



Civic Centre,
Crook,
County Durham.
DL15 9ES
Tel: 01388 765555 Fax: 01388 766660
Minicom: 01388 761515 e-mail: m.laing@wearvalley.gov.uk

Michael Laing Chief Executive

29th April 2008

Dear Councillor,

I hereby give you Notice that a Meeting of the **HOUSING SERVICES COMMITTEE** will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC CENTRE, CROOK** on **THURSDAY 8th MAY 2008 at 6.00 P.M.**

AGENDA

Page No.

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Declarations of Interest

Members are invited to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interests in matters appearing on the agenda and the nature of their interest.

Members should use either of the following declarations:

Personal Interest – to be used where a Member will be remaining and participating in the debate and any vote:

I have a personal interest in agenda item (...) regarding the report on (...) because I am (...)

Personal and Prejudicial Interest – to be used where a Member will be withdrawing from the room for that item:

I have a personal and prejudicial interest in agenda item (...) regarding the report on (...) because I am (...)

Officers are also invited to declare any interest in any matters appearing on the agenda.

NOTE: Members are requested to complete the enclosed declarations form and, after declaring interests verbally, to hand the form in to the Committee Administrator.

3. To consider the capital works performance 2007/08 and the proposed 2008/09 programme. 1 - 5

4. To consider spending plans for the annual Homelessness Strategy Implementation Grant received from Communities and Local Government. 6 - 10
5. To consider such other items of business which, by reason of special circumstances so specified, the Chairman of the meeting is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.

Yours faithfully



Chief Executive

Members of this Committee: Councillors Bailey, Mrs Bolam, Mrs Burn, Mrs Carrick, Mrs Douthwaite, Ferguson, Gale, Mrs Hardaker, Henry, Kay, J Shuttleworth, Sinclair, Stonehouse, Ward and Yorke.

To be confirmed at the Annual General Meeting – 7th May 2008

Chair and Deputy Chair of the Council - *ex-officio, non-voting capacity

Chair: To be appointed

Deputy Chair: To be appointed

TO: All other Members of the Council for information
Management Team

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FORM

NAME AND DATE OF COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM NUMBER	NATURE OF INTEREST AND REASONS	PRINT NAME	SIGNATURE



HOUSING SERVICES COMMITTEE

8 MAY 2008

Report of the Strategic Director for the Community
**CAPITAL WORKS PERFORMANCE 2007/08 AND PROPOSED 2008/09
PROGRAMME**

purpose of the report

To update Committee on the delivery of the capital programme 2007/08 in relation to its housing stock and private sector improvements, and to seek approval for the proposed 2008/09 programme.

background

- 1 Members will be aware that the capital budget was set in February 2007 and subsequently revised at a Special Council meeting on 4 September 2007 in order to commit the Council to use all of its resources.
- 2 As part of the Council's 2007/08 budgetary process the Council committed resources towards:-
 - improving the standard of life to some of our most vulnerable and needy customers by enabling specialist adaptations to be made to both private and public sector houses. These adaptations allowed customers to remain in their homes for longer.
 - making progress towards achieving the decent homes standard in the Council owned housing stock by commencing major capital investment programmes
 - improve the number of decent homes in the private sector by making grants available to homes owners toward improving their properties and assist in the Council achieving its decent homes targets

progress in 2007/08 financial year

disabled adaptations to council owned properties

- 3 In an area where a large proportion of customers are elderly, it is essential to ensure that those customers can continue to live in their homes comfortably and with ease.

- 4 To assist our customers a total of £275,000 has been spent in 2007/08 in ensuring disabled adaptations have been completed.
- 5 A total of 66 properties benefitted from major disabled adaptation work, this includes items such as level access showers, stairlifts etc. A further 191 customers have benefited from minor adaptation works such as grabrails and ramps. This type of work has directly benefited our customers and has ensured they can live comfortably within their home.
- 6 A one-off scheme in Bishop Auckland – a major adaptation for the benefit of a disabled young person by providing a wheelchair accessible single bedroom and shower room. The works costing £35,000 are due to be completed shortly.

disabled facilities grants

- 7 Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's) are essential to assist customers within the private sector to be able to remain in their home as their needs change over time. Central Government allocate an amount in the region of £190,000 per annum to assist in these grants. Including this Government allocation the Council spent £330,000. This has delivered in the region of 85 major adaptation projects.

major repair grants

- 8 In 2007/08 the Council has spent £209,000 improving the living standards for our vulnerable customers. A total of 30 grants have been delivered which has resulted in these properties being brought up to the Decent Homes Standard. The demand for major repair grants are increasing and to better project the extent of the problem a private sector house condition survey is underway.
- 9 The delivery of these grants has seen poor living conditions and standards improved, furthermore customers who have been living in extreme fuel poverty and in a home which is thermally inefficient and prejudicial to health, now live in a property which provides them with a good standard of living.

decent homes

- 10 Dale & Valley Homes brought 244 Council owned properties up to the Government's decent homes standard at a total cost of approximately £3.5 million and within these properties the following elements were replaced:-
 - 186 kitchens
 - 201 bathrooms
 - 83 heating installations
 - 4 boiler only installations
 - 59 full rewires
 - 183 partial rewires
 - 83 lofts insulated

- 11 In addition 867 properties received new windows and doors at a total cost of approximately £3.2 million.

proposed 2008/09 programme

decent homes

- 12 The Major Repairs Allowance and additional 'two star' finance for the 2008/09 financial year is in the order of £ 8.9 million to be allocated to Dale & Valley Homes.

- 13 Dale & Valley Homes do not yet have a detailed investment programme for this current financial year however draft proposals are as follows :-

Provisional Window Programme 2008/09

- Remainder of Watergate Estate, Crook May 2008
- Henknowle/St Andrews, Bishop Auckland June/July 2008
- Willington / Sunnybrow August / September 2008
- Completion of Crook October / November 2008
- West Auckland December 2008 / January 2009
- Coundon January 2009 / February 2009

- 14 The Decent Homes Programme 2008/09 will include internal works as deemed necessary.

98 properties at St Helens Auckland between April – June 2008

194 properties at Crook between April - September 2008

129 properties at South Church, Bishop Auckland between July 2008 –March 2009

118 properties at Weardale between September 2008 - March 2009

15 Also included within the decent homes programme is :-

£10,800	asbestos surveys	identifying the presence of asbestos containing materials in Council owned houses
£79,900	estate demolitions	Demolishing unwanted, unpopular housing stock
£108,000	wall structure finish	improving the condition of properties with external render, including repainting and replacement
£200,000	overbath showers Council dwellings	providing showers as part of a decent homes 'plus' standard
£110,000	Council bungalow adaptations	re-modelling existing unpopular one bedroom bungalows into more popular tow/three bed units

16 The actual property addresses and proposed works will be presented to a future Housing Sub Committee for approval.

disabled adaptations to council owned properties

17 Council has agreed to set aside £173,800 of resources towards the continuation of the disabled adaptations programme. As previously stated, these works will improve the quality of life to some of our most vulnerable customers. It is anticipated that the volume of work delivered will be similar to that of 2007/08.

disabled facility grants

18 A total of £234,000 has been allocated for this financial year, directed towards continuing the private sector and adaptation programme. The Home Improvement Agency will continue to deliver this service on the advice of Social Services

major repair grants

19 Council has allocated £250,000 towards improving living standards of vulnerable customers. This will enable the Council to improve the standard of private housing as well as the quality of life of residents.

equalities and diversity

20 This report includes alterations and modifications to meet the needs of disabled residents.

human resources

21 There are no implications from this report

consultation

- 22 Consultation regarding the Dale & Valley Homes' detailed decent homes programme will be undertaken with customers, Dale & Valley Management and the Council.

financial implications

- 23 All 2007/08 schemes as reported fall within the approved capital budget allocation.
- 24 The current year's capital programme has been agreed by Council and the breakdown of costs will be presented to the Housing Sub-Committee when the detailed investment programme is submitted by Dale & Valley Homes.

RECOMMENDED

- 1 Committee note the progress made against the 2007/08 capital programme.
- 2 Committee agrees to the proposed works for the 2008/09 capital programme and requests regular progress reports.

Officer responsible for the report
Michael Laing
Strategic Director for the Community
Ext 368

Author of the report
Chris Cowen
Capital Projects Manager
Ext 333



HOUSING SERVICES COMMITTEE

8 MAY 2008

Report of the Strategic Director for the Community
HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION GRANT – SPENDING PLANS

purpose of the report

To seek approval of spending plans for the annual Homelessness Strategy Implementation Grant received from Communities and Local Government (CLG).

background and policy context

1. Local authorities have had a statutory responsibility to both respond to and prevent homelessness since 1977; however, the Homelessness Act 2002 placed a greater emphasis on the pro-active prevention of homelessness. This statutory responsibility was enshrined in the Council's Homelessness Strategy which aimed to "develop a homelessness prevention culture that delivers a reduction in homelessness and alleviates the harmful effects of homelessness by improving services".
2. Since 2002 a number of publications providing guidance have been issued; however, probably the most significant of these was CLG's *Homelessness Prevention: A Guide to Good Practice* in 2006. This guide provides local authorities with advice regarding a number of measures that have been found to help prevent homelessness, including:
 - the provision of housing advice;
 - rent deposit schemes;
 - family mediation services;
 - domestic violence support;
 - assisting ex-offenders and people released from other institutions, and;
 - the provision of tenancy sustainment services.
3. In support of this policy direction and to help local authorities introduce some of the measures set out above, the government department responsible for homelessness (currently CLG) has provided the Council with a Homelessness

Strategy Implementation Grant since 2003/2004. For 2008/2009 this grant has been increased by £10,000 resulting in a total grant of £40,000.

current situation

4. Details of how the 2007/2008 grant was used are set out in Annex A. It can be seen from this that the Council already provides access to many of the services recommended by CLG.

proposal

5. Details of how the Homelessness Service plans to spend this year's grant, including the additional allocation, are set out in Annex B. If approved these proposals should ensure that access to existing prevention measures is maintained and result in the introduction of the following new measures:
 - rent deposit scheme, which will provide homeless individuals or those at risk of becoming homeless with a means of securing a tenancy with a private landlord (a separate report which details how this scheme will operate will be presented to Committee);
 - a support protocol for care leavers to ensure the specific needs of this group of individuals who are at risk of becoming homeless are addressed in a comprehensive manner, and;
 - a homelessness prevention panel involving staff from the Council and Dale & Valley Homes in order to maximise the number of at risk tenants who are diverted from the homelessness path.
6. In addition to these specific measures, the plans to improve the accommodation at Dellside should help to reduce the number of occasions on which individuals have to be housed in B&Bs, which is a further target of CLG.

financial implication

7. The proposals contained within this report will fully account for the Homelessness Strategy Implementation Grant provided by CLG; however, as this is a ring-fenced grant the possibility of utilising it in other ways is not a consideration. Whilst the majority of this funding will be used up in 08/09 to deliver the schemes described, the funding for the rent deposit scheme will be held in an account and only used if any of the individuals we assist subsequently default on their tenancy. Consequently, it is possible that all or some of this funding may be carried forward to subsequent years.

legal implications

8. The proposals set out in this report will ensure that the Council is further fulfilling its statutory obligation to pro-actively prevent homelessness. In addition, the

development of a rent deposit scheme will place an obligation on the Council to fund any costs up to the value of the agreed deposit should an individual default on their private tenancy. Whilst this is a consideration, the deposit scheme will be run in accordance with the best practice guidance issued by CLG and the maximum potential commitment will not exceed the amount allocated to the scheme.

human resource implications

9. The development, implementation and management of the proposals set out in this report will require the commitment of officer time; however, this work can be accommodated within existing resources.

it implications

10. There are no IT implications in relation to the proposals set out in this report.

equalities and diversity implications

11. Those individuals who come into contact with the Homeless Service are often from some of the most marginalised sections of our community. Consequently, given that the proposals set out in this report aim to improve and develop the Council provision in this area, it is likely that they will help contribute to the Council's equality and diversity agenda.

crime and disorder implications

12. There are no direct crime and disorder implications in relation to the proposals set out in this report; however, where homelessness is not prevented there is likely to be an increased tendency towards crime in order to allow individuals to take care of themselves. Consequently, the proposals set out in this report may help stop a small number of individuals entering the criminal system.

RECOMMENDED

1. That Committee approves the spending plans set out in Annex B.

Officer responsible for the report
Michael Laing
Strategic Director for the Community
Ext. 368

Author of the report
Mark Farren
Community Support Manager
Ext. 345

ANNEX A

2007/2008 SPENDING SUMMARY

	<u>£</u>
Employment of Homelessness Support Officer to provide housing advice	19,100
Contribution to Joint Protocol for 16/17 year olds (scheme run by County Durham Homelessness Action Partnership [HAP])	6,450
Contribution to Homeless Monitoring Officer (county wide role via Centrepoint to produce necessary statistical data to support long term planning)	4,000
Domestic Violence Support Programme (provided via Council's Domestic Violence Co-ordinator)	0
Family mediation service (provided via HAP).	0
	<u>29,550</u>

2008/2009 SPENDING PLANS

	£
<u>Existing Schemes:</u>	
Employment of Homelessness Support Officer to provide housing advice	25,900
Contribution to Joint Protocol for 16/17 year olds (contribution for 08/09 funded from under spend on 07/08 salary budget)	0
Contribution to Homeless Monitoring Officer (county wide role via Centrepoint to produce necessary statistical data to support long term planning)	4,000
Domestic Violence Support Programme (provided via Council's Domestic Violence Co-ordinator)	0
Family mediation service (provided via HAP).	0
<u>New Schemes:</u>	
Rent Guarantee Scheme – District Fund (to be delivered and administered via HAP)	6,000
Development of a Care Leavers & Support Protocol (via HAP)	0
Establishment of a Homeless Prevention Panel in cooperation with D&VHs	0
Upgrades to accommodation at Dellside (£1,500 to be funded from main homelessness budget)	6,500
	<hr/> 39,900 <hr/> <hr/>