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Michael Laing Chief Executive

8th February 2008

Dear Councillor,

I hereby give you Notice that a Meeting of the **HOUSING SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEE** will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC CENTRE, CROOK** on **MONDAY 18th FEBRUARY 2008 at 2:00PM.**

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 report of Dale and Valley Homes – Decent Homes update February 2008. 1 - 9

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Laing". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the letter 'g'.

Chief Executive

Members of this Sub-Committee: Councillors Mrs Burn, Mrs Carrick, Gale, J
Shuttleworth and Ward.

Chair: Councillor Gale

TO: All other Members of the Council for information
Management Team
Director of Development – Dale and Valley Homes
Customer Panel Representative



HOUSING SERVICES SUB COMMITTEE

18 FEBRUARY 2008

Report of the Strategic Director for the Community
DALE & VALLEY HOMES – DECENT HOMES UPDATE

purpose of the report

To provide an update regarding Dale & Valley Homes' progress on the decent homes programme of works.

background

1. Following the initial meeting of the Housing Sub Committee held on 14 January 2008, members requested regular updates on progress.
2. Attached in Annex A are further updates received from Dale & Valley Homes that illustrate:-
 - Progress on current decent homes programme
 - Progress on current door and window replacement programme
 - Proposed initial programme of works during 2008/09
 - Expenditure against proposed programme
 - Information relating to key performance indicators collected to date
 - Update on the procurement of the stock condition survey

RECOMMENDED

1. That consideration be given to the updates attached as Annex A.

Officer responsible for the report
Michael Laing
Strategic Director for the Community
Ext 281

Author of the report
David Milburn
AD Policy and Resources
Ext 379



DALE AND VALLEY HOMES

REPORT TO WEAR VALLEY HOUSING SUB-COMMITTEE

18 FEBRUARY 2008

Report of the Director of Development
DECENT HOMES UPDATE – FEBRUARY 2008

purpose

To provide the Council with a position statement of how the Decent Homes and the Window Contracts are performing against programme budget, and customer satisfaction.

background

1 Members will recall that at the last meeting we agreed to provide performance information at each meeting similar to that being issued to our Board.

2 Decent Homes Contract

In the report dated 27th November 2007 Members were informed that Dunelm had commenced on a controlled delivery programme at St Helens Auckland where 40 properties would be completed by 1st January 2008 in Melrose Drive.

At the 1st January 46 homes had been completed and a review took place of position outcomes and areas identified for improvement during that controlled delivery.

3 Positive Outcomes:

- Good communication between DVH, Dunelm, and Customers
- No incidents on site regarding damage thefts etc
- Customers were offered day facilities whilst the work was being carried out
- Each tenant had a personal visit to explain the detail of the work by staff from either DVH or Dunelm
- Customers designed their own kitchen layouts
- All properties now meet the Decent Homes Standard
- No reportable accidents and a good standard of Health and Safety including a visit by the Councils Health and Safety Manager
- Customers homes that were in poor state had the opportunity to be cleaned out including the disposal of old furniture
- Good opportunity to have a reality check on out tenant profile information

4 Areas identified for Improvement

- Dunelm hitting the ground running due to the time available from appointment to starting on site

- Insufficient time to arrange a community drop in session so that customers could meet Dunelm staff at the commencement of the work
- Information provided to customers was not always given to Ward Councillors to keep them informed on all issues
- Due to the limited Stock Condition information, Dunelm have been asked to undertake additional surveys to ensure we meet the standard.
- More properties required extensive electrical work than anticipated
- We did not take into account the number of homes where showers had been fitted by the Customer
- The amount of Laminate flooring fitted by customers and no policy was in place on responsibility for removal.

5 With regards to the work carried out in each home there is no doubt that we made the right decision to commence at St Helens due to the work needed to bring these up to the standard. However, we must give Dunelm a mention that they delivered 46 completed homes with limited lead in time of 2/3 weeks.

6 With regards to the remainder of the programme, the proposal was to complete 250 by the 31st March 2008 and to deliver this another stream was opened up in Low Mown Meadows Crook, where the main elements to replace were Kitchens and Bathrooms.

7 Following individual house surveys it became apparent that the kitchens on a high number of properties did not meet the spatial standard to meet Decent Homes. To comply with the regulations customers were given the opportunity to decide from a number of options to either remove walls completely or move these into another room so that a modern day kitchen could be fitted.

8 **Programme Acceleration**

To ensure that we met the available spend we met with Dunelm and asked if they could accelerate their programme by an additional 53 properties bringing the total to 303 for the financial year 2007/8.

A meeting was set up with Site Managers and the supply chain where a programme was agreed to ensure that these properties would be completed. Primarily, this would complete all the properties on the West side of Woodhouse Lane and all homes in Low Mown Meadows with the exception of West End Villa's and Millfield Grove.

9 Therefore we are completing an additional 11 properties on St Helens and an additional 42 properties on Low Mown Meadows as part of the 2007/8 programme.

Attached in appendix 1 is the programme for St Helens excluding the properties in the controlled delivery. (Those to be delivered from January 2008)

Attached in appendix 2 and 3 is the programme for Low Mown Meadows (Those to be delivered from January 2008)

10 **2008/09 Programme**

The remainder of St Helens will be completed from April to the end of May 2008, and the properties in West End Villa's and Millfield Grove will be completed by June 2008.

Both these will form part of the 2008/09 programme that will be proposed at our next Board meeting along with the other estates to comply with the proposal for at least one stream to be running in Crook, Bishop Auckland, and the Dales. Members will receive this for consideration at the full Council Meeting dated 26 March 2008.

- 11 Officers are currently considering a number of estates for inclusion into the next years programme and to ensure that we upgrade the worst first in sustainable areas we are working through the sustainability model and the rationale on the following estates that are coming out with low decency levels:

- Watergate Estate in Crook
- Remainder of North End Gardens
- Wolsingham

12 **Tenant Satisfaction**

Customer satisfactions levels are currently running at 87.3% against a target of 90% however we do envisage this will improve as Dunelm and ourselves improve on communication and zero defects at handover.

This information is sent out and collated by in house staff using Vision Management System a recognised software that tracks tenant satisfaction and uses the information to benchmark against other organisations in Housemark.

13 **Door and Window Contract**

As Members will be aware, this contract is being delivered by Windowman UK Ltd and they have been given a programme to complete approx 40 properties per week.

The next estates to be completed upto 31st March 2008 are:

- Completion of Woodhouse Close
- Completion of St Helens Auckland
- The remainder of the Dales

- 14 Complaints from customers have increased on this contract primarily due to Windowman not returning to items as follows:

- Cracked windows when fitted
- Lack of information when window fitter is to call.
- Plaster work not completed
- Lack of site management
- Lack of customer liaison through the RLO (Resident Liaison Officer)
- Draughty windows leaking through the seals

- 15 Officers are having meetings weekly with Windowman to address these issues and the Managing Director is attending these meetings to ensure the quality and performance is improved to the standard we accepted on the 100 property pilot.

At the last meeting they confirmed that they have now employed a new Contracts Manager who will be on site daily to supervise the fitters, and a new RLO to work with our customers.

Officers will report to the next meeting if these new posts improve the quality and communication issues.

16 **Tenant Satisfaction**

Taking into consideration the slippage in performance Customer Satisfaction ratings are reflecting this at 60.8% against a target of 87.5%.

17 **Stock Condition Survey Update**

The procurement of 3200 unit stock condition survey has been advertised through the European Journal, the Pre qualification questionnaire stage has been completed, detailed tender documents issued and returned. Submissions were returned 31 January 2008 are being evaluated 8 February 2008, with interviews and final evaluation taking place 13 February 2008.

- 18 The contract will be between Wear Valley District Council and the preferred contractor and as such is subject to full council approval 26 March 2008. Surveys will be undertaken from April 2008 with monthly update reports. Once the survey is complete in July and the returns assessed inline with our sustainability index Dale and Valley Homes will, with the agreement of the Council announce the full four year programme. As outlined in reports to December Housing Sub Committee this will be reviewed every six months with the Council.

19 **Projected Financial Outturn 2007/8**

The original financial outturn for Dale and Valley Homes, agreed with the Council was £6,202,138.00 which represented 88% of available expenditure. This position has now been revised to take account of:

- Increase in number of properties made decent over original target from 250 to 303.
- Costs associated with undertaking "worst first" in the early part of the 5 year programme. The works at St Helens are comprehensive for the majority of stock. The requirement at Low Mown Meadows to undertake internal structural works has increased unit costs.

- 20 Anticipated expenditure on Decent Home internal works was £1.3M, this has now been revised to £3.2M. In order to meet these demands Dale and Valley Homes has revised the Door and Window Programme expenditure profile accordingly and moved delivery of up to 300 units into the programme for 2008/9. Overall expenditure across the programme is anticipated as follows:

- Decent Homes internals £3,280,000.00
- Windows and Doors £3,265,000.00
- Other works (structural works etc) £ 414,000.00

Total £6,959,000