

Housing and Community Services Committee

Thursday 5 November 2009 7.30pm

**Council Chamber
Runnymede Civic Centre, Addlestone**

Members of the Committee

Councillors P J Waddell (Chairman), Mrs R M Denby and J M Edwards (Vice-Chairmen);
J R Ashmore, C J Chapman, R J Edis, P A Francis, R N Jones, L C Pouyanne and
A S T Ridge-Newman

AGENDA

Notes:

- i) Any report on the Agenda involving confidential information (as defined by section 100A(3) of the Local Government Act 1972) must be discussed in private. Any report involving exempt information (as defined by section 100I of the Local Government Act 1972), whether it appears in Part 1 or Part 2 below, may be discussed in private but only if the Committee so resolves.
- ii) The relevant 'background papers' are listed after each report in Part 1. Enquiries about any of the Agenda reports and background papers should be directed in the first instance to **Mr M L White, Department of Administration and Leisure Department, Runnymede Civic Centre, Station Road, Addlestone (Tel: Direct Line: 01932 425623). (Email: malcolm.white@runnymede.gov.uk)**.
- iii) Agendas and Minutes are available on a subscription basis. For details, please ring Mr B A Fleckney on 01932 425620. Agendas and Minutes for all the Council's Committees may also be viewed on www.runnymede.gov.uk.
- iv) In the unlikely event of an alarm sounding, members of the public should leave the building immediately, either using the staircase leading from the public gallery or following other instructions as appropriate.

LIST OF MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

PART I

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(No reports to be considered under this heading)

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

TERM	EXPLANATION
ACC	Surrey Adults and Community Care Services formerly known as Social Services.
ALMO	Arms Length Management Organisation. This is an organisation established specifically to manage Council stock. The properties remain Council owned and tenants retain their secure tenancies. This can provide opportunities for extra funds to meet the Decent Homes Standard if all government requirements are satisfied.
BHM	Balancing Housing Markets. This assessment looks at the whole housing market, considering the extent to which supply and demand are “balanced” across tenure and property size.
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic Groups. This is a collective name used by various bodies.
BNAM	‘Basic Needs Assessment Model’. This is the main method for calculating affordable housing requirements suggested in Government guidance – <i>“Local Housing Needs Assessment: A guide to Good Practice”</i> .
CAA	Comprehensive Area Assessment. A way of assessing local public services in England. It examines how well councils are working together with other public bodies to meet the needs of the people they serve. CAA is a joint assessment made by a group of six independent watchdogs including the Audit Commission. The first results are due out in December 2009.
CLG	Communities and Local Government. Government department responsible for local government and housing functions. See the CLG website at www.communities.gov.uk .
COMPACT	This is a requirement of Central Government. It entails developing an agreement between the Council and tenants or voluntary organisations about the way in which they will be consulted on the services they receive or deliver.
DFG	Disabled Facilities Grant. This is a grant made available to disabled persons to provide adaptations to their property. Dependent on the type of work, it is a mandatory grant. The amount of grant awarded is subject to a test of resources of the disabled person.
DHCS	Director of Housing and Community Services.
DWP	Department of Work and Pensions (Government Department)
ESP	Existing Satisfactory Property. This scheme involved working with a Housing Association to purchase low cost housing in the private sector. Originally the scheme involved the repurchase of ex-Right to Buy Council properties. However, the scheme was broadened to include any low cost housing in the Borough.
GOSE	The Government Office for the South East. This is the local office of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (formerly the Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions) for the South East region of England. Its role includes development of the Regional Housing Strategy.
HMO	House in Multiple Occupation. In general terms this is a property that is let to three or more tenants. However, for an exact definition reference must be made to the Housing Act 2004.

HOMES AND COMMUNITIES AGENCY (HCA)	This is the National Housing Agency for England. It is a Government Agency and has replaced the Housing Corporation.
HRA	Housing Revenue Account. This is a statutory account that sets out the expenditure and income arising from the provision of social housing by the Local Authority as a landlord. Expenditure in the HRA includes repairs and improvements, and management expenses. Income is mainly from rents. HRA subsidy is a significant item in the HRA.
LDF	Local Development Framework. Government replacement for the Local Plan.
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership – Leads on the Community Strategy.
NROSH	The National Register of Social Housing (NROSH) is a system for collecting social housing data on individual properties directly from local authorities and housing associations.
PFI	Private Finance Initiative. A long-term contractual private/public partnership under which the private sector takes on the risks associated with the delivery of public services in exchange for payments tied to agreed standards of performance. This can provide an opportunity to raise extra funds for investment in housing stock. Several Councils are currently acting as pathfinders.
PPG3	Planning Policy Guidance. This is Guidance issued by the Secretary of State detailing National Planning Policy within existing legislation. There are many examples of Guidance and PPG3 is the one that is the most relevant to housing. This sets out the requirements relating to the provision of affordable housing.
RARP	Runnymede Accommodation Referral Panel. This group has been established to assess the accommodation requirements of people with mental health, learning disability and physical disabilities. The group considers each individual case and makes a recommendation as to the level of support required. Representatives on the group include the following: Officer from the Borough Council's Housing Department. Officer from the Community Support Team (Social Services). Officer from the Community Mental Health Team (Social Services/Health). Occupational Therapist.
RCRA	Runnymede Council Residents Association, formerly the Tenants' and Leaseholders Services Group. This group was formed in February 1999. The members of the group are Council Tenants and Leaseholders. They meet prior to each Housing and Community Services meeting to consider policy and management issues that impact on Tenants and Leaseholders.
RHB	Regional Housing Board. The RHB has been established by the Government to prepare and oversee the Regional Housing Strategy. The Strategy for the region will set out the approach to housing investment and give a clear framework for spending decisions. One RHB exists for the whole of the South East of England.
RSL	Registered Social Landlord. This is a Housing Association which is entitled to bid for Social Housing Grant. The RSL is established for the purpose of the provision, construction, improvement or management of social housing and is a not for profit organisation.
RTB	Right to Buy. The regulations that allow Council tenants to purchase the freehold or leasehold of their home.

SAP	Standard Assessment Procedure. This is the Government's procedure for assessing the energy efficiency of a property.
SHG	Social Housing Grant. This is the main public subsidy paid to Registered Social Landlords by Central Government, through the Homes and Communities Agency to finance new homes. It can be used to pay for rented schemes as well as low cost home ownership schemes.
SMART	How targets should be set if they are to be effective – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely.
SNHSG	The Special Needs Housing Strategy Group was established to look at the level of housing needed by people with special needs. This includes those with mental health problems, learning disabilities, physical disabilities, young people leaving care, victims of domestic violence, those with drug and alcohol problems, and older people. The group has representatives from a number of different agencies. The Chairman from each of the Local Special Needs Forums is also represented on the Special Needs Housing Strategy Group.
TPAS	Tenant Participation Advisory Service. The independent tenant advisers. Their role is to help tenants understand the complexities of the stock options and to audit the Council's statements and figures.

1. FIRE PRECAUTIONS

The Chairman will read the Fire Precautions which set out the procedures to be followed in the event of fire or other emergency.

2. NOTIFICATION OF CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

3. MINUTES

To confirm and sign, as a correct record, the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 9 September 2009. These Minutes were included in the October 2009 Summons/Minutes Book.

4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

If Members have an interest in an item please record the interest on the form circulated with this Agenda and hand it to the Legal Representative or Committee Administrator at the start of the meeting. A supply of the form will also be available from the Committee Administrator at meetings. Members who have previously declared interests which are recorded in the Minutes to be considered at this meeting need not repeat the declaration when attending the meeting. Members need take no further action unless the item in which they have an interest becomes the subject of debate, in which event the Member must leave the room if the interest is personal and prejudicial.

6. CHOICE BASED LETTINGS (DHCS)

1. **Purpose of Report**

1.1 **The purpose of the report is to advise the Committee of the commencement of the Choice Based Lettings Scheme.**

2. Background Information

2.1 It has been a Government aspiration, for a number of years, that allocation schemes offer those seeking social housing greater choice in where they live, and, that schemes be transparent and easy to understand. Choice Based Lettings (CBL) Schemes were

seen as a means of meeting this aspiration, and, consequently Local Authorities were required to introduce some form of CBL by 2010.

- 2.2 Local authorities were also encouraged to help applicants to move more readily between areas, perhaps for employment reasons or to provide or receive support from relatives. The creation of a sub-regional allocations scheme was seen as a way of facilitating movement between areas, and so as to meet these various aims the Council joined forces with Elmbridge and Spelthorne Councils to create the SEARCH Moves Partnership.
- 2.3 In addition to Elmbridge and Spelthorne Councils, the Partnership was expanded to enable the Elmbridge Housing Trust and A2Dominion Housing Association to join.
- 2.4 Whilst a number of CBL schemes have been established nationally, several of them creating sub-regional partnerships similar to SEARCH Moves, what makes SEARCH Moves different is the adoption of a common allocations policy by all five partners to the scheme. This means that any applicant for housing living in the sub-region will be assessed in exactly the same way, irrespective of which landlord he/she approaches. This was critical to the operation of the scheme, as 30% of vacancies will be made available to applicants throughout the sub-region, and so it was important that applicants in Elmbridge were assessed in the same way as those in Spelthorne or Runnymede to ensure fairness to all.
- 2.5 To further assist mobility within the sub-region it is proposed that the percentage of vacancies offered "cross boundary", i.e. not restricted to applicants or tenants with a local connection to our particular borough, be increased to 60%. Eventually, it is proposed that this percentage be increased further, although there is yet no date for when such increases will take place.
- 2.6 Mechanisms are in place to ensure that if one Borough within the Partnership becomes a "net importer", i.e. finds that more applicants from the other two Boroughs succeed in securing the vacancies offered cross-boundary than residents move out, adjustments will be made to redress the balance. Lettings for newly built properties will not be included in the cross-boundary arrangements.

3. Report

- 3.1 The SEARCH Moves Scheme became operational at the beginning of November 2009, a year ahead of the Government's deadline.
- 3.2 The principle behind CBL is that instead of Council Officers allocating empty homes to suitable applicants from the Housing Register, vacancies are advertised in a similar way to that used by estate agents. Details of vacancies will be displayed on boards in the Civic Offices, on the website, and, will also be contained in printed material which will be made available at a number of sites, including local libraries.
- 3.3 Empty properties will be subject to a 'bidding' cycle of a fortnight, during which time applicants will be given an opportunity to make it known they would like to be considered for one of the vacancies. At the end of each fortnight, Officers will be advised of all those who have expressed an interest, and the applicant in the highest band and who has waited the longest will be offered the property.
- 3.4 The system will provide applicants details of how all properties are allocated. Whilst it will not disclose personal information, it will advise of the band the successful applicant was in, and how long she/he had been waiting. This transparency will, it is hoped, reassure applicants that the scheme is fair and that properties are allocated in accordance with the published policy. It is also hoped that the scheme will reveal just how few properties become available each cycle and will encourage applicants to be more realistic in respect of their rehousing.
- 3.5 Feedback following the introduction of CBL schemes in other parts of the country suggests that they are well received, and are preferred by applicants to more traditional methods of allocation. The one concern that is often raised is that CBL schemes require a degree of ability on the part of the applicant, and that should an applicant be unable to

navigate the CBL system, either through disability, lack of access to the internet, language barriers or any other reason, then they would be disadvantaged.

- 3.6 The SEARCH Moves Partnership recognised from an early stage that procedures would need to be put in place to overcome any possible barriers to the CBL scheme, particularly for vulnerable groups. An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken, a copy of which is attached at Appendix 'A'. From the Assessment it can be seen that the Partnership took on board lessons learnt from those authorities who implemented CBL earlier, together with the experiences of the CBL provider, Locata, who support CBL schemes nationally.

4. Financial Considerations

- 4.1 The implementation of CBL has come at a cost. The appointment of a CBL provider, Locata, to set up and operate the scheme is an expense the traditional allocation scheme did not have, and, although much of the cost of implementation has been met by a £100,000 CLG grant, it is necessary for the five SEARCH Move partners to contribute £10,000 each year to the operational costs of the scheme. Provision is made for this in existing budgets.

5. Legal Considerations

- 5.1 Part VI of the Housing Act 1996 establishes the legal framework for the allocation of council housing. It requires local authorities to give 'reasonable preference' to those in greatest housing need. Section 169 of the Act also requires local authorities to 'have regard to guidance as may from time to time be given by the Secretary of State', the most recent of which being issued in July 2009.
- 5.2 The SEARCH Moves Partnership took independent legal advice in respect of its common allocations scheme and policy and is satisfied that the scheme does meet the requirements of both statute and guidance. It is important that the scheme is kept under constant review, and arrangements are in place to ensure that the policy is reviewed on a regular basis.

6. Equalities

- 6.1 As indicated above, it is recognised that the move to CBL may impact adversely on certain vulnerable groups. Steps have therefore been put in place to anticipate and overcome potential difficulties as illustrated in the Equality Impact Assessment (Appendix 'A'). Monitoring of the scheme is also designed to identify well placed applicants who do not bid for suitable properties so that Officers can follow up such cases. In doing so, Officers can establish if there is a reason why the applicant has not bid, and if necessary put in place procedures to prevent any individual from missing out on an opportunity to secure suitable accommodation.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 Implementation of a sub-regional CBL scheme has been a complex and difficult task requiring changes to a wide range of existing procedures and policies. However, it will provide improvements for applicants and greater transparency with regard to the allocation of social housing.

(FOR INFORMATION)

Background Papers

Search Moves Partnership Agreement

Search Moves Customer Allocation Policy

7. AFFORDABLE HOUSING TARGET (DHCS)

1. **Purpose of Report**

1.1 **The purpose of the report is to advise the Committee of the progress that has been made towards meeting the Affordable Housing target.**

1.2 **To seek authority from the Committee to progress a new Homebuy initiative with Catalyst Housing Group.**

2. **Background Information**

2.1 In December 2006, the Council adopted a new Housing Strategy which had the delivery of 500 Affordable Housing units over a period of 5 years (from December 2006 to December 2011) as one of its main targets.

3. **Report**

3.1 As at the 13 October 2009, the total number of units delivered against the above target amounted to 191. The detail of the units provided is set out in Appendix 'B'.

3.2 There are also currently 121 units under construction, the majority of which will be completed within the next 12 months. Details of these are also set out in Appendix 'B'.

3.3 It is now almost 3 years since the original target was set and, using an average of 100 units a year, 300 units should have been provided to date. This is not currently the case and, although it is anticipated that 300 units will be provided by March 2010 there are few schemes emerging after that. Exempt Appendix 'A' sets out other possible schemes that have the potential to provide 299 units over the next 2 years, however, the achievement of these is not guaranteed.

3.4 Officers are continuing to meet with Registered Social Landlords and landowners to press for the schemes in Exempt Appendix 'A' to be completed, but, as the sites are often in private ownership it is difficult to guarantee results. It is therefore necessary to look for other opportunities to try and provide more affordable units and address the potential shortfall in the target.

4. **Proposed New Homebuy Scheme**

4.1 At the June meeting of this Committee, Members were informed that a new Zone Agent had been appointed in Surrey to market the low cost home ownership products that exist within the area. Catalyst Housing Group are the new Zone Agents for the area. A copy of their web page is set out in Appendix 'C' and sets out details of the organisation.

4.2 Catalyst have recently organised an event to publicise the availability of low-cost home ownership schemes. The event was held in the Runnymede offices on Saturday 10 October and attracted 120 households. Each of these have shown an interest in pursuing home ownership opportunities in and around Runnymede.

4.3 There will be low-cost home ownership opportunities on the Franklands Drive estate when it is completed and there are currently some limited opportunities within the schemes at both Roakes Avenue and Pretoria Road, Chertsey. However, these will not be adequate to meet the demands of all those that have shown an interest and it is clear that there is a need to consider other schemes.

4.4 In the past, the Council has funded Thames Valley Housing Association to provide a shared ownership/Homebuy scheme for Runnymede residents. This scheme worked well and over the period of 5 years from 2001 – 2006 it enabled 320 households to be assisted. However, the scheme was withdrawn when house prices increased significantly and the Government introduced their own Open Market Homebuy scheme. Unfortunately the Government's scheme has recently been withdrawn. However, the reduction in house prices now means that Homebuy and shared ownership schemes have become more affordable.

- 4.5 Catalyst Housing Group have said that they would be prepared to match-fund a low cost home ownership scheme to provide Open Market Homebuy in Runnymede. They are proposing that if the Council were to commit £500,000 they would also do so. The amount of properties this would secure would depend on the size of the Homebuy loan made to households but, working on a £50,000 loan, it would be possible to help 20 cases. It would also mean that there would be 20 additional units added to the Council's Affordable Housing target performance.
- 4.6 Catalyst Housing Group are also saying that they will return any grant paid to the Council in the event that properties are subsequently purchased or tenants staircase to full ownership.
- 4.7 There is still a great deal of detail to be agreed for any proposed scheme. However, Officers feel that this is a good opportunity to increase affordable housing supply in the Borough. It also has the potential to improve the local economy by maintaining movement within the housing market.
5. Financial Issues
- 5.1 The Housing Capital Programme was set out in detail at the meeting in January 2009 and included information on the funds available for Affordable Housing.
- 5.2 There is an uncommitted provision of £2.637 million in the programme for new housing schemes. These funds represent sums that the Council has chosen not to pass to the Government under the housing capital receipt pooling rules. It is therefore proposed that a capital estimate of £500,000 be created from this provision to enable a new Open Market Homebuy scheme to be formulated with Catalyst Housing Group.
- 5.3 It should be noted that there are other improvement proposals to the housing stock that may require use of housing capital. These include changes to Beomonds in Chertsey and to Ashdene in Englefield Green. However, this proposal will not significantly impact on the financing of these schemes.
6. Legal Issues
- 6.1 It will be necessary to draw up a detailed agreement with Catalyst Housing Group on the terms of the proposed scheme. This will cover issues such as the payment and repayment of grant, the level of funding to be given to specific households and the affordability criteria for entry into the scheme. At this stage approval in principle is being sought from the Committee to utilise available funds for a scheme. It is proposed that detail of the scheme be approved by the Director of Housing and Community Services.
- 6.2 It is also proposed that the success of the scheme will be reviewed in 12 months.
7. Equality Impact Assessment
- 7.1 The proposal to provide additional Homebuy units with Catalyst Housing Group has been assessed and the EIA that covers this proposed scheme is attached at Appendix 'D'. Time has not allowed for this to be considered by the Equalities Group so the recommendation is subject to this consideration.
8. Conclusions
- 8.1 The Council has already enabled 191 Affordable Housing units to be delivered since the target to achieve 500 units was set in December 2006. Although there are also a number of units under construction performance is currently below target and it is necessary to consider opportunities to increase the number of units completed.
- 8.2 The new Zone Agent, Catalyst Housing Group, have offered Runnymede the opportunity to implement a new scheme aimed at first time buyers and those who can afford low cost home ownership. It is proposed that in principle this new scheme be supported and that Officers be given authority to work up the details of the scheme.

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that –

- i) the performance in relation to the Affordable Housing target be noted; and**
- ii) subject to a positive outcome to the Equalities Impact Assessment the Director of Housing and Community Services be given authority to implement the new Homebuy scheme; and**
- (iii) a capital estimate in the sum of £500,000 be approved for the new low cost home ownership scheme using the provision for new affordable housing contained within the Housing Capital Programme.**

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

None

8. SERVICE PLAN FOR HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES (DHCS)

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 **The purpose of the report is to make the Committee aware of the progress on the Housing and Community Services Plan and the background information is as follows.**

2. Background Information

2.1 In November 2008 the Committee approved a new Service Plan for the period 2008 – 2010.

2.2 Service Plans are a fundamental part of performance monitoring and contain actions from the Council's key strategic documents. The targets within the Plan are assigned to specific service managers and used in appraisals to assess performance.

2.3 The Plans embody action points from the Sustainable Community Strategy, the Housing Strategy, the HRA Business Plan, the Homelessness Strategy, the Private Sector Renewal Strategy, the Equalities Action Plan and the Risk Management Plan. A separate section on the action points from the Older Persons Strategy has also been added to the Service Plan since the last Committee meeting.

3. Report

3.1 Attached at Appendix 'E' is the report setting out the current performance against the plan targets. A "traffic lights" system has been used to show where targets are progressing well, are at risk of not being developed, failing, or are complete. Where targets have not been achieved then they appear as "failing" and proposals for addressing them are provided in the "comments" column. This is also the case where a target is delayed beyond the target date.

3.2 Attached to the Service Plan is the departmental Equality Action Plan and Members are also invited to scrutinise the contents of this.

3.3 There have been some significant achievements e.g. Decent Homes target, arrears recovery, introduction of CBL, review of resident involvement in sheltered housing, review of transport etc. Unfortunately, however, a number of targets have also slipped. This is mainly due to staff shortages which occurred over the Summer period. However these have now been addressed and lost ground will be made up in the coming months.

3.4 The targets from the Older Person Strategy adopted in January have been added to the plan. It should be noted that one of these targets relates to including a Member

champion for older people (target no 9.27). The Committee is asked to consider this requirement and seek a nomination.

4. Financial Implications

4.1 The resource implications for each target are outlined within the Plan and reports are brought to Committee if there are any specific resource implications.

5. Equality Impact Assessment

5.1 Members are invited to comment upon the progress made on the Equality Impact Assessment targets.

6. Council Policy

6.1 It has been Council Policy since 2003 to adopt Service Plans.

7. Conclusions

7.1 A comprehensive Service Plan was established in November 2008. A range of measures have been taken and there have been a number of achievements. There has been some slippage within the Plan but measures are now being taken to progress any targets that have been delayed.

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that –

(i) the Committee note the performance within the Service Plan and confirm whether the measures proposed to address any shortfall are satisfactory; and

(ii) the Committee consider the requirement to appoint a Member champion and nominate accordingly.

(TO RESOLVE)

Background Papers

None stated

9. ENERGY EFFICIENCY TARGETS IN THE SERVICE PLAN (DHCS)

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 **The purpose of this report is to expand on the brief comments within the Service Plan to explain how Officers are meeting energy efficiency targets in respect of the Housing stock.**

2. Background Information

2.1 For a number of years the Service Plan has contained targets in respect of improving the energy efficiency of the Council owned housing stock. *Specifically, target 2.1 – Demolish the PRC flats at Wapshott Road, 2.2 – Meet the Decent Homes Standard, 2.3 – Achieve a minimum SAP rating of 61 for all properties and 2.12 - Agree proposals for 230 properties with solid walls that cannot be cavity insulated.*

3. Report

3.1 Progress has been made on a number of fronts. The flats at Wapshott Road were emptied during 2008 and have subsequently been demolished. These properties were some of the worst insulated homes in the Council's ownership but have now been replaced by energy efficient homes.

- 3.2 Year-on-year the Council has reduced the number of homes that do not meet the Government's Decent Homes Standard, and is well on the way to achieving 100% compliance by the 2010 deadline. One of the requirements of the Decent Homes Standard is to ensure properties are well insulated and have adequate heating, so meeting the Standard will inevitably improve the energy efficiency of these homes.
- 3.3 In addition, the average SAP rating of the Council's housing stock has increased every year, and currently stands at 77 points, well above the national average.
- 3.4 Whilst the average SAP rating for council owned homes is comfortably within upper quartile, it is recognised that the properties with the worst SAP ratings are well below the average, and some are below the Council's minimum standard of 61 points. These are predominantly the remaining PRC stock, and those 230 properties with solid walls already identified as being unsuitable for cavity wall insulation.
- 3.5 It has now been established that with the installation of condensing boilers, increased loft insulation, improved controls and a number of other improvements, it should be possible to reach the minimum SAP target of 61 points for most of these homes. It could be argued therefore that there is no longer any need to consider undertaking additional works, such as external cladding, for these properties.
- 3.6 Whilst Officers believe we can achieve our minimum SAP target without the need for external cladding, it has been calculated that to undertake cladding could increase the SAP rating by an additional ten points, which combined with other works could bring these properties close to the overall average. Individual savings for households could be as much as £200 a year, and for some of our residents, living on low incomes, such savings would be welcome.
- 3.7 The cost of external cladding is substantial. The alternative would be to consider internal insulation, which would necessitate battening walls and fixing some form of insulation board. In addition, window and door details would need adjustment, skirting boards and architraves re-fixing, electric switches and socket outlets moving together with almost total kitchen and bathroom refurbishment. The disruption to residents would be considerable, making it difficult, if not impossible to undertake this work with tenants in occupation. After completion, all rooms in the property would be noticeably smaller and so, not surprisingly, Officers felt it unwise to pursue the internal cladding option.
- 3.8 The current cost of external cladding is considered to be approximately £10,000 per property. Even with savings of up to £200 p.a. the pay-back period for this level of investment is likely to be in the region of 50 years and beyond the expected lifespan of some properties. It is difficult to make a case for the work.
- 3.9 From time to time Government grants become available to social landlords to undertake energy efficiency work to their housing stock. It is therefore proposed that if grants become available for this, the issue of the Council's solid walled properties should be revisited. However, until such time no attempt to raise the SAP rating of these properties should be made beyond the minimum level achievable with the initiatives listed in paragraph 3.5.
4. Financial Considerations
- 4.1 The HRA Business Plan allows for the upgrading of boilers, controls etc on a programmed basis which will enable most properties with lower SAP ratings to eventually achieve the Council's minimum standard. There is no provision for additional insulation such as external cladding, and to incorporate this into the Business Plan would require other works to be omitted or delayed. Without generous grants, or a significant improvement to the Business Plan, it will be difficult to accommodate this additional expenditure.
5. Legal Consideration
- 5.1 There is no legal requirement to achieve any particular SAP level.
6. Equalities

6.1 The need to improve insulation to properties where it is not possible to cavity insulate is specific to a small proportion of our housing stock and so is unlikely to disproportionately discriminate against any particular group of resident. Without a full census of occupants of such properties, it is not possible to ascertain if the decision not to improve SAP ratings beyond the minimum target has any adverse effect beyond what might normally be expected. It is recognised that tenants on a limited income, which might include the elderly, disabled and unemployed, are more likely to be in fuel poverty, (which requires them to spend more than 10% of their disposable income on fuel costs), but there is no evidence to suggest that a disproportionate number of tenants living in these properties fall into this category.

7. Conclusions

7.1 The Council has set a target to ensure that its properties achieve a SAP rating of at least 61. It was felt that this target might be difficult to achieve for solid wall and PRC housing. However, it has now been ascertained that by providing a range of measures it should be possible to achieve this rating.

7.2 However, to take solid wall and PRC properties above the 61 rating would require expensive over cladding the payback period for which would be many years. It is therefore only proposed to pursue this measure should Government grants become available.

(FOR INFORMATION)

Background Papers

None stated

10. FINANCIAL MONITORING STATEMENT (DF)

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 **To inform the Committee of the latest financial projections for the 2009/10 financial year for Housing services and Community services.**

2. Background Information

2.1 The Financial Monitoring Statement was introduced to all Committees in September 2006 to inform Members of the current financial position of the services under the remit of each Committee. This Committee received two statements, one for Housing services and the other for Community services.

2.2 Each statement reflects an updated position based upon the 2009/10 original estimates approved by this Committee in January. The statements have now been updated to include changes identified in the Financial Forecast considered at the Corporate Management Committee in October 2009.

3. Report

3.1 The two statements at Appendix 'F (i)' and 'F (ii)' are split into three distinct parts:

- Projected budget and forecast
- Savings still to be delivered
- Current year budget indicators

3.2 The projected budget and forecast sections show the anticipated variations in the current year's budget. These variations are categorised as approved changes and other potential changes. Implications for the following three years are included for completeness so that the full-year effect of any changes can be seen.

3.3 The achievement of the revenue reductions programme approved by the Council is one of the Council's key performance indicators. Savings targets not yet achieved are

reported in the second section of each statement. These savings are all incorporated into the projected budget forecast figures in section one.

- 3.4 The final section sets out the key budget indicators for the significant areas of this Committee's budget. This indicates the actual income received against the amount expected (the budget) for the period covered by each statement.

(FOR INFORMATION)

Background Papers

None stated

11. KITCHEN REFURBISHMENTS – SELECTION OF CONTRACTOR (DHCS)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 **The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee of the selection of a contractor to undertake the refurbishment of kitchens.**

2. Background Information

- 2.1 In March 2009 a report was brought to this Committee seeking approval of a shortlist of contractors in respect of the kitchen refurbishment work for properties in Victory Park Road. This was required under standing order C3.3 as the value of the contract was anticipated to be in excess of £100,000.

3. Report

- 3.1 From the six companies shortlisted, five tenders were received. Although Brymor originally submitted the most competitive tender, they failed to submit a priced schedule of work, and when requested to provide one subsequently withdrew their submission. The next most favourable submission was from Clairglow Heating Ltd in the sum of £445,634. The tender from Clairglow has therefore been accepted. The unsuccessful tenders are as follows:-

Brymor Construction Ltd	£429,568 (Withdrawn)
Claude Fenton	£475,009
Pavehall PLC	£544,604
Saffron Contract Services	£630,172

- 3.2 It is a requirement of standing order C9.6 that although Officers are authorised to accept the most financially favourable tender, the tenders received must be reported to Committee.

4. Financial Considerations

- 4.1 Provision has been made in the HRA Business Plan for this work.

5. Equalities

- 5.1 There are no equality issues relating to the acceptance of this tender.

(FOR INFORMATION)

Background Papers

Exempt

12. STANDING ORDER 42 – URGENT ACTION

The following action has been taken after consultation with the Chairman of the Committee under Standing Order 42.

<u>Officer</u>	<u>Action Taken</u>	<u>Central</u>
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		<u>Index No.</u>
Director of Housing and Community Services	Approval of Revised Allocations Policy	704

(FOR INFORMATION)

Background Papers

SO 42 proforma No 704 on Committee Section SO 42 file.

13. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION that –

the press and public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the following reports under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the reports in question would be likely to involve disclosure of exempt information of the description specified in appropriate paragraphs of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

(TO RESOLVE)

PART II

Matters involving Exempt or Confidential Information in respect of which reports have not been made available for public inspection.

- | | | |
|-----|------------------------------------|-------------|
| a) | <u>Exempt Information</u> | <u>Para</u> |
| 14. | COMMUNITY MEALS SERVICE - VEHICLES | 3 |
| b) | <u>Confidential Information</u> | |

(No reports to be considered under this heading)