

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Housing Futures Working Group
AUTHOR/S: Property Services Manager

24 October 2007

STOCK CONDITION SURVEY

Purpose

1. To advise on the method and findings of the Stock Condition Survey carried out by independent surveyors' Savills commercial Ltd. in the autumn of 2006.

Executive Summary

2. A stock condition survey was carried on 24.5% of the Council's housing stock in the autumn of 2006 to assess the condition and future maintenance liabilities. The survey's findings suggest the stock is generally in reasonable condition but a lack of capital investment has meant the properties could not be maintained to a recommended condition. Approximately 24% of the stock is currently 'non-decent' and the survey has identified all of the works required to meet the Government's decent homes target, this is achievable on current financial forecasts.
3. The report provides a total forecast expenditure to improve and maintain the stock and related assets over 30-years, which equals £323.3m. This total expenditure over the 30 year-horizon falls within expected benchmarks of a stock of this type and location. These results have formed the basis of the financial analysis and modelling conducted by Tribal Consultancy.

Considerations

4. The maintenance information held on the Council's housing stock had not been refreshed since a stock condition survey carried out in 2002. In order to have up-to-date information on the condition and future maintenance liability of its housing stock the Council duly prepared and commissioned a stock condition survey employing Ridge Consultancy (who are recognised experts in the social housing asset management field) to provide expert advice and support.
5. In September 2006 Savills (a leading surveying practice), was awarded the contract, and the survey was duly carried out between October and November 2006.

Solicitors - Trowers and Hamlins drew up the formal agreement signed under seal by Savills to warrant the works to the client.

6. The survey was commissioned with a view to assessing the Council's current and future housing repairs and maintenance liability. Savills surveyed a representative sample of 24% of the Council's housing stock based on the different property types and locations to ensure statistical accuracy, and the results extrapolated across the entire housing stock.
7. The survey identified that the stock is generally in a reasonable condition with evidence of whole house modernisation programmes being carried out in the past, along with an almost completed window replacement programme. However, the stock has not received the level of major capital investment necessary to maintain all the homes to a recommended condition. As a result, there are a significant number of major components that have reached/are reaching the end of their useful life and which will require renewal in the short term.
8. Approximately 24% of the stock is currently non-decent, this compares favourable with the national average of circa 43%. The survey has identified all of the works required for the decent homes obligation to be met in full by the Government's target of 31 December 2010.
9. The report provides a total forecast expenditure to improve and maintain the stock and related assets over 30-years, which equals £323.3m. This equates to £56,963 per dwelling or £1,899 per dwelling per annum. This total expenditure over the 30-year horizon falls within expected benchmarks of a stock of this type and location.
10. The results of the stock condition survey have formed the basis of the financial analysis and modelling conducted by Tribal Consultancy.
11. The full Stock Condition Survey Report and appendices is available on the Council's Website.

Consultations

12. At the beginning of the survey all tenants received written notification that a survey had been commissioned and that a surveyor may make contact to arrange an

inspection of their home. During the survey Savills employed a team of independent surveyors to visit 24.5% of the housing stock and conduct both external and internal surveys.

Effect on Project Objectives

13. Investment needs of the housing and the resources available to meet those needs	The stock condition survey provided the information for Tribal's financial modelling and an assessment of the council future maintenance liabilities.
The viability of the Housing Revenue Account	An assessment of revenue maintenance expenditure is contained within the report, and used to inform the financial modelling process.
Tenants' views on the current housing service and their priorities	The survey provides a factual snapshot of the condition of the housing stock – however, tenants' views were received on the aspirational standard.
Sustainable Community Strategy (and LAA) implications	Understanding the maintenance needs of the Council's housing stock to ensure appropriate improvement programmes are developed for quality affordable housing is a key driver for sustainable communities.
Staff are well informed and involved in the Housing Futures process	The results of the stock condition survey will be shared with staff – and will inform the Housing Futures process.
A sound and robust evaluation based on the above objectives, and relevant government guidance	The stock condition survey was commissioned and delivered in line with CLG guidance. The findings formed the basis of Tribal's financial modelling and forecasts.

Actions Required

14. To note the findings of the report.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

The Stock Condition Survey Report January 2007 prepared by Savills

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