well designed and secure | 2004 |
| Development potential | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any potential to be identified Any development proposals to be subject to full consultation | 2004 on-going |

Estate Improvement Programme

During 2003, the Council undertook an Estate Appraisal to assess the environmental needs of the area; local Tenants and Residents Associations were involved in this process. Three individual appraisals stand out; these are:

The current estimate at Grange Farm Close is £1.27 million over a three year period. The properties have in excess of a thirty year life with little additional investment required. It is essential to address the quality of life sustainability issues in the area by investing in the environment and SCH will accord these works high priority in its investment planning.

Environmental investment needs at Pinner Hill are estimated at £0.95 million. The properties are in a good state of repair, and it is the environmental factors which impact on the quality of life for residents. SCH will accord these works high priority in its investment planning.

The investment needs of the Mill Farm Close Estate extend beyond environmental works alone and a more extensive preliminary options appraisal has already been undertaken by the Council with residents on this Estate. SCH will continue with these consultations.

Current proposal for the Mill Farm Close Estate require an investment from the Council of just under £2 million to refurbish the retained blocks, with some loss of rental income. The preferred option does have the potential to produce a net gain of some seventy dwellings which could be used to provide shared ownership accommodation for first time buyers and cross subsidy will fund approximately £4.4 million of the total costs of refurbishment. SCH will work with tenant and leaseholder representatives, and the Council, to develop a project which will deliver decent homes in a sustainable community on this estate.

Across the rest of the Borough the estimated cost of desirable environmental improvements is £4.21 million. These have been incorporated into the Council's Investment Programme over a ten year period from April 2004.

In addition, a number of self-financing environmental improvement projects have been identified. A significant proportion of these improvements relate to car parking and garage areas and the use of communal land and sheds. It is

anticipated that these environmental improvements will lead to a reduction in management and maintenance costs while greatly improving the quality of the external environment. SCH will incorporate these projects within its programme of works.

Health and Safety and the Miscellaneous Programme

Health and safety projects are contained within the overall scope of the investment programme.

Asbestos identification and removal is an ongoing activity and not specifically identified within the investment programme.

Currently the general policy for lift renewals is that lifts which are greater than 15 years old, or which have not been refurbished in the previous 15 years are renewed. However, SCH will review this policy as part of the on going Asset Management Strategy.

Adaptations for disabled tenants are carried out on an “as and when required basis”, they have previously been funded from corporate centre budgets, it has been **assumed** that this arrangement will continue.

Local Labour

The Board of SCH aims to maximise the benefits to the local economy of its investment programme. It will, as far as practicable in a London environment, use local consultants and contractors in the delivery of the investment programme. SCH will:

- Require its construction and building contractors to offer training posts to, particularly, young employees, with a job at the end of the training period
- Set a target for the number of trainees and the value of work to be procured through local suppliers
- Organise opportunities for local suppliers and contractors to bid for sub-contracted work which will be allocated on a competitive basis.

A risk for the Council and SCH is the ability of the construction industry to meet the potential growth in demand in London and the South East, particularly with the number of ALMOs already set up in West London all trying to deliver enhanced investment programmes.

The potential problems around procurement for major works are already an agenda item for existing ALMOs in West London. SCH will pursue the possibility of joint procurement projects with other ALMO and RSL neighbours. It may also be an advantage to look to work with medium sized contractors, which will not be engaged in delivering some of the larger programmes, or new build projects. This is an area of identified risk that SCH will need to manage in order to achieve its objectives.

SCH will ensure that training and local labour schemes are incorporated into procurement requirements.

Delivery Structures

The responsibility for the procurement, delivery and project management of the investment programme lies with the Property Services Manager.

SCH will follow the Egan principles in procurement and seek partner arrangements with consultants, professional advisors and building and construction contractors.

Additional resources have been identified to manage the programme and have been committed during the negotiation of the management fee. The recruitment process is underway to provide SCH with adequate suitable qualified and experienced staff to manage the investment programme. The development needs of existing staff have been identified and are being addressed by focussed training and coaching activities.

SCH will use external consultants to supplement the internal staff team to deliver the programme. The Housing Division of the Council has been developing longer term relationships with external consultants and contractors in recent years, particularly following the growth of the programme as a result of the Major Repairs Allowance. SCH will develop a matrix of consultants covering the required skills set, so that the delivery of the programme can be accelerated.

SCH will have a service contract with the Design and Build Division of the Council and will work with them to identify the projects they will manage and those that be outsourced to architects, surveyors and engineers.

SCH will agree with its consultants and contractors' plans of work for each project and the budget for out-turn cost. Both the physical progress against plan, the expenditure against budget and forecast out-turn cost will be monitored, with monthly reviews of each project.

SCH will develop a range of performance information **in conjunction with the Council** for the delivery of the investment programme which will be the subject to external benchmarking.

Approvals and Scrutiny of the Investment Plan

SCH will present the investment plan to the Council for approval. Any recommendations for amendment to the investment plan will be submitted by SCH Board to the Cabinet or full Council of the London Borough of Harrow for approval, in compliance with the Council's Financial Procedures.

The Council's lead monitoring officer will receive a monthly report on progress on capital works and achieving the decent homes standard. The Council's Corporate Management team will receive a report on the progress of SCH against the Annual Delivery Plan on a **six/three** monthly basis.

SCH and the Council will work together to put in place procedures for interim reports which may be necessary if there is a need to seek approval for urgent amendments to the investment plan.

Performance Management

Approach

The key principles that used in developing the performance monitoring system are that:

- Targets will be outcome and output focussed
- BVPIs and the ALMO suite of indicators generated by Housemark will be included within performance measures
- Appropriate local indicators will be developed
- Targets will be set that improve on historic performance and wherever possible achieve upper quartile performance
- Performance calculation definitions will be made clear and transparent and conform to recommended best practice
- We will use a wide range of customer satisfaction measures
- Reporting will be based on those areas of the service that are critical to the successful performance of the organisation
- Reporting will be exception based and concentrate on areas where performance is not on target

For each service objective a set of headline performance indicators will be developed and the frequency that they will be presented to the client agreed. It is targeted that a significant amount of this information will be generated by computer.

SCH will develop processes and procedures to ensure that the company operates efficiently and effectively. Management reports will be developed to measure the effectiveness of all parts of the company's operation and these will be reviewed by management and made available to Board members.

Performance Monitoring Framework

A performance monitoring system has been developed and agreed with the Council before 1 September 2004.

The table shows the framework of monitoring meetings proposed between SCH and the Council after 1 September 2004. In addition, SCH will develop its own reporting framework for its Board. It will be necessary to determine the reporting framework and frequency to TLCF.

| Monthly |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| SCH Customer Services Manager meets with Council appointed officer to discuss performance report based upon an agreed basket of indicators. |

| |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Monthly |
| SCH Finance Manager or HRA Accountant meets with the Council's Finance Director or nominee. |
| SCH Property Services Manager or Asset Manager meets with the Council's Housing Services Enabling Manager to discuss performance on the Capital Programme. |
| Quarterly |
| SCH Managing Director meets with the Executive Director Urban Living or nominee, to discuss performance against the Delivery Plan and the HRA Business Plan, and future strategic direction. This meeting will consider both strategic and operational issues. |
| 6 monthly or as required |
| The Executive Director Urban Living will report to the Council's CMT on performance of SCH and any associated appropriate matters. |

SCH see this process as being based on a quarterly review of performance, examining how well the ALMO is delivering the targets set out in this Delivery Plan and the subsequent annually revised Delivery Plan. In the event that targets within the plans are not being met, or there are indications that targets will not be met, SCH will present to the review meeting plans for remedial action.

The quarterly review will be provided with a report including:

- What is going well and where Delivery Plan, or Annual Performance Plan, targets are being met
- What is not going well
- What will be done to improve performance in area where things are not going well
- A report on agreed remedial action identified in previous quarterly reviews

The key monitoring forum for ALMO performance will be quarterly by the Executive Director (Urban Living) who will meet with the SCH Managing Director to discuss delivery against the Annual Delivery Plan and the HRA Business Plan. This meeting will look at both strategic and operational issues.

SCH will meet with other Council agencies on a monthly basis, or alternative frequency to be agreed, to ensure that SCH is delivering its agreed contribution to partnering arrangements in the development of sustainable communities.

SCH will prepare such information on its performance as is reasonably requested by the Council and will attend Council or Council Committee meetings if requested.

Each month a performance report will be prepared by the SCH against an agreed list of performance indicators and submitted to an appointed Council officer. The officer and appropriate SCH management will meet to review progress to discuss performance against the annual delivery plan; the focus of this meeting will be operational performance. It is anticipated these meetings will take place each month for the first six months of the ALMOs operation to oversee the establishment and then take place as and when agreed between the Council and SCH.

The progress on capital works and achieving the Decent Homes Standard will be monitored, through returns and meetings between the Council's Housing Services' Enabling Manager and SCH's Property Services Manager.

If the administration of the HRA is delegated to the ALMO a monthly meeting will take place between the ALMO HRA accountant and the Borough Treasurer. Again it is anticipated that this meeting taking place each month.

The Council's Corporate Management Team will receive a report at **six/three** monthly intervals (or more frequently if required) on the progress of SCH against the Annual Delivery Plan. This will be prepared and submitted by the Executive Director of Urban Living based on information supplied by SCH.

The overall aim is for the Council and the ALMO to work in partnership and focus on the important areas of service delivery. The framework has been designed to ensure that SCH has freedom to operate, but that the Council can be informed on the areas of service which represent the maximum risk.

Performance Indicators

The targets and key performance indicators to be met by the service are contained in **Appendix 8**. This suite of indicators is based on those used by the National Federation of ALMOs in Association with HouseMark to compare performance of federations' members. SCH is a member of the Federation.

Official Returns

SCH will work with the Council to prepare and submit official returns to the Audit Commission, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, the Mayor of London and the like and will agree precise responsibilities on a case by case basis.

SCH will provide such information and assistance as is reasonably requested by the Council in support of any consultations or negotiations with statutory or voluntary bodies and shall respond to queries from such bodies in support of the Council.

Audit and Inspection

The Annual Work Programme

This programme identifies some of the key tasks that will be undertaken by either the Council or SCH where the successful completion of said task is dependent upon joint working.

Intervention

Should targets and standards set out in this Delivery Plan fail to be met, the Council will have a graduated method of intervention as detailed in the Management Agreement between the Council and SCH. This allows the Council to receive information and determine actions by SCH Board at a level consistent with the severity of failure to meet targets and standards as set out in paragraph 65 of Management Agreement.

Appendix 1: Annual Work Programme

| Date | Task | Duration | Responsibility |
|---------|------|----------|----------------|
| Sept 04 | | | |
| | | | |
| Oct 04 | | | |
| | | | |
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| Nov 04 | | | |
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| Dec 04 | | | |
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| Jun 05 | | | |
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| Date | Task | Duration | Responsibility |
|---------|------|----------|----------------|
| Jul 05 | | | |
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| Aug 05 | | | |
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| Sept 05 | | | |
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| Oct 05 | | | |
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| Nov 05 | | | |
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| Dec 05 | | | |
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| Jan 06 | | | |
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| Feb 06 | | | |
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| Mar 06 | | | |
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Appendix 2: Service Delegation List

Section 27 Information

Appendix 3: Best Value Performance Improvement Plan

Insert update Performance Improvement Plan

Appendix 4: SCH Structure Charts

Insert structure charts

Appendix 5: SCH Service Standards

This section identifies the services standards that will be adopted by SCH.

Appendix 6: Policy, Procedure and Publication List

The following chart identifies all the documents to be worked to be SCH and identifies their review dates and who has responsibility for completing the review.

| Document | Review Date | Responsibility |
|----------|-------------|----------------|
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Appendix 7: Management Fee and Payment Schedule

| DETAIL | 2004/05 (part year) | 2005/06 Estimate | Comments |
|--------|------------------------|---------------------|----------|
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Appendix 8: Key Performance Indicators

| | 2003/04 | | | Target 2004/05 | Performance 01/09/04 | Target 2005/06 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|--------|------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Current BV66a | Upper Quartile | Harrow | All London | | | |
| Rent collection and arrears: proportion of rent collected | | | | | | |
| Current BV185 | | | | | | |
| Percentage of responsive (but not emergency) repairs during the period for which the authority both made and kept an appointment | | | | | | |
| Old BV 68 | | | | | | |
| Average relet times for dwellings let in the financial year | | | | | | |
| Old BV 72 | | | | | | |
| The percentage of urgent repairs completed within government time limits | | | | | | |
| Old BV 73 | | | | | | |

| | 2003/04 | | | Target 2004/05 | Performance 01/09/04 | Target 2005/06 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|--|--|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| The average time taken to complete non-urgent responsive repairs | | | | | | |
| Current BV 184 | | | | | | |
| The proportion of homes which were non-decent at 1st April 2002 | | | | | | |
| Current BV 184 | | | | | | |
| The percentage change in proportion of non-decent homes between 1/4/02 and 1/4/03 | | | | | | |
| Current BV 164 | | | | | | |
| Does the ALMO follow the CRE's Code of Practice in Rented Housing and follow the Good Practice Standards for social landlords on tackling harassment included in the Code of Practice for Social Landlords | | | | | | |
| Current BV 74 | | | | | | |
| Satisfaction of tenants with the overall service provided by their landlord | | | | | | |

| | 2003/04 | | | Target 2004/05 | Performance 01/09/04 | Target 2005/06 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|--|--|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Current BV 74 | | | | | | |
| Satisfaction of BME tenants with the overall service provided by their landlord | | | | | | |
| Current BV 74 | | | | | | |
| Satisfaction of non-BME tenants with the overall service provided by their landlord | | | | | | |
| Current BV 63 | | | | | | |
| Energy efficiency - the average SAP rating of ALMO dwellings | | | | | | |

Local Indicators?