

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

HOUSING REPAIRS TASK AND FINISH GROUP

REVIEW SCOPE

1 PURPOSE/OBJECTIVES OF THE REVIEW

To review how well the Council is achieving on housing repairs and maintenance.

To investigate the condition of voids and the process of re-letting void properties.

To investigate communications on housing repair issues both with tenants and Council departments.

2 POTENTIAL OUTCOMES

To identify strategies to improve housing repairs. Key objectives for investigating this area: -

- Best Value Performance Indicators: -
 - B184a – The proportion of local authority homes which were non-decent at 1 April
 - BV184b – The percentage change in proportion of non-decent local authority homes between 31 March and 1 April
 - BV74a – Satisfaction of tenants of council housing with the overall service provided by their landlord
 - BV74b – Satisfaction of tenants of council housing with the overall service provided by their landlord with results further broken down by ethnic tenants
 - BV74c – Satisfaction of tenants of council housing with the overall service provided by their landlord with results further broken down by ethnic tenants
 - BV75a – Satisfaction of tenants in council housing with opportunities for participation in management and decision making in relation to housing services by their landlord
 - HLP19 – Night time repairs to housing completed on target
- Council's Recovery Plan March 2006 – September 2006
 - Action 19: Put in place key strategies to shape the way services are delivered
 - Action 20: Housing Action
 - Action 21 Housing Management

To inform the lettable standard for Council properties.

3 INFORMATION REQUIRED

- Complete voids process from when the property becomes empty to when it is re-let
- Voids information such as: -
 - What creates a void
 - How voids could be advertised
 - Length of time voids remain empty
- Best practice external to Northampton; e.g. Visits to other Local Authorities
- Current Housing Strategy and how the review can influence the next version
- Decent Homes Programme
- 5-Year's Capital Programme
- Communication methods with tenants and Council departments

4 FORMAT OF INFORMATION

- Baseline Data
- Details of budget allocation
- Officer reports/presentations
- Evidence from the Portfolio Holder
- Public meeting with tenants
- Written evidence from tenants
- Site visits to a selection of void properties
- Site visit to a best practice Council
- Evidence from an expert – fellow researcher (UCN)
- Evidence from the Healthier Communities Collaborative
- Involve the media

5 METHODS USED

- Minutes of the meetings
- Site visits to a selection of void properties
- Site visit to best practice Council
- Views of tenants
- Desktop research/ web based
- External organisation to be asked to carry out an independent assessment on a Council property such as elderly persons' accommodation

6 CO-OPTION TO THE TASK AND FINISH GROUP

- Mrs Ann Timson NTACT
- Mr Norman Adams NTACT

7 EVIDENCE GATHERING TIMETABLE

July to November 2006

26 July	Scope the review
August – October	Site visits to voids and best practice Council
30 August	Evidence gathering
20 September	Evidence gathering
18 October and evening	Evidence gathering – Public meetings – late afternoon
15 November	Evidence gathering
13 December	Finalise Chair's report

8 RESPONSIBLE OFFICERS

Lead Officer	Carl Grimmer
Co-Ordinator	Tracy Tiff

9 RESOURCES AND BUDGET

R Fitzhenry, Property Maintenance Manager, and B Turrell, Voids Officer, to provide support and advice.

Available budget for evidence gathering.

10 FINAL REPORT

Completed by 13 December. Presented by the Chair of the Task and Finish Group to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and then to Cabinet.

11 MONITORING PROCESS

Review the impact of the report after six months (June/July 2007)