

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Housing Portfolio Holder

March 2009

AUTHOR/S: Corporate Manager Affordable Homes

AFFORDABLE HOMES: SERVICE PLAN

Purpose

1. To provide an overview for updated service plan for 2009/10 – 2011/12.

This is a not a key decision.

Background

2. All service areas within SCDC have to provide a service improvement plan setting out how the service will be developed over the following three years. This document includes the HRA parts of housing but also gives wider coverage to those part of the housing service that are funded mainly by the general Fund e.g. homelessness. This report will be presented to the March Portfolio Holder meeting.
3. This Service Plan should be read in conjunction with the HRA Business Plan and the Fiver Year Housing Maintenance Plan which were considered by the Portfolio Holder at the meeting in February 2009.

Considerations

4. This document is refreshed on an annual basis. Consideration will be given next year to combining the Service Plan and Business Plan elements as they share much of the same content and need to be read in conjunction with each other. The Five Year Housing Maintenance Plan is already an appendix of the HRA Business Plan.
5. The presumption for the document is that the housing stock will remain in the ownership of the Council. Reference has been made however to the Housing Futures project which may result in the transfer of the Council's housing to South Cambridgeshire Village Homes if tenants vote in favor of transfer during 2009.
6. The Service Plan contains an action plan that includes both activities that will need to occur whatever the outcome of the tenant ballot as well as some actions that will only be applicable if the tenants vote to retain Council ownership of their homes. There are no actions listed associated with a vote in favour of stock transfer to South Cambridgeshire Village Homes as these would form a separate action plan.
7. The results of the recent Statutory Tenants Survey (STATUS) shows that overall levels of satisfaction with the housing service amongst tenants remains high.
8. The STATUS survey also confirms that there are high levels of disability amongst the tenant population with 50% of households having at least one person with a long-term disability and 10% of households having a wheelchair user.

9. The resources to run the housing service are considerably reduced from 2009/10 as the first reduction in the capital programme is implemented with further cuts showing from 2010/11. Overall more than £3 million has been cut from the budget.
10. The revenue budget is also shown to be running at a deficit for the next four years running down the reserves until 2013/14 when the only way to balance the books will be to make significant savings of more than £500,000.
11. The service plan takes account of the challenges posed by the continuing economic downturn in the country as a whole.

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| 12. Legal | None |
| Staffing | None |
| Risk Management | A housing risk matrix is included within the Service Plan |
| Equal Opportunities | The need to address issues relating to equal opportunities and diversity are addressed within the Service Plan. |

Consultations

13. The Service Plan reflects a range of tenant and staff input. The Housing Maintenance plan is drawn up with substantial input from a panel that includes tenants and elected members.

Effect on Service Priorities and Corporate Objectives for 2008/09

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| 14. | Work in partnership to manage growth to benefit everyone in South Cambridgeshire now and in the future |
| | Partnership working is central to housing work. |
| | Deliver high quality services that represent best value and are accessible to all our community |
| | A high level of service has been delivered to date and the Housing Service will strive to achieve the best outcomes it can for tenants within the resources available. |
| | Enhance quality of life and build a sustainable South Cambridgeshire where everyone is proud to live and work |
| | The quality of SCDC homes and the services offered by Housing play a role in the quality of life for all residents in the South Cambridgeshire villages. |

Recommendations

That the Housing Portfolio Holder approves the Affordable Homes Service Plan.

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

Draft STATUS Survey 2008, MRUK

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