



## HOUSING AND COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

### AGENDA

**WEDNESDAY 13 NOVEMBER 2013 AT 7.30 PM**

**BULBOURNE ROOM, CIVIC CENTRE, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD**

The Councillors listed below are requested to attend the above meeting, on the day and at the time and place stated, to consider the business set out in this agenda.

Adeleke	N Hollinghurst
Adshead	Killen
Bassadone	Mahmood (Vice-Chairman)
Conway	Marshall (Chairman)
Douris	McLean
Flint	Organ

Co-Opted Members: S Parker & M Cook (Substitute)

Substitute Members: Councillors G Chapman, Clark, Harris and Wixted.

For further information, please contact Member Support on Tel: 01442 228226, or Email: [member.support@dacorum.gov.uk](mailto:member.support@dacorum.gov.uk). Information about the Council can be found on our website: [www.dacorum.gov.uk](http://www.dacorum.gov.uk).

#### **PART I**

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**1. MINUTES**

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2013.

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

To receive any apologies for absence

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To receive any declarations of interest

A member with a disclosable pecuniary interest or a personal interest in a matter who attends a meeting of the authority at which the matter is considered-

- (i) must disclose the interest at the start of the meeting or when the interest becomes apparent

and, if the interest is a disclosable pecuniary interest, or a personal interest which is also prejudicial

- (ii) may not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter (and must withdraw to the public seating area) unless they have been granted a dispensation.

A member who discloses at a meeting a disclosable pecuniary interest which is not registered in the Members' Register of Interests, or is not the subject of a pending notification, must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days of the disclosure.

Disclosable pecuniary interests, personal and prejudicial interests are defined in Part 2 of the Code of Conduct For Members

[If a member is in any doubt as to whether they have an interest which should be declared they should seek the advice of the Monitoring Officer before the start of the meeting]

**4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

An opportunity for members of the public to make statements or ask questions in accordance with the rules as to public participation

**5. CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE IN RELATION TO CALL-IN**

None

**AGENDA ITEM: 6**

**SUMMARY**

<b>Report for:</b>	<b>Housing and Community Overview &amp; Scrutiny</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>13 November 2013</b>
<b>PART:</b>	<b>1</b>
If Part II, reason:	

<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>Quarter 2 Performance Report – Resident Services</b>
Contact:	Cllr Neil Harden, Portfolio Holder for Resident and Regulatory Services  Author/Responsible Officer, Julie Still, Group Manager – Resident Services
Purpose of report:	Monitoring and information
Recommendations	That members note the report and identify any areas where they require additional information or reports of specific projects.
Corporate objectives:	Safe and Clean Environment Building Community Capacity Dacorum Delivers
Implications:	Financial  Within existing budgets  Value for Money
'Value For Money Implications'	
Risk Implications	As per Neighbourhood Delivery Service Plan
Equalities Implications	
Health And Safety Implications	
Consultees:	Service Team Leaders, Community Safety Co-ordinator

Background papers:	Service Reports, Police reports, CorVu
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## **Housing and Community Overview and Scrutiny Quarter 2, 2013 – 2014**

### **1 Introduction**

1.1 This is the second quarter performance report for the Residents Services Group which forms part of the wider Neighbourhood Delivery service area and covers the period 1<sup>st</sup> July to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2013.

1.2 The services within this group are: -

2 Neighbourhood Action, Anti-Social Behaviour, Community Safety, The Old Town Hall, Children's Services, Community Cohesion, CCTV, Town Centre Management and Youth Democracy..

2.1 If there are any additional areas or reports for specific areas that members would like to see, please can they inform the Group Manager, Resident Services.

### **3 Quarter 2 Performance Report – CorVu**

3.1 See Appendix A

### **4 Operational Risk Report**

4.1 See Appendix B

### **5 Resident Services - Second Quarter Achievements.**

5.1 The following achievements are a sample of the projects/work undertaken by this group of services during the last quarter.

### **6 Community Safety Partnership**

6.1 All crime within the borough has reduced by 10.4% compared to the same period last year which relates to 358 fewer crimes. A full breakdown is provided in Appendix C which shows the details around the Partnership priorities of Anti-Social Behaviour and Criminal Damage, Vehicle Crime, Dwelling Burglary, Alcohol Misuse, Drug Misuse and Managing Offenders/Reducing Re-offending.

6.2 A further breakdown of specific crimes by ward is provided at appendix D, please note that anti-social behaviour is not classified as a crime or included in the *all crime* figures.

6.3 The Community Safety Partnership sponsored the bravery award at the Pride of Dacorum Awards. This award was won by a 6 year old boy, Archie Major, who had shown incredible bravery when his mother collapsed at home and knocked herself out. Lauren Goldberg-Kosab was highly commended in this category as well for her selfless rescue of an elderly neighbour from a fire.

## **7 Anti-Social Behaviour**

- 7.1 Reports of anti-social behaviour continue to reduce with a 35% reduction year to date across the borough. Figures relating to reports at a ward level can be found at appendix D.
- 7.2 A new Team Leader was appointed for the Anti-Social Behaviour Team – Nicola Bryant. Nicola has established strong links with the police and is working in partnership to deliver improved outcomes and early intervention for victims of anti-social behaviour.
- 7.3 An injunction with a power of arrest was obtained at County Court to help protect vulnerable people within the community.
- 7.4 The Family Intervention Officer continues to work with challenging families across the borough and significant results have been achieved in the 3 key areas of increasing school attendance, reducing crime and anti-social behaviour and thirdly addressing worklessness.

## **8 Quarter 3 – 2013-14 priorities for ASB: -**

- 8.1 Deliver further training within the Council on domestic abuse and roll out the DASH (Domestic Abuse Stalking and Honour based violence) risk assessment.
- 8.2 To produce joint procedures to manage anti-social behaviour with the Housing Service

## **9 Neighbourhood Action**

- 9.1 'Love Your Neighbourhood' was piloted in a specific lower super output area within Woodhall Farm. This project was about bringing together all of the services who do area inspections, ward walks etc., in the community and agencies with an investment or responsibility in the area to deliver on issues identified by the community.
- 9.2 This resulted in a wide range of partners being involved including Ward and County Councillors, Portfolio Holder, Metropolitan Housing Association, Circle Anglia Housing Association, Police, Fire Service, Highways, Clean Safe and Green, Environmental Health, Environmental Sustainability (heating advice, recycling), Revenues and Benefits, Housing (a range of service areas) .
- 9.3 The project included intensive consultation which identified specific issues in their neighbourhood. Where these matters were of a physical nature they were inspected by all agencies on a pre-arranged morning inspection by all agencies and many were immediately dealt with. The top three issues identified by residents were: anti-social behaviour; roads and pavements and clean streets.
- 9.4 The morning's inspection was followed by an event in the park which offered a range of opportunities to speak to the services and agencies that work in this area and get appropriate advice and information. Face painting, craft, inflatables were welcomed by the residents and kept the children occupied.
- 9.5 A full report will be brought to this committee in January 2014 as part of the Neighbourhood Action report.

- 9.6 The Verge Hardening project continues with 138 additional spaces completed at this time across the borough. Further funding has been secured to continue this project and the process to identify areas of need will be repeated.
- 9.7 Neighbourhood Action Public meetings took place in 7 areas across the borough during September. The ward Councillors chaired the meetings which were attended by 350 people.
- 9.8 The Neighbourhood Action team facilitated work experience for 5 students from Adeyfield School who were placed at DBC for 1 week as part of their business and administration apprenticeship during September. A range of joint and individual activities were co-ordinated between 4 departments within the council.
- 9.9 A total of 10 new volunteers took part in face painting training in September 2013. The group will join the network of volunteer face painters for community events who have painted the faces of hundreds of children (and adults) since training in June 2013. Events have included the Woodhall farm 'Love your Neighbourhood' event, the Community Bandstand event for Community Action Dacorum, the 'Link' family fun day, Adventure Playground National Play Days and the Communities Together Mela.

## **10 Quarter 3 - 2013-14 priorities: -**

- 10.1 Complete phase 1 Verge Hardening project.
- 10.2 Christmas lights and events in Neighbourhood Action areas
- 10.3 Identify areas for further Love Your Neighbourhood events.

## **11 Children, Young People – Adventure Playgrounds**

11.1 The numbers of children aged 6 – 12 Years inclusive attending the adventure playgrounds in the last quarter were: - 30095.

11.2 This year's National Play Days had the highest attendance recorded with over 1000 children and their parents attending both Chaulden and Adeyfield and over 700 attending both Bennetts End and Adeyfield. In addition to the high attendance the playgrounds raised funding for events throughout the year.

11.3 At Adeyfield the Bike Doctor Project saw 19 children benefit from second hand bicycles having worked on them to repair and service them.

11.4 The 4 Youth Clubs continue to thrive with numbers continuing to increase and attendance numbers were 984 for the last quarter which takes into account a 2 week closure during the summer. Youth Connexions are also delivering youth clubs on different nights at 3 of the venues.

11.5 The youth forum at Adeyfield Youth Club has been working with Mencap and has secured funding to improve the gardens at Mountbatten Lodge care home. Work will start this autumn

## **12 Quarter 3 2013-14 Priorities: -**

- 12.1 – Review the new Adventure Playgrounds Service Structure
- 12.2 –Half Term programme and reduced Christmas programme (due to Christmas closure period)

## **13 Youth Democracy**

- 13.1 Dacorum Youth Forum continues to meet and there are currently 18 active members of the group. Mayor, Cllr Penny Hearn attended the July meeting and opened up conversations about the issues that young people felt the Borough Council needed to address.
- 13.2 Members of the Dacorum Youth Forum volunteered their time at the Herts Learning Disability Games organised by the Sportspace Sports Development team and funded through the Herts Sports Partnership. Katie Giddings, One of the volunteers has written a Digest article with her account of the experience.
- 13.3 Youth Action Entertainers were at Elizabeth House in July where 10 young people took part in a display of singing and Irish Dancing. These events continue to be run in partnership with Age UK Dacorum and Tenant Participation.
- 13.4 In August 13 young people from the Dacorum Youth Forum (10) and National Citizen Service (3) came to the Mayors Parlour to meet with a number of Local Councillors and the Mayor. This was an informal setting where the group discussed issues affecting young people at a local level and set out key developments that young people and councillors would like to see in future. This is the first step in a programme of activities to raise the profile of young people within the Borough.
- 13.5 On Saturday 17 August, Hemel Skate Jam took place in Gadebridge Park. Hemel Skate Park group have been working with the Neighbourhood to raise funds for improvements to Gadebridge Skate Park. An estimated 300 people enjoyed the skate jam where music was provided by Youth Connexions and local bands, DJ's and rappers kept the crowd entertained.

## **14 Quarter 3 priorities 2013 – 14:-**

- 14.1 Increase membership of Youth Forum
- 14.2 European Local Democracy Week

## **15 Community Cohesion**

- 15.1 Neighbourhood Action contributed funding, support and attended the sports day for the Russian Speaking group. Sportspace supported the group to organise the day which celebrated their one year anniversary. Neighbourhood Action have also supported

the group with the DBC grant application which was successful to run Russian Language classes.

15.2 The Communities Together Mela weekend was run in partnership with Global Pindd and the Old Town Hall. The traditional outdoor event was brought indoors to the local theatre and hosted a range of community and professional performances. Performances and workshops included African drumming, Line Dance, Irish Dance, Salsa Dance, Bollywood, Hip hop, Gujarati and street dance. Free stalls were also in the café bar; Face painting, arts and crafts and henna. Including the performers who joined the audience after their performance, 189 people watched the show. 29 people took part in the 2 African drumming workshops. 40 faces were painted, 40 shakers and 75 ribbons batons were made in arts and crafts.

## **16 Quarter 3 priorities 2013 – 14:-**

18.1 Kick Racism Out of Football event

## **17 CCTV and Town Centre**

17.1 The town centre bandstand hosted a wide range of events at weekends during the summer which included circus workshops, giant exotic birds, balloon artists, Punch and Judy, pre historic cave men, steel drums, Caribbean arts and crafts workshops, magic shows and Phoenix Dixieland Jazz Band.

17.2 Israr Ali, CCTV Operator was nominated for the Pride of Dacorum Awards Unsung Hero by the Gazette. This followed a commendation from His Honour Judge Plumstead for outstanding work resulting in the prosecution and imprisonment of an individual targeting a young woman.

17.3 The CCTV control room managed 597 separate incidents during the second quarter of this year. There were 91 arrests directly involving the CCTV control room, 122 calls regarding lost, found or stray dogs, 174 visitors to the CCTV control room and 49 missing persons.

## **18 Quarter 3, 20123-14 priorities: -**

18.1 Complete the transfer of CCTV to Cupid Green site

18.2 Implement new code of practice for CCTV

18.3 Christmas Event – 24<sup>th</sup> November

## **19 Old Town Hall**

19.1 A summer of Look Out Pop Up Theatre was on the road across Dacorum with events at Adeyfield, Highfield Berkhamsted and Markyate.

19.2 Phase One of the works to the Old Town Hall were completed during August and on time and saw the improvements to the kitchen area and Gallery Bar.



19.3 Following on from the improvements, interim arrangements for a café were implemented and this opened on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2013. Initial response has been limited by the current works to the Old High Street as have the number of private lettings.

19.4 In September Sales of tickets for the new program were in demand and a number of shows sold out within 20 minutes of being launched.

19.5 Preparation for works to install disabled access to the cellar venue continue with works due to commence in January 2014 and complete in the spring.

## **20 Quarter 3 2012/13 priorities**

20.1 Deliver Autumn / Winter programme

20.2 Prepare for major works to Old Town Hall

Appendix A p1xxxxxx

## Appendix A p2

## Appendix B p1

## Appendix B p2

## Appendix B p3

## Appendix B p4

**Appendix B p5**



**Appendix B p6**

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## Appendix C p1

## Appendix C p2



## Appendix C p4



## Appendix d p1









**AGENDA ITEM: 7**

**SUMMARY**

<b>Report for:</b>	<b>Housing and Community Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>13 November 2013</b>
<b>PART:</b>	<b>1</b>
If Part II, reason:	

<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>Quarter Two Performance Report – Regulatory Services</b>
Contact:	Cllr Neil Harden, Portfolio Holder for Residents and Regulatory Services  Author/Responsible Officers:  Chris Troy, Group Manager, Regulatory Services  Dave Austin, Assistant Director (Neighbourhood Delivery)
Purpose of report:	To provide Members with the performance report for quarter 2 in relation to Regulatory Services.
Recommendations:	That Members note the report.
Corporate objectives:	Resources and Value For Money; Optimise Resources and Implement Best Practice.
Implications:	Financial:  None.
'Value For Money Implications'	Value for Money:  Monitoring Performance supports the Council in achieving Value for Money for its citizens.
Risk Implications	Risk Assessment completed for each service area as part of service planning and reviewed quarterly.
Equalities Implications	Equality Impact Assessment completed for each service area as part of service planning and reviewed quarterly.
Health And Safety Implications	None.
Consultees:	

Background papers:	Quarterly Performance Report – quarter 2 (attached).
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	

## 1. Background

1.1 For the purpose of this report, 'Regulatory Services' includes the following services:

- Environmental Health (Food Safety, Health and Safety, Statutory Nuisances, Contaminated Land, Drainage, Private Water Supplies, Infectious Diseases, Air Quality Management)
- Private Sector Housing (HMOs, Illegal Eviction, Private Sector Landlord Issues, Improvement Grants, Disabled Facilities Grants, etc)
- Public Health
- Home Energy Conservation
- Pest Control
- Stray Dogs / Dog Warden Services
- Clinical Waste
- Cesspool Emptying
- Environmental Enforcement and High Hedges
- Emergency and Business Continuity Planning
- Street Trading
- Sustainability

## 2.0 Regulatory Services Performance Indicators

2.1 There has been slippage in one area:

REG01 (Red) - Percentage of abandoned vehicles removed within 24 hours.

The quarter 2 performance identified that there has been significant slippage with respect to this indicator. There were just two abandoned vehicles reported to Redcorn during this quarter and one of these missed the 24 hour target. For reasons not entirely clear the removal contractor failed to act on our instructions, although the vehicles were removed within 24hours of the second notification.

## 3. Environmental Protection

3.1 **Statutory noise nuisance:** A number of residents living in a block of flats in Hemel Hempstead complained to the Council that a tenant regularly played amplified music at excessive levels. Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) were able to witness this noise which resulted in the serving of an abatement notice under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Despite the notice being served the noise continued and officers had no choice but to take direct action. Officers obtained a warrant from the court and broke into the flat and seized the tenant's music centre. This was a good example of partnership working with the police, who supported our intervention from the onset, and agreed to accompany officers on the day the equipment was seized.

3.2 **Fly-tipping** : Action is being considered in relation to waste illegally deposited on land in Bullbeggars Lane, Potten End . An investigation into alleged offences under the Environmental Protection Act was carried out by officers from the Enforcement section. They were able to identify the source of the waste and managed to locate a witness who identified the potential offender. A prosecution file has been submitted to the Council's legal section and we are awaiting approval to proceed.

#### 4. **Food Safety**

4.1 **Closure of a food premises:** Voluntary closure procedures were initiated following an inspection of a restaurant in Markyate. A number of problems were identified including a pest infestation and a general failure to maintain standards of hygiene & cleanliness. Food Hygiene Improvement Notices were also served for breaches of food hygiene legislation in a local fish and chip shop.

4.2 **Novel food process:** An issue emerged in the last quarter relating to a business involved in novel food process, namely the processing of raw human placenta for human consumption. Action is being taken to stop this operation.

4.3 **Food Hygiene Rating System** :The Council's website has been updated and there is now a widget on the home page of the DBC website which allows the public to see all recent 4 and 5 rated premises and there is also an app which can be downloaded onto smart phones and tablets which will give instant information to users.

#### 5. **Pest control**

5.1 There are plans in the future to expand the Council's Pest Control Service and in September we met with representatives from Hertfordshire County Council to discuss taking over the pest control contracts for 15 of their largest sites. Additional officers are being trained on pest control which will increase capacity in this area. We are also looking at other income streams including the possibility for charging for some domestic call outs.

#### 6. **Health and Safety**

6.1 Health and Safety Enforcement notices were served on a warehouse after an inspection identified that workers were being exposed to excessive noise and dust. In addition notices were served for dangerous racking and an unprotected mezzanine floor and a fork lift truck was prohibited from being used. We are continuing to work with the business and they are now largely compliant with Health and Safety legislation.

#### 7. **Private Sector Housing**

7.1. **Empty Homes Strategy** :The Council's Empty Homes Strategy was approved by Cabinet in September . The aim of this strategy will be to bring empty homes back into use which is a sustainable way to meet housing needs as well as improving the overall amenity of an area and reducing crime.

#### 8. **Animal Welfare**

8.1 A woman, living in Hemel Hempstead, was successfully prosecuted under the Animal Welfare Act for prolonged neglect of a pet dog, to the extent that the dog had to be put down, The pet owner, who tried to pass her dying dog off as a stray, was fined



£580 and given a suspended prison sentence alongside a ten year ban from owning a dog.

- 8.2 The Council's dog warden has achieved the Silver Footprint (RSPCA) award for animal welfare for the third year running. The attainment of this assurance scheme means the public can be confident that we are looking after their dogs when they are under our care.

## **9. Clinical Waste**

- 9.1 Changes to the clinical waste collection in partnership with CSG, Env Agency and Hertfordshire County Council has resulted in a 30% reduction in 'over classified' waste. This will allow people that have certain ailments to keep their dignity as they will now be less readily identified, whilst maintaining the Council's duty to ensure that clinical waste is disposed of in the correct way. There were some initial complaints about the reduced service at the beginning but crucially no non-conformances have been reported to HCC.

## **10. Recruitment**

- 10.1 Two officers have taken up their roles in Regulatory Services

Dawn Ryder (Environmental Health Officer-Environmental Protection & Housing Team)

Nicola Turvey (Sustainability Officer)

## **11. Public Health**

- 11.1 Officers sit on Dacorum's Health and Wellbeing Group as well as the Hertfordshire Health Protection Committee. Both these groups are focused on identifying the key determinants of health within communities and looking to see how local authorities can improve health outcomes.

There is a project looking at capturing public health data from the day to day work we do and translating this into meaningful information which will help to inform and prioritise our objectives for the future. We will be considering how best to deliver the wider 'Public Health Agenda' in terms of the three key areas listed below:

- Protection from threats and hazards
- Preventing ill health
- Promotion of good health

This will involve joint working with other stakeholders within Dacorum as well as external partners such as Public Health England, Health Protection, Hertfordshire County Council and other Local Authorities within Hertfordshire.

Measure	Owner & Updater	Sep 2012 Result	Trend	Jun 2013 Result	Trend	Sep 2013 Result	Sign Off	Comments	Flag
REG01 - Percentage of abandoned vehicles removed within 24 hours	Chris Troy Nicholas Egerton	57.14% (4/7) Target: 0	→	100.00% (7/7) Target: 85.00	↓	50.00% (1/2) Target: 85.00	✓	<b>Updater</b> Percentage achieved this qrt looks low however this is due to the low number of vehicles reported. Only one vehicle was not picked up initially within 24hrs. The original request sent through was not actioned. Following a further notification the car was cleared within 24 hours	
REG02 - Percentage of high risk (category A and B) food premises inspected that were due in the quarter	Chris Troy Nicholas Egerton	90.90% Target: 0	↑	100.00% Target: 98.00	→	100.00% Target: 98.00	✓	<b>Updater</b> During this period 17 high risk premises were due for inspection. 16 premises were actually inspected as 1 premises was found to have closed down.	
REG03 - Percentage of service requests for the whole of Regulatory Services responded to within 3 working days	Chris Troy Nicholas Egerton	98.33% (884/899) Target: 0	↑	99.47% (933/938) Target: 98.00	↓	99.32% (1020/1027) Target: 98.00	✓		
REG04 - Health and Safety work programme milestones met	Chris Troy Nicholas Egerton	100% Target: 0		No Data Target: 100		No Data Target: 100	✓		
REG05 - Percentage of Noise cases closed within 60 days	Chris Troy Nicholas Egerton	91.74% (111/121) Target: 0	↑	88.68% (94/106) Target: 90.00	↑	91.57% (163/178) Target: 90.00	✓		
REG06 - Disabled Facilities Grants: percentage of final payments made within 6 months following approval	Chris Troy Nicholas Egerton	81.82% (9/11) Target: 0	↑	86.67% (13/15) Target: 80.00	↓	85.71% (12/14) Target: 80.00	✓		

**AGENDA ITEM: 8****SUMMARY**

<b>Report for:</b>	<b>Housing &amp; Communities Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>13<sup>th</sup> November 2013</b>
<b>PART:</b>	<b>1</b>
If Part II, reason:	

<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>Quarter 2 Performance Report - Housing Landlord</b>
Contact:	Councillor Margaret Griffiths, Portfolio Holder for Housing  Author/Responsible Officer – Elliott Brooks – Assistant Director - Housing
Purpose of report:	1. To Update the Committee on the Performance of the Housing Service for the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter of 2013/14  2. To Update the Committee on the progress of the 2013/14 Housing Service Plan  3. To inform the Committee of the status of the current Housing Service Risk Register
Recommendations	1. That the Committee note the Performance Report, Risk Register & Service Plan Update
Corporate objectives:	Affordable Housing
Implications:  'Value For Money Implications'	<u>Financial</u> All areas of the service are subject to Monthly Budget Monitoring Meetings with Financial Accountant. Budget Reporting is quarterly to the Committee and 6 monthly to Tenants & Leaseholders Committee. <u>Value for Money</u> The Housing Service & its costs are reviewed annually through a national benchmarking organisation (Housemark)
Risk Implications	Appendix – Housing Operational Risk Register
Equalities Implications	Equality Impact Assessments are carried out when policies or procedures are amended as appropriate
Health And Safety Implications	Health & Safety is an identified Key Risk for the Housing Service.
Consultees:	Andy Vincent – Group Manager Tenants & Leaseholders

	Calvin Fisher – Interim Group Manager Property & Place Julia Hedger – Group Manager Strategic Housing
Background papers:	
Historical background <i>(please give a brief background to this report to enable it to be considered in the right context).</i>	Each year, in consultation with staff and members of the Tenants & Leaseholder Committee a set of performance indicators, and key Service Plan Objectives are identified and agreed.
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	TLC – Tenants & Leaseholder Committee HRA – Housing Revenue Account

## **1. Introduction**

This report details the performance of the Housing Service during the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2013/14 against performance indicators, as well as updating the Housing & Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee regarding progress of the Housing Service Plan which was agreed with the Tenant & Leaseholder Committee in March 2013 following consultation.

The report also details the Housing Operational Risk Register. These risks have been identified as key in terms of tracking and ensuring all is done to mitigate as far as is reasonably possible.

## **2. Housing Performance Report – Quarter 2 2013/14**

Appendix 1 shows performance against the ‘Service Critical’ performance indicators for the Quarter 2 period of July - September 2013.

In addition to the ‘Corvu’ report please note the following for Quarter 2:

- Percentage of General Needs Properties let within target – 30.19%
- Percentage of Sheltered Properties let within target – 53.73%

This information will be included in future Corvu reports.

### 3. Service Plan Progress

The Service Plan captures the key improvements or pieces of work to be delivered this year. It identifies how and when they will be done and who will be responsible. Below is a table summarising the current progress of each element

	<i>What will be different once this work is done</i>	<i>Project Lead &amp; Target Completion</i>	<b>Housing &amp; Communities Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee September 13 Update</b>	
<i>Asset Management Strategy</i>	<i>We will develop a long term plan which will detail how we expect to invest in Dacorum Borough Council owned homes, sheltered schemes, footpaths and drying areas over the next 10 years.</i>	<i>Asset Team Leader  September 2013  ( behind – likely to be December 2013)</i>	<b><i>Kick Start meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> June involving staff and tenants. Draft strategy currently being produced.</i></b>	<b><i>Draft Strategy produced for AD &amp; GM comment</i></b>
<i>Energy Strategy</i>	<i>We will utilise grants where available to introduce renewable technologies and help improve the energy efficiency of Dacorum Borough Council owned homes, sheltered schemes and blocks of flats.  We will also ensure that when we undertake work to improve Dacorum Borough Council owned homes, such as planned improvement programmes, that we seek to improve their energy efficiency.</i>	<i>Asset Team Leader  December 2013  (on target)</i>	<b><i>This project is linked to the Asset Management Strategy and Ricky Lang (Home Energy Conservation Officer) is currently collating information for a draft strategy.</i></b>	
<i>Digital access</i>	<i>We will improve the number of people who have access to the internet; by:-</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Installing internet enabled computer terminals in each of our sheltered schemes</i></li> <li>• <i>Working with Community Centres to install additional internet enabled computer terminals</i></li> <li>• <i>Develop a training course to</i></li> </ul>	<i>Income Team Leader  March 2014  (on target)</i>	<b><i>This project will be launched in September and will be carried out by a Corporate Graduate</i></b>	<b><i>A project initiation document has been completed and some initial work has been done with BT, Northgate, Orchard and Revenues and</i></b>

	<i>enable tenants to develop their IT skills</i>			<b>Benefits</b>  <b>A launch meeting is planned for November</b>
<i>Homelessness - prevention and developing a new Homelessness Strategy</i>	<p><i>We want to help prevent households from becoming homeless. Our Housing Advice Team already provides services to help households from becoming homeless. During 2013/14 we will:-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Develop working with the local prison to ensure that when inmates finish their term that they have access to suitable accommodation.</i></li> <li>• <i>Employ Welfare and Budget Advisors to help residents with the impact of the on-going economic difficulties and the introduction of changes to welfare benefits.</i></li> <li>• <i>Adopt a Homelessness Strategy that will set long-term strategic objectives with a clear action plan for:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>Preventing homelessness,</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Improving temporary housing options, and</i></li> <li>➤ <i>Focusing on suitable and well-managed resettlement into more secure accommodation.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><i>Homelessness and Housing Advice Team Leader</i></p> <p><i>December 2013</i></p> <p><i>(on target)</i></p>	<p><b>All staff are security checked and advice surgeries will begin in October 13</b></p> <p><b>Draft strategy been to OSC and Cabinet and consultation finished – Final version of strategy to go to OSC and Cabinet in November 13</b></p>	<p><b>Advice surgeries at the Prison started in September 2013 and will be bi-monthly as agreed with the Prison. Once evaluated they may increase to monthly.</b></p> <p><b>Final version of Homelessness Strategy going to OSC and Cabinet Nov 13 as planned.</b></p>
<i>Developing the Private Rent Sector</i>	<p><i>We want to develop and run a Local Lettings Agency to improve and expand the current Deposit Guarantee Scheme. The aims of this work will be to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Increase the number of local landlords working with the Council;</i></li> <li>• <i>Provide more housing options to low income and vulnerable</i></li> </ul>	<p><i>Strategy &amp; Private Sector Housing Team Leader</i></p> <p><i>December 2013</i></p> <p><i>(on target)</i></p>	<p><b>Help to Rent scheme to be launched end of September 13. Has been to July OSC for comments</b></p>	<p><b>Help to Rent scheme launched on 21<sup>st</sup> October aimed at meeting service plan targets for this area.</b></p>

	<p>households;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a modern, professional service with a good local reputation; and</li> <li>• Generate income to cover costs (remaining competitive over private agencies).</li> </ul>			
Developing the Housing Options service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a new Enhanced Housing Options module on the Moving with Dacorum website which identifies the options available to a household when seeking alternative accommodation.</li> <li>• We will also provide more details on the website including developing a user guide and information leaflets on topics such as About Housing in Dacorum.</li> </ul>	<p>Housing Options Team Leader</p> <p>December 2013</p> <p>(on target)</p>	<p><b>Enhanced Housing Options module goes live with new allocations policy in November 13. New website will be live from early October 13.</b></p>	<p><b>Enhanced Housing Options module will go live with the new Allocations Policy as planned on the 7<sup>th</sup> November. DBC website updated and pages went live on 30<sup>th</sup> October</b></p> <p><b>Members Training on new Allocations Policy 31<sup>st</sup> October</b></p>
<p>We will utilise the feedback we receive to improve the quality of the services we provide.</p> <p>(affects tenants, leaseholders and housing applicants)</p>	<p>We receive feedback in the form of satisfaction survey responses, complaints, comments at involvement events and complements.</p> <p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivering an improvement plan developed as a result of undertaking the Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR) and publish progress within News and Views and our Annual Report.</li> <li>• Publish information on the themes that people are complaining about</li> </ul>	<p>Policy and Participation Team Leader</p> <p>March 2014</p> <p>(On Target)</p>	<p><b>Work has commenced to collate all the 'housing' intelligence together to get a full picture of what it is telling us.</b></p> <p><b>Work is progressing to ensure we can utilise the complaints system as an</b></p>	<p><b>It has been agreed with the TLC that the next Housing Service Plan should be led by feedback from the 2014 STAR Survey</b></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that our 'Local Offers' continue to reflect our tenants priorities</li> <li>• Review how affective our satisfaction surveys are in capturing the views of our tenants</li> </ul> <p>We will use this information to review our policies and procedures and enhance the information that we provide to service users.</p>		<b>effective intelligence source.</b>	
<i>Leasehold service review</i>	<p>Review the service that leaseholders receive; by:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comparing the service that leaseholders in Dacorum receive with other leaseholders across the county</li> <li>• Asking leaseholders' their view of the quality and costs associated with their existing service</li> <li>• Ensuring that all processes associated with providing services to leaseholders are as efficient as possible</li> </ul>	<p>Leasehold Team Leader</p> <p>December 2013</p> <p>(On Target)</p> <p><b>Slipping – likely completion date March 2014</b></p>	<b>Some work has commenced on this project to gather customer views and cost information</b>	<p><b>Some initial work has been done to prepare the scope of the review and to gather internal cost and performance data</b></p> <p><b>Plus data from partner social landlords</b></p>
<p><i>Older Persons Strategy</i></p> <p><i>(affects tenants, leaseholders, housing applicants and residents across the borough)</i></p>	<p>We will look at the housing, support, care and health services available to older people across the borough.</p> <p>This work will seek to understand how well these services are working together and what is needed to be done to improve the co-ordination of these services over the next 10 years.</p> <p>We will also identify whether there is sufficient provision of services for older people within the borough; whether new</p>	<p>Strategy &amp; Private Sector Housing Team Leader</p> <p>March 2014</p> <p>(On Target)</p>	<b>Housing Needs Study now complete, responses currently being analysed. Older Persons Strategy update report to OSC in September linked to Sheltered Housing review. Strategy will</b>	<b>HNS results have been analysed and have informed the first draft of the Strategy. OSC report was received well in September. OP Strategy will be ready for TLC, OSC and Cabinet as planned ahead of</b>



	<p>services are required or some are existing services are surplus to requirements.</p> <p>A new Older Persons Strategy will be developed and adopted by the Council.</p>		<p><b>be ready for OSC and Cabinet in Jan 14.</b></p>	<p><b>target.</b></p>
<p><i>Repairs &amp; Maintenance Procurement project delivery</i></p> <p><i>(affects tenants and leaseholders)</i></p>	<p><i>This work is designed to enable us to prepare for the end of our current maintenance contracts – and to ensure that a new contract(s) is in place from the spring of 2014.</i></p>	<p><i>Property and Place Group Manager</i></p> <p><i>July 2014</i></p> <p><i>(On Target)</i></p>	<p><b>Gas Contracted Awarded August 2013</b></p> <p><b>Total Asset Management Contract currently subject to Competitive Dialogue</b></p>	<p><b>New Gas contract started 1<sup>st</sup> October</b></p> <p><b>Second Stage of dialogue to start early November for final 3 contractors for Total Asset Management Contract</b></p> <p><b>Contract Award likely to be February 2014 Cabinet</b></p>
<p><i>Vulnerable people</i></p> <p><i>( affects tenants)</i></p>	<p><i>We will look at how we deliver services to ‘vulnerable people’ – for example we may do certain repair work quicker if a tenant is known to be vulnerable or be able to provide support services to ensure they are able to sustain their tenancy.</i></p>	<p><i>Tenant and Leasehold Group Manager</i></p> <p><i>October 2013</i></p> <p><i>(slightly behind)</i></p>	<p><b>Kickstart meeting planned mid October</b></p>	<p><b>A kickstart meeting has been held</b></p> <p><b>The information/ comments from the meeting have been collated and a project group has been identified to develop the full strategy document</b></p>
<p><i>Develop phase 2 and 3 of the Council New Build</i></p>	<p><i>We will develop phase 2 &amp; 3 of the Council New Build programme including purchasing land, developing</i></p>	<p><i>Housing Development Manager</i></p>	<p><b>Phases 2&amp;3 finances approved in the HRA</b></p>	<p><b>New Housing Development Strategy has been drafted</b></p>

<i>Programme</i>	<i>standard of the new homes and confirming the required budgets for the whole programme.</i>	<i>March 2014 (On Target)</i>	<i>business plan review 2013. Further update report to Cabinet Sept 13</i>	<i>for TLC, OSC and Cabinet in November 2013. This strategy addresses the standards of new homes built. Other land acquisitions with required finances have been approved by Cabinet at several different meetings</i>
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#### **4. Housing Highlights**

As well as progress against the Service Plan there have been other service improvements or pieces of work carried out which have enhanced the service to our tenants and leaseholders.

- Electronic / handheld monitoring of cleaning inspections and 'pass/fail' rates
- Introduction of a new 'Empty Homes Lead Officer and a full external review of the Empty Homes processes carried out
- Full review of the homelessness service carried out
- Gold CAWF award for pet policy 2013/14
- 'Prevention of Social Housing Fraud Funding' - successful bid for funding to tackle social housing fraud working in conjunction with Hightown Praetorian and Churches Housing Association
- Coronation Lunch at Queens square was a massive success, over 500 people attended
- Very Successful tenant conference with 132 people attending, Housing Hero's awards presented and enjoyable joint training of staff and tenants on Equality and Diversity and designated persons training.

#### **4. Housing Risk Register**

Appendix 2 details the Housing Service Operational Risk Register following the review carried out by the Assistant Director & Group Managers.

Appendix 1 p1

Appendix 1 p 2

Appendix 1 p3

Appendix 1 p4

Appendix 1 p5

Appendix 1 p6



Appendix 1p7

Appendix 2 p1

Appendix 2 p2



Appendix 2 p4





**AGENDA ITEM: 9**

**SUMMARY**

<b>Report for:</b>	<b>Housing and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>13 November 2013</b>
<b>PART:</b>	
If Part II, reason:	

<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>Quarter 2 Outturn Report</b>
Contact:	Cllr Nicholas Tiley, Portfolio Holder Finance & Resources James Deane, Assistant Director (Finance & Governance)  Author: Paul Sutton, Group Manager (Financial Services)
Purpose of report:	To provide details of the forecast outturn position as at the end of Quarter 2 2013/14.
Recommendation:	That Committee note the forecast outturn position
Consultees:	Budget managers
Historical background <i>(please give a brief background to this report to enable it to be considered in the right context).</i>	Not Applicable.
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	HRA – Housing Revenue Account GF – General Fund



## 1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline the Council's forecast outturn for 2013/14 as at 30 September 2013. The report covers the following budgets:

- General Fund
- Housing Revenue Account (HRA)
- Capital Programme

## 2. General Fund Revenue Account

2.1 The General Fund revenue account records the income and expenditure associated with all Council functions except management of the Council's own housing stock, which is accounted for within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) (see Section 3).

2.2 Appendix A separates expenditure into controllable and non-controllable categories in order to focus scrutiny on those controllable areas that officers are able to influence.

2.3 The majority of non-controllable costs result from year-end accounting adjustments, e.g. depreciation charges. These are required to show the true value of resources used to provide the Council's services, but do not result in a cash charge to taxpayers. As costs will not be known until year-end, the forecast outturn for all areas is shown as on budget.

2.4 The table below sets out the forecast outturn position for the Committee's services by subjective. This is supported by an analysis of major variances.

Housing & Community	Controllable Budget £000	Forecast Outturn £000	Forecast Variance	
			£000	%
Employees	3,008	3,097	89	3.0%
Premises	398	398	0	0.0%
Transport	58	49	(9)	-15.5%
Supplies & Services	2,196	2,193	(3)	-0.1%
Third Parties	25	25	0	0.0%
Transfer Payments	5	5	0	0.0%
Income	(3,801)	(3,918)	(117)	-3.1%
	<b>1,889</b>	<b>1,849</b>	<b>(40)</b>	<b>-2.1%</b>

### 2.5 Employees - £89k over budget (3%)

The major variance (£60k) is projected within Strategic Housing. This is due to temporary Housing Options posts. Specific grant is available within earmarked reserves to finance these posts, which will offset this pressure before year-end.

## 2.6 Income - £117k over budget (-3.1%)

There are three main variances:

- £65k from the provision of homelessness accommodation at Leys Road Hostel. This income is received from housing benefit payments, for customers of the hostel;
- £100k recovered housing benefit to off-set the cost of providing homelessness accommodation through private providers (Bed & Breakfast).

Partly offset by:

- A £63k underachievement within Regulatory Services due to the cessation of drainage service provision to the HRA following the retirement of an employee.

## 3. Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

3.1 The HRA is a ring-fenced account relating to the Council's Landlord functions. A guiding principle of the HRA is that revenue raised from rents and service charges must be sufficient to fund expenditure incurred. The forecast outturn position is shown at Appendix B.

3.2 The projected year end HRA balance is £2.718m. The forecast operating deficit is £59k – a change of £244k compared to the surplus of £185k originally budgeted. Major variances are as follows:

### 3.3 Repairs and Maintenance - £1m over budget: (9.4%)

#### Day to Day Repairs

The current projected overspend of £450k on responsive (day to day) repairs is caused by an increase in demand. The volume of repairs carried out in the first six months of 2013/14 has exceeded predictions and is significantly up on last year. Work is taking place to analyse the types of repairs so that this can inform our future repairs policy, the new Total Asset Management Contract and future planned programmes.

It is felt that the increased activity since self financing on repairs, planned works, consultation and communication has resulted in increased expectations from our tenants and leaseholders. The consequence is that more tenants are choosing to report repairs with a confidence that they will be completed .

#### Empty Homes – Void Repairs

There is a projected overspend of approximately £800k. There are two main reasons for the projected overspend in this area:

- Lettings are projected to be approximately 10% higher than in 2012/13. This is attributed in part to the welfare reform changes, which results in an

increase in the number of tenants wishing to move to a smaller home;

- The budget for 2013/14 was set using the empty homes standard for 2013/14 rather than the agreed revised standard. The difference is an average of around £500 per void repair;
- It is clear from DBC officer networks and from discussions with ARCH (Association of Retained Council Housing) that many authorities are experiencing similar pressures on their empty homes budget.

#### Planned Maintenance

A review of planned maintenance has been undertaken and total works of £250k identified that could be saved against the 2013/14 budget and completed in 2014/15

### 3.3 Revenue Contribution to Capital - £756k under budget (6.3%)

The projected overspend on Repairs and Maintenance would result in the projected closing balance falling below the minimum target balance of 5% of turnover (around £2.7m). The level of Revenue Contribution to Capital has therefore been reduced in order to maintain the balance at above the minimum target. This will not affect the delivery of the capital programme.

## 4 Capital Programme

- 4.1 The table below summarises capital forecast outturn for this committee. The detailed capital programme by scheme is set out at Appendix C.

	<b>Current Budget £000</b>	<b>Forecast Outturn £000</b>	<b>Forecast Slippage £000</b>	<b>Forecast Variance</b>	
				<b>£000</b>	<b>%</b>
General Fund	8,037	7,730	353	46	0.6%
Housing Revenue Account	27,180	27,180	0	0	0.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>35,217</b>	<b>34,910</b>	<b>353</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>0.1%</b>

- 4.2 The forecast variance is based upon the capital budget approved by Cabinet in February 2013 adjusted for slippage brought forward at outturn and items approved in year. The changes are detailed in the table and reasons set out below.:

<b>Amendments</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>Approved</b>
<b>2013/14 GF Original Budget</b>	<b>6,508</b>	
Affordable Housing Development Fund	524	Portfolio Holder Decisions
Slippage carried forward from 2012/13	254	Audit Committee - June 2013
Highbarns Land Stabilisation Project	750	Council July 2013
<b>2013/14 GF Current Budget</b>	<b>8,036</b>	
<b>2013/14 HRA Original Budget</b>	<b>23,659</b>	
Slippage carried forward from 2012/13	1,771	Audit Committee - June 2013
Estate Improvements	750	Council July 2013
Balcony Repairs	1,000	Council July 2013
Strategic Acquisitions	5,000	Council September 2013
<b>2013/14 Current Budget</b>	<b>32,180</b>	

4.3. **Decent Homes in the Private Sector (line 55)**

A review is currently being undertaken as to how this external funding should be best used to improve homes in the private sector. It is therefore not expected that the budget (£353k) will be spent this year.







**AGENDA ITEM: 10**

**SUMMARY**

<b>Report for:</b>	<b>Housing and Communities Overview &amp; Scrutiny</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>13 November 2013</b>
<b>PART:</b>	
If Part II, reason:	

<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>Get Involved Strategy 2012-15 - Update</b>
Contact:	Cllr Margaret Griffiths, Portfolio Holder for Housing  Jules Goodridge, Lead Officer Tenant Involvement – Author  Elliott Brooks, Assistant Director, Housing Service - Responsible Officer
Purpose of report:	To update the Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the Get Involved Strategy 2012-15.
Recommendations	The committee to note the report and the progress made.
Corporate objectives:	Effective and empowered tenant involvement supports the Council's corporate objectives and contributes to:  Our community capacity Economic development and regeneration Resources and value for money Affordable Housing Enhancing our profile and reputation
Implications:  'Value For Money Implications'	<u>Financial</u>  The Get Involved Strategy 2012-15 supports tenants and leaseholders getting involved through the monitoring of budgets to ensure that tenant priorities are tackled effectively.  <u>Value for Money</u>  Value for Money is a regulatory requirement for all social housing providers. By ensuring that our tenants are



empowered and involved in the services that they receive we will ultimately ensure that we are giving good value for money.

Risk Implications	Failure to deliver the Get Involved Strategy could risk the image and reputation of the Housing Service. Mechanisms have been put in place to ensure that tenants actively monitor the strategy on a regular basis to ensure that the objectives are met.
Equalities Implications	Tenant Involvement deals with the whole tenant and leaseholder community, including young people.
Health And Safety Implications	There are no health and safety implications.
Consultees:	<p>Chair of the Tenant and Leaseholder Committee</p> <p>Chair of Housing Maintenance and Environment Committee</p> <p>Vice Chair of the Tenant and Leaseholder Committee</p> <p>Vice Chair of Housing Maintenance and Environment Committee</p> <p>Two co-optee members of the Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>Members of the Tenant and Leaseholder Committee</p>
Background papers:	<p>Get Involved Strategy 2012-15 (appendix 1)</p> <p>Consultation Framework (appendix 2)</p> <p>Consultation Register (appendix 3)</p>
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	Tenant and Leaseholder Committee (TLC), Housing Maintenance and Environment Committee (HMEC), Tenant and Leaseholder Scrutiny Panel (TLSP) and Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR).

## 1.0 Background

In June 2013, a report was presented to the Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This report commented on the Get Involved Strategy 2012-15, and year 1 of the Strategy; it outlined the key objectives for year 2 of the Strategy.

This report will enable an updated position to be given to the Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as well as highlighting any challenges that the team have encountered with delivering the Strategy to date.

A copy of the Get Involved Strategy 2012-15 action plan is attached, appendix 1 and we are currently progressing year 2 of the action plan. The action plan includes hyperlinks that act as an evidence base for the work that has been done as part of the Strategy, which will also support our work to achieve the National Tenant Organisation's Accreditation.

## **2.0 Year two of the Strategy**

Year 2 of the strategy began in April 2013 and work has progressed well; we are continuing to support our top-level committees, the Tenant and Leaseholder Committee (TLC), Housing Maintenance and Environment Committee (HMEC), and Tenant and Leaseholder Scrutiny Panel (TLSP). We have successfully recruited a part time resource to help with the administration support that is involved in facilitating these groups and it is hoped that this person be in post by the beginning of December. Recruitment is also on-going, and there are still areas where we need to develop tenant involvement, such as housing management.

### **2.1 Regulatory Standards compliance**

We have recently completed the Annual Report to tenants and leaseholders for 2012/13, this shows how we are currently performing against the regulatory standards. In most areas, we are able to provide evidence of compliance. More work needs to be done around Value for Money and we also need to ensure that when we are setting objectives for the following year as part of the annual report that these are delivered on. The objectives should be a reflection of the improvements that tenants and leaseholders have highlighted as their priorities and we use Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR) data to help us to set our priorities for the Annual Report. We will also be including tenant's priorities from STAR into our future housing service plans. The STAR data will also provide us with a review of our local promises (offers) that are made to tenants and leaseholders. We now have Local Promise Champions from the TLC recruited and named in our annual report to help support the work around local promises.

### **2.2 Work so far this year**

The first six months of the year has also seen us be involved in many events and aspects of the service. We have also hosted events for Housemark and Housing Quality Network, as well as TP Herts. Our major event of the year is the Tenant and Leaseholder Day (TLD) and over 133 people attended the day.

#### **2.2.1 Tenant Involvement led events**

Tenant Involvement-led events for the first two quarters included:

- Coronation Big Lunch – Adeyfield
- You are the Key – campaign and “meet the team” events at the Old Town Hall
- Summer of Swapping – mutual exchange events
- Barge Trips – in partnership with Hightown Praetorian, Watford Community Housing Trust and Thrive Homes
- Gade Tower Fun Day
- Youth Action Entertainers – visits to sheltered schemes
- Right to Buy event on behalf of DCLG

#### **2.2.2 Events supported/attended by Tenant Involvement Team**

In addition to attending Neighbourhood Action Group meetings and Parish Council meetings, other events that we have been involved in from April to September 2013 include:

- Adeyfield Fun Day
- Your Place – Highfield

- Love your Neighbourhood – Woodhall Farm
- Tring Carnival
- Coronation Lunch – Berkhamsted
- Supported Housing Coffee mornings – informal and “clear landings”
- Adeyfield Senior Citizens’ Coffee morning
- Litter Pick Street Champion Event – Adeyfield
- Aids and Advice days – Adeyfield and Bennetts End
- Films are Adeyfield
- Kings Langley Form Fair
- Adeyfield School Careers Fair
- Adventure Playgrounds

### **2.2.3 Projects supported by Tenant Involvement**

Tenant involvement is also involved or had involvement in the following projects between April and September 2013:

- Verge Hardening
- Parking Barriers
- Community Garden Project – Gade Tower
- Your Place – CIH pilot
- Rent Campaigns
- Film-making workshops with secondary schools
- Dacorum Youth Forum
- Supported Housing Forum
- Joint working with Youth Connexions
- Skate park project
- Cleaning project

### **2.2.4 Consultations led by the Tenant Involvement Team**

We have also undertaken consultations in the following areas to look at tenants’ priorities for the areas in which they live, and work will be progressing shortly in these areas:

- Riverside Gardens
- Summer Court
- Woodhall Farm
- Everest Way/Hillary and Tedder Road
- Longlands
- Chaulden House Gardens
- Elizabeth House
- London Road/Avia Close/Kents Avenue

### **2.2.5 Quarters 3 and 4 of the strategy**

The remaining six months of the year will see us working on the following areas:

- Woodhall Farm improvements work
- Grovehill improvement works
- Runham Road and Seaton Road – energy efficiency improvements
- Customer Service portal development
- Developing our electronic methods of communication such as Facebook and twitter
- Introducing mystery shoppers
- Supporting the Tenant and Leaseholder Scrutiny Panel to undertake their first scrutiny inspection
- STAR – the next survey (service plan objective)
- Review local promises as part of the STAR survey (service plan objective)

- Longlands development
- Walkways project
- Review of the tenants' handbook

### **3.0 Consultation Framework**

We have now published the Consultation Framework, appendix 2 that is available on the website, and has been circulated to all staff in housing. We will also make arrangements for this be made available in a small booklet format that can then be sent out to tenants and leaseholders who do not have access to the internet. The Consultation Framework was a TLC priority on the Get Involved Strategy 2012-15.

We are also in the process of creating a Consultation Register, appendix 3 in draft format. The Register is being created to help publicise the consultations that officers across Housing are involved in or due to be involved in. This will be a live document and will need to be updated on a regular basis to ensure that it is fully up to date and this will be available on the website. The consultation procedure has been reviewed and this now ensures that all consultations involve tenants and leaseholders in the process where there is a change, improvement or withdrawal of a service and/or asset.

### **4.0 Taking it a step further**

We are still working towards the National Tenant Organisations accreditation and the Get Involved Strategy 2012-15 supports this objective. Achieving the NTO approved accreditation will mean that we have in place a system of accountability, self-regulation and scrutiny that actively involves our tenants. This will mean that we have not only successfully implemented the Strategy but have developed tenant involvement so that tenants have an active voice that is heard and responded to.

In addition to the existing monitoring mechanisms in place at the end of year 2 we will again be undertaking a review of the strategy with the Tenant Involvement Review Group and will work with them to set the objectives for the final year of the strategy.

### **5.0 Conclusion**

The Strategy is a three-year plan to increase the number of tenants and leaseholders that are involved in working with the Housing Service and to give those that want to be involved a flexible choice of ways to get involved. An update on the Strategy is taken to the Tenant Involvement Review Group on a regular basis and an update is given to the Tenant and Leaseholder Committee on a quarterly basis. The Chair of the Tenants and Leaseholder Committee also receives a monthly update on the Strategy.

Our tenants and leaseholders continue to play an instrumental part in the delivery of the Get Involved Strategy 2012-15, and will work with us to review and shape the Strategy over the life of the project.

**STATUS REPORT:- Action Plan to achieve our objectives**

**APPENDIX 1**

Link to NTO	Objective	Reference	Who?	By when?	Administrative or Impact	Status	Hyperlink to evidence
	<b>Year 1</b>						
A, B, C & D	Establish new involvement structure – including committees, scrutiny, local panels, tenant associations and street champions in partnership with resident services	Service Plan 2012-13	CL	Quarter 2	A	<b>Complete</b> – a new structure has been established and the Strategy will enable us to achieve this structure	<a href="#">Structure in word doc..doc</a>
A & B	Establish aspirations of the Tenant and Leaseholder Committee to improve the housing service	Service Plan 2012-13	JG	Quarter 2	I	<b>Complete</b> – this formed part of the new terms of reference for the TLC	<a href="#">TLC terms of reference 10.07.12 (final).doc</a>
A, B, C & D	Develop Tenant Scrutiny and launch the framework and recruitment at the Tenants Annual Conference 2012	Localism Act 2011 Service Plan 2012-13	CL	Quarter 2	I	<b>Complete</b> - Tenant and Leaseholder Scrutiny Panel have met and approved a Chair. Training is currently	<a href="#">..\Scrutiny\Tenant Scrutiny Form_14 Nov Recruitment.docx</a>

Link to NTO	Objective	Reference	Who?	By when?	Administrative or Impact	Status	Hyperlink to evidence
						being sourced to support them.	<a href="..\TLSP\2013 minutes\2013-08-15 TLSP minutes.doc">..\TLSP\2013 minutes\2013-08-15 TLSP minutes.doc</a>
A,B,C & D	Create a consultation framework to ensure that effective consultation is undertaken with tenants and leaseholders on changes to policy and/or services and the results are communicated effectively	TLC Priority	JG	Quarter 3	A & I	<p>DBC have a corporate consultation framework which is currently under review. We will be ensuring that this meets the requirements for our tenants and leaseholders and making recommendations to improve this where needed.</p> <p>31.01.13 framework still under review at corporate level</p> <p>22.02.13 – An update is awaited from the</p>	<a href="..\Consultation framework\2013-08-20 Housing Service Consultation Framework Final Draft.docx">..\Consultation framework\2013-08-20 Housing Service Consultation Framework Final Draft.docx</a>

Link to NTO	Objective	Reference	Who?	By when?	Administrative or Impact	Status	Hyperlink to evidence
						<p>communications team with regards to the progress of this project at corporate level. Sue has chased this and hopefully a response is due shortly</p> <p>19.03.13 – Take to TLC at next meeting – introduce Q1 13/14</p> <p>27.03.13 – Sue Prowse to take to TI review on 16.04.13 then TCL on 13.05.13</p> <p><b>Objective in Year two to complete</b></p>	
A, B, C & D	Undertake a consultation with tenants and leaseholders regarding the creation of local area panels	TPAS best practice	JG	Quarter 2	I	Consultation took place at the Tenant and Leaseholder conference with no for or against.	

Link to NTO	Objective	Reference	Who?	By when?	Administrative or Impact	Status	Hyperlink to evidence
						<p>More work will be done around local area panels following the realignment of the Tenant Involvement team to enable more grass roots involvement.</p> <p>22.02.13 – the consultation was completed but more work needs to be done in this area post recruitment campaign – this will be addressed in the year one review of the strategy.</p> <p><b>27.03.13</b> – Objective set for Tenant Involvement officers to investigate options for their patches – 1<sup>st</sup></p>	



Link to NTO	Objective	Reference	Who?	By when?	Administrative or Impact	Status	Hyperlink to evidence
						quarter 2013/14	
A,B,C & D	Create a supported housing forum to help ensure that the needs and priorities of supported housing tenants are being met	Service Plan 2012-13	OJ	Quarter 3	I	<p><b>Complete</b> - A supported housing forum has been created and they have met on several occasions to discuss matters that directly affect the service and its tenants.</p> <p>22.02.13 – the next forum is scheduled for 7<sup>th</sup> March, good attendance at the last meeting, agenda very much lead around service issues specific to supported housing.</p> <p>27.03.13 – dates of next forum are 08.05, 03.07, 04.06 and 06.11.13. ToR created all</p>	

Link to NTO	Objective	Reference	Who?	By when?	Administrative or Impact	Status	Hyperlink to evidence
						members just to sign up to them and same code of conduct etc applies	
A & D	Ensure that Tenant Involvement objectives are included in the staff appraisal process	Service Plan 2012-13	CL	Quarter 1	A & I	<b>Complete</b> – all staff have received TI objectives as part of their 2012/13 appraisal.	<a href="P:\Shared Information\Service Planning\201213\Updated 22.08.12 Service Planning Objectives 2012-13 all objectives V2 2003 2012 (2).doc">P:\Shared Information\Service Planning\201213\Updated 22.08.12 Service Planning Objectives 2012-13 all objectives V2 2003 2012 (2).doc</a> Action 1.7 in plan
A, C & D	Where possible and practical arrange training jointly for staff and tenants	TLC priority	JG	Quarter 4	A	<b>Complete</b> Staff and involved tenants attended the ARCH conference, CIH conference and STAR workshops together in	

Link to NTO	Objective	Reference	Who?	By when?	Administrative or Impact	Status	Hyperlink to evidence
						2011 and 2012. More training together will be arranged throughout 2013.	
C	Set up a framework to continually look to recruit tenants to be involved in the service via News and Views, surveys, events, consultation and the local media	Service Plan 2012-13 TLC Priority	JG	Quarter 3	A	<p>Recruitment advert to go in every edition of news and views. Various local media methods will be used for recruitment to Scrutiny Panel in the new year.</p> <p>31.01.13 – Recruitment campaign to commence in March 2013</p> <p>22.02.13 – Following the review of the recruitment campaign this will help to inform the best methods to use for continual recruitment and</p>	<a href="P:\Tenancy and leasehold Group\Policy and Participation\News &amp; Views\Final Versions\News and Views Winter 2012-13 LR.pdf">P:\Tenancy and leasehold Group\Policy and Participation\News &amp; Views\Final Versions\News and Views Winter 2012-13 LR.pdf</a>

Link to NTO	Objective	Reference	Who?	By when?	Administrative or Impact	Status	Hyperlink to evidence
						<p>succession planning, further work will therefore be undertaken in this area post April 2013.</p> <p>27.03.13 – post campaign review to be undertaken and effective methods highlighted to use going forward</p> <p>Campaign complete – methodology for continued recruitment being developed</p>	
C	Develop a system to plain English all communications to tenants and leaseholders	Service Plan 2012-13 TLC priority	SD	Quarter 4	A	News and Views has achieved Plain English standard. A Plain English course is also being arranged for 2013 by the communications	

Link to NTO	Objective	Reference	Who?	By when?	Administrative or Impact	Status	Hyperlink to evidence
						<p>team and the date will be circulated once known.</p> <p>31.01.13 – Plain English course for staff on 27.02.13</p> <p>22.02.13 – Following TI review group meeting, notes from training to be circulated to TLC to assist with article writing etc.</p> <p>19.03.13 – Given to TI review group for comment</p> <p>The communications team now work to Plain English guidelines for all communications/publications</p>	

Link to NTO	Objective	Reference	Who?	By when?	Administrative or Impact	Status	Hyperlink to evidence
A	Use the STAR survey results to identify and plan tenant led improvements across the borough	STAR Service Plan 2012-13 Local Offers	JG	Quarter 2	A & I	<p>An action plan has been drafted and elements of improvements have been incorporated within the Annual Report 2011/12 for us to deliver on and report back on through 2012/13 and the next annual report. Other items will inform service planning for 2013/14.</p> <p>31.01.13 – Objective to monitor STAR improvements to be included in the Service Plan 13/14.</p> <p>22.02.13 – Report to update position on STAR objectives so far being written this will</p>	<a href="#">P:\Tenancy and leasehold Group\Policy and Participation\Tenant's Annual report\Annual Report 2011-12\DC Annual Report WEB.pdf</a>

Link to NTO	Objective	Reference	Who?	By when?	Administrative or Impact	Status	Hyperlink to evidence
						<p>go to TLC and HCOSC</p> <p>27.03.13 – need to review action plan at next TI review group meeting to assist with work-plan for TLC for 13/14</p> <p>An improvement for STAR is in place</p>	
A, B, C & D	Undertake an Equality Impact Assessment for the Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement function and self-assess against the CIH Equality and Diversity Charter	CIH E&D Charter	CL	Quarter 4	A & I	<p>This will begin in January 2013</p> <p>31.01.13 – Training taking place on 06.02.13</p> <p>22.02.13 – Training had to be re-scheduled to 12.03.13. New guidance out from CIH. EIA should be complete by 31.03.13</p>	

Link to NTO	Objective	Reference	Who?	By when?	Administrative or Impact	Status	Hyperlink to evidence
						<p>27.03.13 – delay as Orchard software that will assist not in place until end Q1 13/14 – initial work undertaken</p> <p>Orchard software to be in place by end July 2013 when this piece of work can be completed</p> <p>20/08/2013 Work still underway with Orchard which should enable us to easily capture the information needed to undertake the EIA.</p> <p>04/09/2013 Problems with servers are delaying us be able to productively use RI Orchard. This should be resolved by 18/10/2013</p>	



Link to NTO	Objective	Reference	Who?	By when?	Administrative or Impact	Status	Hyperlink to evidence
A	Use Housemark benchmarking to establish Equality and Diversity Performance Indicators	CIH E&D Charter  Housemark	JG	Quarter 4	A	<p>The benchmark report was received on 20.12.12 therefore this piece of work can commence.</p> <p>31.01.13 PI's will be available as part of the upgraded Orchard project due to complete by early summer, we will begin reporting low level on a quarterly basis from 13/14.</p> <p><b>E&amp;D PI's established – Complete.</b></p>	<a href="..\Performance Indicators\PI back info.xlsx">..\Performance Indicators\PI back info.xlsx</a> <a href="..\Performance Indicators\2013-2014 Performance Indicators.xlsx">..\Performance Indicators\2013-2014 Performance Indicators.xlsx</a>
	Undertake a Gap analysis in preparation for the NTO accreditation	NTO best practice Regulation Tenant involvement and	JG	Quarter 4	A	<p>Work has begun on the gap analysis for the NTO accreditation.</p> <p>22.02.13 – Discussed with TI review group, to</p>	<a href="..\Project Plans and documents\NTO\NTO report for HMT.doc">..\Project Plans and documents\NTO\NTO report for HMT.doc</a>

Link to NTO	Objective	Reference	Who?	By when?	Administrative or Impact	Status	Hyperlink to evidence
		Empowerment Standard				<p>be presented to the TLC at a future meeting.</p> <p>27.03.13 – Jules to present to next TI review group meeting then to TLC 13.05.13 if possible.</p> <p>Objective moved to year two to progress</p>	
	Undertake a review of the Strategy against the year one plan. Set deadlines for year two priorities.		CL	Quarter 4	A	<p>This will take place in March 2013.</p> <p>22.02.13 – Work due to begin shortly to take to the TI review group meeting on 19.03.13.</p> <p>27.03.13 – Review completed with TI review group on 19.03.13, new</p>	

Link to NTO	Objective	Reference	Who?	By when?	Administrative or Impact	Status	Hyperlink to evidence
						objectives for 13/14 set	
	<b>Year 2</b>						
B & D	Establish a menu of flexible involvement opportunities to enable everyone to have an input into the housing service	Best Practice	JG	Q1		<p>15.05.13 - As part of the review of the Policy and Participation Team a new structure was implemented. TIO now have objectives to involve tenants in all parts of the involvement structure. This will be monitored through 121's and appraisal.</p> <p>09/07/13 update – Jules attended Group Manager for tenancy and leasehold explaining all opportunities. She is booked into Property</p>	<a href="#">..\DBC Branded Get Involved Strategy 12-15.docx</a>

Link to NTO	Objective	Reference	Who?	By when?	Administrative or Impact	Status	Hyperlink to evidence
						and place group managers meeting. <b>Complete</b>	
A	Implement consultation framework to ensure that effective consultation is undertaken with tenants and leaseholders on changes to policy and/or services and the results are communicated effectively	TLC Priority	SProwse	Q1		15.05.13 - Work has been underway with the Tenant Involvement Review Group. An Executive Panel meeting is taking place 21.05.13 to look at consultation.  Update to TLC 03.06.13.  20/08/2013 – final draft to HSMT end of August for approval. <b>Complete</b>	<a href="#">..\..\Consultation framework\2013-08-20 Housing Service Consultation Framework Final Draft.docx</a>
A, B & D	Establish the Tenant Scrutiny Panel and ensure that training is completed and the scrutiny schedule developed	Service Plan 2013/14	CL/JG	Q1		09.05.13 – enough people have shown an interest in this role. Interviews to be undertaken and then the Panel can begin.	

Link to NTO	Objective	Reference	Who?	By when?	Administrative or Impact	Status	Hyperlink to evidence
						<p>Training will be arranged firstly.</p> <p>09/07/13 update- A training package has been sourced and is going to the TI Reivew Group and the TLC for approval.</p> <p>20.08.13 – Panel met on 15.08.13 and have asked for more info from CoPS.</p> <p>04/09/2013 A trainer has now been resourced. Dates need to be booked for training. A TOR will be developed through the training.</p> <p>25.09.13 – Merron Simpson has been</p>	

Link to NTO	Objective	Reference	Who?	By when?	Administrative or Impact	Status	Hyperlink to evidence
						appointed as trainer for the TLSP. Dates 18.11.13 and 27.11.13. Recruitment is on-going to bolster the numbers of the committee	
C	Develop and introduce a “welcome pack” for all involved tenants and leaseholders	Best Practice	SB	Q1		15.05.13 – work has not yet started on this.	
C	Compile a list of publications and websites for involved tenants to have access to as a knowledge base and ensure access is available	Service Plan 2013/14	JG	Q2		15.05.13 – a list of websites has been drawn up. Further work needed on what publications would be useful for involved tenants.  20.08.13 – list of websites in new tenancy pack and available on website.  <b>Complete</b>	<a href="#">P:\Tenancy and leasehold Group\Policy and Participation\Tenant Involvement\Project Plans and documents\TI Review\Useful Webistes.docx</a>

Link to NTO	Objective	Reference	Who?	By when?	Administrative or Impact	Status	Hyperlink to evidence
C	Develop and introduce a comprehensive training package for involved tenants and leaseholders that gives flexibility of choice and a variety of learning methods	TLC Priority	CL/JG	Q2		<p>09.05.13 – Meeting with TPAS on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2013. Also spoken with WCHT who use an organisation called Linch Pin – contact made and just awaiting them to come back to us.</p> <p>03.06.13 – HQN have sent a proposal through and one has been received from TPAS.</p> <p>09/07/13 update – Keith Crampton has put forward proposals. This is going to the TI Reivew Group and the TLC for approval.</p> <p>20.08.13 - This has been agreed. First training (E&amp;D) 23.09.13.</p>	

Link to NTO	Objective	Reference	Who?	By when?	Administrative or Impact	Status	Hyperlink to evidence
						<p>Jules to produce leaflet.</p> <p>02.09.13 – Advert re training in Autumn News and Views.</p> <p>Designated Person training booked for 12.10.13.</p>	
C	<p>Establish an editorial panel to include tenants and leaseholders for all publications including leaflets and posters using Plain English as a guide</p>	Best Practice	SD	Q2		<p>Reader survey was sent out with the summer ed. of N&amp;V's and requesting volunteers for this panel. Analysis has not yet been undertaken as responses are still coming in.</p> <p>01.09.13 – 18 volunteers have joined the newly formed editorial panel. The will</p>	



Link to NTO	Objective	Reference	Who?	By when?	Administrative or Impact	Status	Hyperlink to evidence
						be involved in many aspects of our publications. <b>COMPLETE</b>	
D	Promote involvement opportunities at sign up of a new tenancy	Best Practice	SB	Q1		15.03.13 – a young person’s leaflet is currently being worked on by a young person. Due to school commitments this may not be completed until Q2.  20.08.13 The strategy is currently given out and a list of useful websites. <b>Complete</b>	<a href="F:\Jules\Admin\Useful Webistes.docx">F:\Jules\Admin\Useful Webistes.docx</a>  <a href="..\A5 FOLDED_v4a.pdf">..\A5 FOLDED_v4a.pdf</a>
D	Recruit dedicated resource to support the TLC and other committees in minute taking and arranging meetings etc.	TLC Priority	CL	Q1		09.05.13 – Issues with finance at the moment on this  03.06.13 – this has now	

Link to NTO	Objective	Reference	Who?	By when?	Administrative or Impact	Status	Hyperlink to evidence
						<p>been resolved and has been passed through for approval. 09/07/13 update – all forms have now been approved. Job Description, Person Specification and recruitment advert has been forwarded to Human Resources.</p> <p>20.08.13 As this is a new position, this requires a rigorous assessment, this is now complete and the banding agreed. Now awaiting final sign off by CE, then can proceed to advert.</p> <p>04/09/2013 All approved now. Advert will be out 10/09/2013 for two weeks. Staff</p>	

Link to NTO	Objective	Reference	Who?	By when?	Administrative or Impact	Status	Hyperlink to evidence
						<p>should be in position by end of October.</p> <p>25.09.13 – Closing date for advert is 27.09.13, shortlisting to take place w/c 30.09.13 and interviews w/c 07.10.13.</p> <p>Interviews undertaken and successful candidate has accepted. It is hoped they will be in post by December.</p>	
C	Develop electronic methods of involvement via the website	Service Plan 2013/14	SPrice	Q3		<p>25.09.13 – a review of the website and the format/links is currently being undertaken. Selina is working with Katie Warner on this. Facebook page is up and running. Currently on</p>	

Link to NTO	Objective	Reference	Who?	By when?	Administrative or Impact	Status	Hyperlink to evidence
						track.	
D	Identify budget and space to create a “tenant resource centre”	Best Practice	JG	Q3		Discussion to be had with TI review group regarding a “virtual” centre.	
A	Delegate budgets through sub committees, local area panels	TLC Priority	CL	Q2		09.05.13 – work to begin on this in June 2013  20.08.13 no budgets have yet been identified/allocated. However the TLC/HMEC will be involved in helping us to develop a protocol for the spend against the Estate/Environmental Improvement Budget.	
A	Set up a process for the TLC to enable them to undertake a review and self-assessment of	TLC Priority/	SD	Q3			

Link to NTO	Objective	Reference	Who?	By when?	Administrative or Impact	Status	Hyperlink to evidence
	their core activities over the year that highlights improvements or changes to systems that have been as a direct result of their involvement - this will then form the basis of an annual report by TLC to tenants/leaseholders and members.	Best Practice					
	Achieve NTO accreditation	Best Practice	JG	Q4		20.08.13 TLSP would like to look at certain elements of this and use the framework as a process of assessment for our services. Currently on target.	
	Undertake a review of the Strategy against the year two plan. Set deadlines for year three priorities.		CL/TLC	Q4			
	<b>Year 3</b>						
D	Constitute the TLC in a move towards a tenants federation and work with members services to include within the Councils						

Link to NTO	Objective	Reference	Who?	By when?	Administrative or Impact	Status	Hyperlink to evidence
	constitution						
C	Establish tenant associations in high rise blocks and sheltered accommodation						
B	Increase the percentage of involved tenants by 5% between 2012-15						
B & C	Introduce neighbourhood agreements via the local area panels to ensure that tenants priorities for improvements are being tackled in their local area						

# Dacorum Borough Council Housing Landlord

## Consultation Framework 2013





## Housing Service Consultation Framework

Consultation is a very valuable part of tenant involvement as it gives tenants and leaseholders the opportunity to comment on issues that directly affect them.

It is essential that consultation is well planned, co-ordinated, robust and cost-effective, and that it is used to develop action plans to improve the quality of services we are delivering to our tenants and leaseholders.

Our definition of consultation is: **Ask, Listen, (Check\*) Act.**

### When do we consult?

When a change to a service or policy is needed that directly affects tenants and/or leaseholders we will ask your opinion on this. We will listen to your responses and we will then act upon them. If we are unable to act on your responses then we will give you a reason why we have taken the decisions that have been made. Matters that affect tenants and/or leaseholders locally will be consulted at that local level to ensure that the best outcome in local areas is achieved.

### We will also consult our tenants and leaseholders:

- when changes implemented need monitoring/tracking
- when there are unanswered questions from previous survey results that service officers cannot answer themselves
- when residents' opinion or feedback is required

**\*Where a consultation forms part of a project or piece of work that the Tenant and Leaseholder Committee (TLC) are involved in or are monitoring then we will refer all results of the consultation back to them before proceeding. This enables the Tenant and Leaseholder Committee to *check* that the best method of consultation has been used and that the consultation has been valuable. Failure to consult on changes to a service or policy that directly affects tenants and/or leaseholders will result in the TLC referring the matter to the Executive Panel for a full review and investigation on behalf of those tenants and/or leaseholders affected**



## **Benefits of Consultation**

### **To our tenants and leaseholders:**

- Opportunity to influence decisions and actions that affect their lives
- Opportunity to express their views and concerns
- Opportunity to suggest service improvements
- Increased understanding and involvement with the Council

### **To the Housing team:**

- Better decision making
- Better understanding of the needs of local people
- Early warning of potential problems
- Opportunity to make services more relevant and effective

## **Consultation Procedure**

This consultation procedure defines the methods and standards of consultation to be adopted by Dacorum Borough Council's Housing Service. Its purpose is to enable and encourage the effective involvement of tenants and leaseholders in matters that affect them and it ensures that tenants, leaseholders and their recognised group/s are made aware of **when, why and how** they are consulted and the outcome of any consultation. At all times consultations will abide by Dacorum Borough Council's '**Consultation Ethical Guidelines**'

This framework forms part of the Policy and Participation team's procedure document for Tenant Involvement.

## **Consultation standard**

### **Consultation procedures will vary according to:**

- The subject of the consultation, which may for example be an improvement or repair scheme, a regeneration initiative or a strategic issue.
- The people to be consulted, which might be all tenants and/or leaseholders, a whole block, estate or specific individuals and/or households.
- Particular circumstances; there might be specific local issues, environmental considerations, related legislation or guidance to take into account.

### **The Housing Service will use a variety of methods to achieve our consultation standards including:**

- Informing tenants, leaseholders and their recognised associations of the consultations taking place in their area.

- Hold public meetings to discuss how the issue will be progressed – where appropriate.
- Set up a steering group if appropriate or requested by residents, which involves tenants, leaseholders and residents affected.
- Provide information to all those affected regarding any planned timetable, who to contact and how to complain during the process.
- Give regular and timely updates and advice to everyone affected and involved on lengthy projects.
- Provide opportunities for those affected to have their say on decisions and be involved in the process, where appropriate.
- Those that have been involved may be asked to evaluate the consultation at the end of the process.
- All consulted will be informed of how to access the outcome of any consultation. Results of consultations affecting all tenants or leaseholders will be published on our website.
- A variety of methods will be used to reach as many people as possible and ensure that those consulted are representative of those affected by the proposed change.
- Include the use of social media, such as Facebook, twitter and the website to increase the number of methods/ways in which people can have a say.
- Tenants cannot be formally involved in the decision-making process when appointing Housing staff. However there may be opportunities for an informal introduction for shortlisted candidates for all recruitment to the Tenant Involvement Team and Housing Service Team Leaders. The TLC will also be notified when a Group Manager is being recruited. All new Housing staff will be given the opportunity to attend as an observer at TLC and/or Housing Maintenance and Environment Committee (HMEC).

### **The role of the Local Promise Champion**

Local Promise Champions are involved tenants who work with the Housing Service to ensure that we are complying with the Housing Regulations set out by the Homes and Community Agency; they are representatives from the TLC. Each Local Promise Champion monitors one of the standards. The Local Promise Champion will be informed of any consultation that is taking place within their area. This will enable them to monitor the process and ensure that effective consultation is being undertaken.

### **Consultation Register**

From October 2013 a register of consultation will be created and this will be shared on the website so that all tenants and leaseholders can view what consultations are ongoing at any time. Following testing and feedback, this will be formally introduced from 2014/15 and will form part of our local promises and service standards.

The consultation summary chart overleaf (page 4) shows at a glance the circumstances in which tenants, leaseholders and their groups should be consulted or informed of changes that affect them. Please note it is not an exhaustive list.

A variety of consultation methods may be used, and may include writing to them individually, or publishing an article in News and Views. Appendix 1 shows some levels of involvement.

In order to maximise the number of people that respond to consultation and give as many opportunities as possible for people to have a say we will also use social media which may include Facebook, twitter, and the website. Appendix 2 shows the procedure we will take on all consultations.

In all cases Dacorum Borough Council will abide by any relevant law or regulatory guidance.

### Consultation Summary Chart

Issues	Every DBC Tenant	Every DBC Leaseholder	All affected tenants and leaseholders	Residents' Associations	Tenant and Leaseholder Committee
Changes to tenancy conditions	✓				✓
Changes to the provision of the Housing Service	✓	✓		✓	✓
Improvements to the provision of the Housing Service	✓	✓		✓	✓
Withdrawal of a Housing Service	✓	✓		✓	✓
Changes to general repairs procedures	✓			✓	✓
Changes to rent collection	✓			✓	✓
Changes to Lettings Policy	✓			✓	✓
Programmed Maintenance Works: ❖ Demolitions/decants  ❖ Modernisation/ Refurbishment  ❖ Environmental/Estate works			✓	✓	✓
Improvements to a local area			✓	✓	
Design modifications to individual properties or blocks			✓	✓	
Changes to Lease conditions		✓			✓
Changes to Tenants' Handbook	✓				✓
Changes to Leaseholders' Handbook		✓			✓
Changes to leaseholders' service charges		✓			✓
Any change to charges made to tenants			✓		✓
Introduction of other new Policy or Procedure			✓	✓	✓
Changes or reviews of existing policies			✓		✓
Developing methods for monitoring the			✓	✓	✓

quality of the service i.e. landscaping/cleaning etc.					
Introduction of local promises	✓	✓			✓
Developing a new Strategy i.e. Older Persons Strategy	✓				✓
Changes to the Housing Strategy	✓	✓			✓
Annual Report	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Homelessness Strategy ❖ This may include residents of the borough in addition to tenants and leaseholders	✓	✓			✓

It may also be necessary to consult with a variety of partners or other agencies if they are affected by the issue being consulted on. This could include Councillors, internal Council departments, and external agencies such as Hertfordshire County Council, the local Constabulary, and other residents in the area. (This is not an exhaustive list).

#### **Data protection and how the information will be used.**

The Data Protection Act 1998 ensures that the information provided will only be used for research or to produce statistics.

The data is confidential and only the aggregated data which cannot be attributed to any individual will be published.

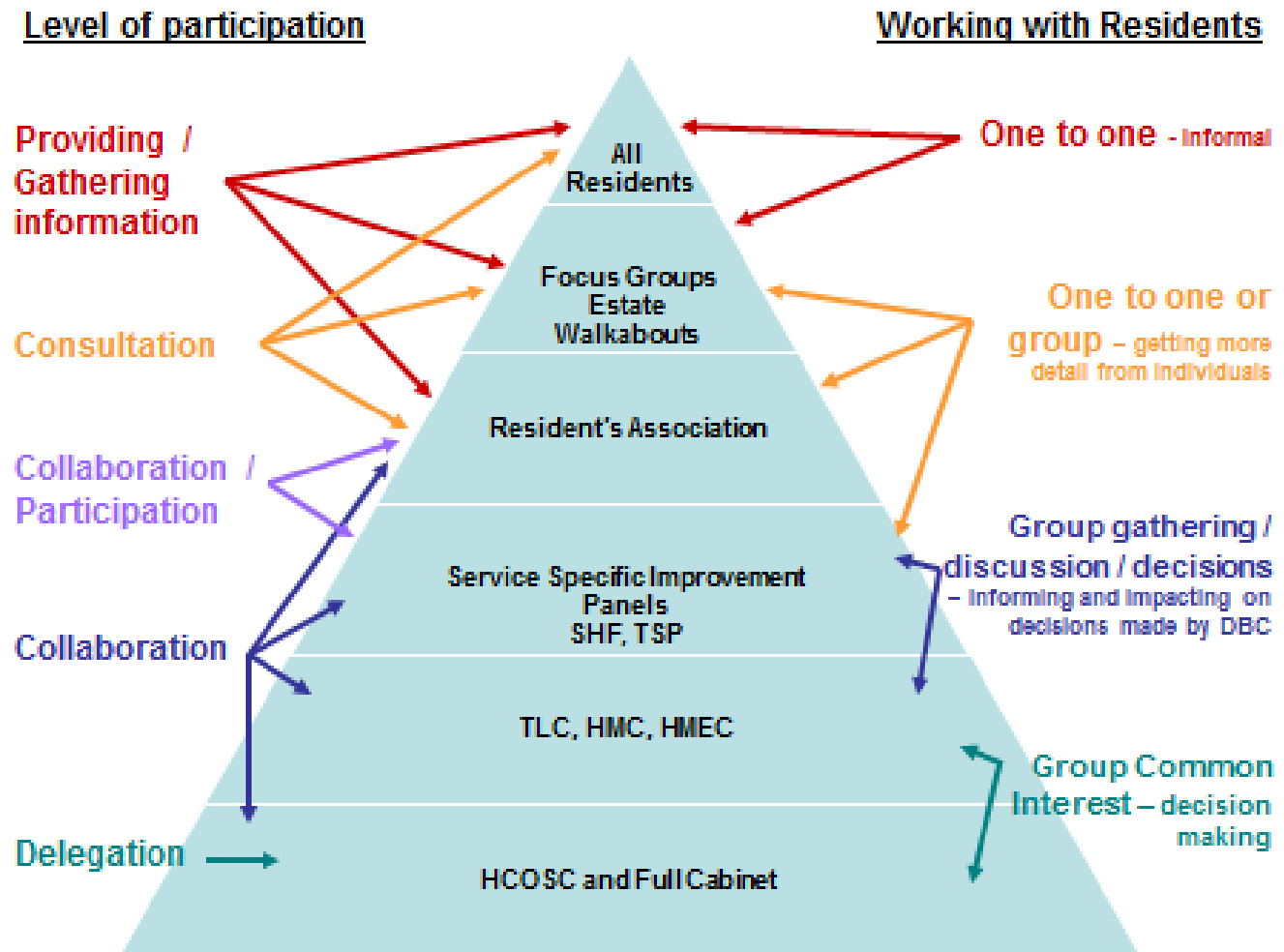
#### **Equal Opportunities**

We will include Equal Opportunities questions to help us ensure that we are hearing from and considering all sections of the community. These questions are optional.

#### **Contact Details**

For further information on consultations, please contact Tenant Involvement on 01442 228000 or email [tenantinvolvement@dacorum.gov.uk](mailto:tenantinvolvement@dacorum.gov.uk)

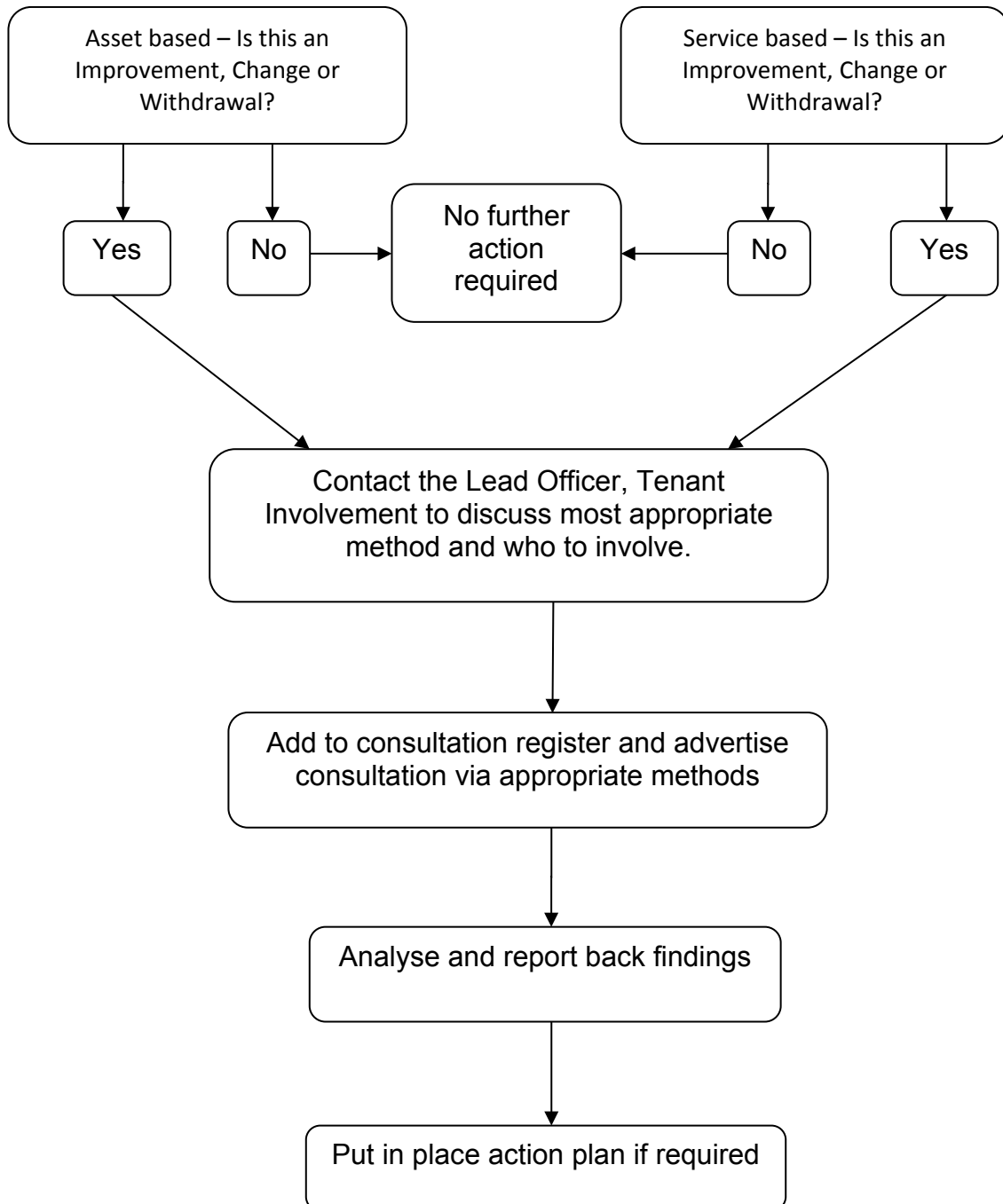
(Appendix 1)



Levels of involvement

(Appendix 2)

**Consultation Procedure**



# Dacorum Borough Council Housing Landlord

## Consultation Register 2013/14



## Consultation Register

<b>Consultation:</b>	Preparation of the Vulnerability Strategy
<b>Group:</b>	Tenant and Leaseholder Group
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Andy Vincent
<b>Timeframe:</b>	Autumn/Winter 2013
<b>Consultees:</b>	Tenant population, waiting list applicants and Tenant and Leaseholder Committee (TLC)

<b>Consultation:</b>	Preparation of the Digital Inclusion Strategy
<b>Group:</b>	Tenant and Leaseholder Group
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Andy Vincent
<b>Timeframe:</b>	Winter/Spring 2013/14
<b>Consultees:</b>	Tenant population and local residents, Tenant and Leaseholder Committee (TLC)

<b>Consultation:</b>	Preparation of the Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy
<b>Group:</b>	Tenant and Leaseholder Group
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Lindsey Walsh
<b>Timeframe:</b>	Autumn/Winter 2013
<b>Consultees:</b>	Tenant population and local residents, Tenant and Leaseholder Committee (TLC)

<b>Consultation:</b>	STAR Survey
<b>Group:</b>	Tenant and Leaseholder Group
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Carolyn Leech
<b>Timeframe:</b>	Winter/Spring 2013/14
<b>Consultees:</b>	Whole tenant and leaseholder population

<b>Consultation:</b>	Launch of the web self-service portal
<b>Group:</b>	Tenant and Leaseholder Group
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Andy Vincent
<b>Timeframe:</b>	Autumn/Winter 2013
<b>Consultees:</b>	Tenant representatives
<b>Included:</b>	Introduction of automated text messaging
<b>Consultation:</b>	Leaseholder Handbook
<b>Group:</b>	Tenant and Leaseholder Group
<b>Responsible</b>	Alison Chatterjee



<b>Officer:</b>	
<b>Timeframe:</b>	Autumn 2013
<b>Consultees:</b>	Leaseholders

<b>Consultation:</b>	Community Alarm Upgrade
<b>Group:</b>	Tenant and Leaseholder Group
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Dharini Chandarana
<b>Timeframe:</b>	Autumn/Winter 2013
<b>Consultees:</b>	Supported Housing tenants

<b>Consultation:</b>	Tenants Handbook
<b>Group:</b>	Tenant and Leaseholder Group
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Carolyn Leech
<b>Timeframe:</b>	Autumn/Winter 2013
<b>Consultees:</b>	Tenant population, tenant representatives, and Tenant and Leaseholder Committee (TLC)

<b>Consultation:</b>	Parking Barriers
<b>Group:</b>	Tenant and Leaseholder Group
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Andy Vincent
<b>Timeframe:</b>	Autumn/Winter 2013
<b>Consultees:</b>	Local tenants and leaseholders and local tenant representatives
<b>Areas:</b>	Elizabeth House Florence Longman House London Road/Avia Close London Road/Weymouth Street Kents Avenue

<b>Consultation:</b>	Development and Improvement - Asset
<b>Group:</b>	Property and Place
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Katherine Taylor
<b>Timeframe:</b>	Autumn/Winter 2013
<b>Consultees:</b>	Local tenants and leaseholders and local tenant representatives, Tenant and Leaseholder Committee
<b>Areas:</b>	Longlands

<b>Consultation:</b>	Estate Improvements
<b>Group:</b>	Property and Place Group

<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Simon Smith
<b>Timeframe:</b>	Autumn/Winter 2013
<b>Consultees:</b>	Local tenant and leaseholders, and Tenant and Leaseholder Committee
<b>Areas:</b>	Woodhall Farm Grovehill

<b>Consultation:</b>	Mobility Policy
<b>Group:</b>	Property and Place Group
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Simon Smith
<b>Timeframe:</b>	Autumn 2013
<b>Consultees:</b>	Tenant and Leaseholder Committee, Housing and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Supported Housing Forum

<b>Consultation:</b>	Training packages for tenants
<b>Group:</b>	Tenant and Leaseholder Group
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Jules Goodridge
<b>Timeframe:</b>	Winter/Spring 2013/14
<b>Consultees:</b>	Involved tenants and Tenant and Leaseholder Committee

## AGENDA ITEM: 11

### SUMMARY

<b>Report for:</b>	<b>Housing and Community Overview &amp;Scrutiny</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>13 November 2013</b>
<b>PART:</b>	<b>1</b>
If Part II, reason:	

<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>STAR Survey update report</b>
Contact:	Councillor Margaret Griffiths, Portfolio Holder for Housing Responsible Officer: Elliott Brooks, Assistant Director, Housing Authors: Suzy Donaldson, Housing Policy Officer Sue Prowse, Tenant Involvement Officer
Purpose of report:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. To update the committee on our year end progress in delivering the STAR 2012 Improvement Plan</li><li>2. To outline our approach in highlighting areas for improvement as a result of tenant and leaseholder priorities identified in the STAR survey including how the results of STAR 2014 will support service planning for 2014-16</li><li>3. To confirm that the Tenant and Leaseholder Committee will be involved in monitoring progress made against tenant and leaseholder priorities identified in STAR 2014</li></ol>
Recommendations	That the committee note the information contained within the report
Corporate objectives:	Improving customer satisfaction supports the Council's corporate objectives and help contribute to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Our community capacity</li><li>• Resources and Value for Money</li><li>• Enhancing our profile and reputation</li></ul> STAR supports the Homes and Communities Agency regulatory standards, thereby providing evidence that we meet and exceed the requirements in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tenant Involvement and Empowerment</li><li>• Home</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tenancy</li> <li>• Neighbourhood and Community</li> </ul>
Implications:	<p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>A budget of £25,000 has been allocated to this project, to be met from existing resources.</p> <p>Any financial implications arising from the delivery of improvements resulting from the STAR survey results have already been identified within the Housing Service budget.</p>
'Value For Money Implications'	<p><u>Value for Money</u></p> <p>Targeting resources to areas of the Housing Service most in need of improvement helps ensure the maximum value for money for our tenants and leaseholders.</p>
Risk Implications	<p>Failure to act upon customer feedback and performance issues could impact upon the reputation of Dacorum Borough Council.</p> <p>A lack of consultation with tenants and leaseholders about their satisfaction with the services that they receive could lead to a failure to target resources effectively. This in turn may lead to further dissatisfaction and ultimately impact on the image and reputation of Dacorum Borough Council and its Housing Service.</p>
Equalities Implications	<p>Equality Impact Assessment reviewed/carried out as part of STAR project.</p> <p>Survey results could be weighted to determine whether or not minority groups have unrepresentative levels of dissatisfaction when compared with the tenant and leaseholder population as a whole.</p>
Health And Safety Implications	None identified.
Consultees:	<p>Tenants and Leaseholders</p> <p>Tenant and Leaseholder Committee</p> <p>Housing Staff</p>
Background papers:	<p>STAR survey 2012 – recent News and Views articles</p> <p><a href="#">Autumn 2013:</a></p> <p><a href="#">News and Views autumn 2013</a></p> <p><a href="#">Summer 2013:</a></p> <p><a href="#">News and Views summer 2013</a></p>

	<p>STAR Presentation to committee June 2012</p> <p><a href="#">STAR 2012 results presentation</a></p> <p>STAR improvement plan progress report to committee</p> <p>March 2013</p> <p><a href="#">STAR satisfaction survey progress update report HCOSC 13 March 2013</a></p>
<p>Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:</p>	<p>STAR – Survey of Tenants and Residents</p> <p>STATUS - Standardised Tenant Satisfaction Survey</p> <p>TLC – Tenant and Leaseholder Committee</p> <p>HMEC – Housing Maintenance and Environment Committee</p>

## 1. Background

STAR is a standardised approach to tenant and resident satisfaction surveys developed by and copyright to HouseMark. Guidelines for running STAR surveys were originally published in July 2011. DBC's first STAR survey was developed in conjunction with tenants and was distributed to all tenants and leaseholders in January 2012.

The STAR survey is a comprehensive satisfaction survey covering all aspects of the Housing Service. The purpose of the survey is to help identify areas of lower satisfaction so that improvements can be put in place to address them.

Three separate STAR surveys were issued to all our general needs tenants, supported housing tenants and leaseholders in January 2012. Surveying tenants, leaseholders and supported housing tenants separately enables us to identify both general issues, such as lack of parking, but also more group specific issues requiring improvement or additional resources. It is also consistent with HouseMark guidelines for STAR surveys.

Prior to STAR, the last robust housing survey of our tenants and leaseholders was carried out in 2008 through the STATUS survey. At this time only a sample of tenants and leaseholders received a survey as opposed to 100% for the 2012 STAR survey.

The next STAR survey will be carried out early in 2014, and this will again be sent to all tenants and leaseholders.

## **2. STAR 2012 improvement Plan**

The STAR improvement plan was developed to address areas of the service attracting lower levels of satisfaction in the STAR 2012 survey.

To ensure that tenants, leaseholders and supported housing tenants feel that their feedback has been taken on board we have provided regular progress updates in News and Views as well as through the Annual Report. It is hoped that this will encourage a similarly significant proportion of tenants and leaseholders to complete the next STAR survey early next year.

Our approach for 2014 – 2016 will be to feed the STAR survey results into the process for Housing service planning as this is a more effective way of monitoring and delivering tenants' and leaseholders' priorities.

The Tenant and Leaseholder Committee will also be able to easily identify the improvements that have been highlighted as a result of STAR 2014 and monitor the improvements that have been made through the quarterly reports that they receive in relation to the Service Plan.

## **3. How have we performed?**

The STAR 2012 Improvement Plan update (see appendix A) provides information regarding our performance in delivering the improvement plan. It is evident that we have made good progress in the majority of areas or are on track to do so in the near future. Details of the key areas for improvement and our progress in addressing them can be found below:

### **3.1 Parking**

Parking has been identified as a major concern for tenants, supported housing tenants and leaseholders. Lack of parking provision and problems associated with anti-social parking have been the main issues that we have sought to address. A parking strategy for Housing land will be launched in December following consultation with tenants and leaseholders from the Housing Maintenance and Environment Committee. This will help to create more parking and tackle anti-social parking.

Monitoring of parking and improvements in this area will be undertaken by the Housing Maintenance and Environment Committee (HMEC) with regular updates being taken to the Tenant and Leaseholder Committee by the Chair of the HMEC.

### **3.2 Cleaning**

Cleaning has been identified as a problem area by both tenants and leaseholders living in flats. Satisfaction with cleaning of external communal areas has been particularly low and a number of measures have been put in place to address this. Information provided to residents has improved greatly, with signs installed in all blocks detailing when cleaning will be carried out. Tenants and leaseholders have also received a detailed 'Service standards' booklet outlining the service they should expect to receive and giving them information about what to do if they do not feel they are receiving the correct level of service. New robust monitoring measures have also been put in place, to ensure that all cleaners' visits are recorded and that quality control checks can be carried out.

Two additional members of staff were recruited to the Housing Cleaning Service in October 2013. They are each equipped with a van and will be expected to take a proactive role in

dealing with problems such as fly tipping on Housing land, build-up of moss on hard surfaces and responding to residents' reports of any cleaning service issues.

Cleaning will form part of the monitoring remit for the HMEC with regular updates being taken to the TLC by the Chair of the HMEC.

### **3.3 Maintenance of planted areas**

The maintenance of planted areas was identified as an area in need of improvement by tenants, supported housing tenants and leaseholders. We have responded to what tenants and leaseholders have told us and following consultation with Clean, Safe and Green a new Service Level Agreement (SLA) has been agreed which will go live in March 2014. It is intended that this will help to address any weaker areas and improve levels of satisfaction with the service. To assist with the monitoring of the SLA tenant volunteers from neighbouring blocks are to be recruited to report any problem areas. Performance against the SLA will be monitored by the HMEC with regular updates being taken to the TLC by the Chair of the HMEC.

### **3.4 Leaseholders**

It is evident that satisfaction rates amongst leaseholders are lower than those for tenants and supported housing tenants. One of the key measures put in place to try and address this has been greater communication. By engaging more with leaseholders we are able to gain more of an understanding of the underlying issues so that we can focus on them. Leaseholders have been actively encouraged to get more involved in the Housing Service through News and Views and the 'You are the Key' campaign. The Leaseholder Group will be re-launched following the distribution of the new Leaseholder Handbook.

While satisfaction with repairs and maintenance was relatively high amongst tenants and supported housing tenants, leaseholders identified a number of problem areas. A new leaseholder handbook will be launched shortly to help outline the level of service that leaseholders should expect to receive. Meetings with leaseholder representatives will also be taking place to discuss the problem areas. Representatives from the relevant service area will be present at the meetings to answer any questions and try to resolve any issues.

## **4. Developing and delivering the 2014 STAR Survey**

Involving our tenants and leaseholders both in developing the survey and the methodology for producing, delivering, administering and evaluating it is of paramount importance.

Since the early stages of developing the 2012 survey we have taken every possible step to raise awareness of STAR and encourage survey completion.

DBC's next STAR survey will be distributed in January 2014. A series of meetings with tenants and staff were arranged in order to develop the 2014 survey and determine methodology for both the survey itself and handling the data received. An article in the autumn 2013 edition of News and Views invited all tenants and leaseholders to attend these meetings to help us develop the survey and 'make sure we ask you the right questions'.

## **5. Monitoring and evaluating the results of the 2014 STAR Survey**

Once the results of the survey have been fully analysed, comparison will be carried out with the results of the 2012 survey to see if satisfaction has declined, improved or stayed the same. We will also benchmark our results against other members of the HouseMark Local

Authority Benchmarking Club. Areas with low or declining rates of satisfaction will be addressed within the Housing service plan.

More robust monitoring of the Housing service plan will also take place through the Tenant and Leaseholder Committee to ensure that timescales are being met and that any blockages to delivering actions can be addressed.

We will continue to use News and Views and the Annual Report as methods of reporting the results of the STAR 2014 and also of the progress made against the improvements that have been highlighted as our tenant and leaseholders priorities.



**STAR Improvement Plan progress April 2012 – December 2013**

Improvement area	Objective	Action	By when?	Lead Officer	Update
<b>Communicating effectively</b>					
<p><b>Extent to which tenants feel their views are being taken into account</b></p> <p><b>STAR result:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tenants <b>60% satisfied</b></li> </ul>	<p>Ensure feedback from STAR and other consultation is acted upon. Publicise opportunities for tenants to get involved</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Include regular STAR update in News and Views</li> <li>➤ Promote opportunities for involvement through:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tenants Conference</li> <li>• News and Views (N&amp;V)</li> <li>• Community events</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Quarterly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual</li> <li>• Quarterly</li> <li>• Ongoing</li> </ul>	<p>CL/SD</p>	<p>An update on progress in meeting STAR improvement plan objectives has been included in every edition of News and Views. This helps to ensure that our tenants and leaseholders are kept informed and demonstrates our commitment to improving the Housing service.</p> <p>Third annual Tenant and Leaseholder Day (conference) took place in September. Excellent feedback received and numbers attending have grown year on year.</p>
<p><b>Contacting DBC in the last 12 months with a query other than service charges: was getting hold of right person easy or difficult</b></p> <p><b>STAR result:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leaseholders <b>Easy 53% (32% answered difficult)</b></li> </ul>	<p>Ensure we provide an accessible, efficient service to our leaseholders</p>	<p>Publicise ways in which leaseholders can get in touch through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• News and Views</li> <li>• Leaseholder Handbook</li> </ul>	<p>December 2013</p>	<p>SB</p>	<p>Dedicated Service Charges team respond to queries promptly.</p> <p>Team featured in News and Views to encourage leaseholders to get involved and to publicise contact details.</p> <p>New leaseholders' handbook developed in consultation with leaseholders, includes separate contact</p>

					sheet.
<b>Percentage of Supported Housing tenants with internet access at home</b>  <b>STAR result:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supported Housing 76% have no internet access</li> </ul>	Improve accessibility of internet access for Supported Housing tenants	Install internet enabled computers in every Supported Housing Scheme and provide training to tenants as required.	December 2013	DC/AV	Training has been held in some supported housing schemes to help tenants get on line. The installation of internet enabled computers in all supported housing schemes is a priority within the new Digital Inclusion Strategy.
<b>Neighbourhood issues</b>					
<b>Extent to which tenants feel parking is a problem in their neighbourhood</b>  <b>STAR result:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tenants 40% feel is major problem</li> <li>Leaseholders 30% feel is major problem</li> <li>Supported Housing 31% feel is a major problem</li> </ul>	Improve quality of parking for our tenants and leaseholders	Support corporate parking project to look at improvement, prevention and traffic order controls.	December 2013	AV/SS	<p>A parking strategy for housing land will be launched in December following consultation with the Housing Maintenance and Environment Committee (HMEC). The strategy will address issues associated with anti-social parking and provide additional parking provision.</p> <p>Work on the first supported housing scheme (Elizabeth House) has recently commenced. Work on the remaining nine schemes/high rise blocks will follow with a completion date of March 2014.</p>
<b>Extent to which tenants feel rubbish or litter is a problem in their neighbourhood</b>	Reduce rubbish and litter within neighbourhoods and improve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Introduce litter picks as part of the local area walkabouts</li> <li>➤ Work with street</li> </ul>	Ongoing	JG	<p>Local area walkabouts available on request.</p> <p>Consultation is to be undertaken with</p>

<b>STAR result:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tenants 19% feel is major problem</li> <li>• Leaseholders 23% feel is major problem</li> </ul>	reporting mechanisms	champions to ensure litter picking in area			the Tenant and Leaseholder Committee (TLC) shortly to see if any partnership work can be undertaken with street champions.
<b>Grounds maintenance and cleaning</b>					
<b>Tenants satisfaction with maintenance of planted areas</b>  <b>STAR result:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tenants 60% satisfied</li> <li>• Leaseholders 51% satisfied</li> <li>• Supported Housing 60% satisfied</li> </ul>	Improve maintenance of planted areas to increase satisfaction levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Service Level Agreement to be developed with Clean Safe and Green (CSG)</li> <li>➤ Recruit tenants in blocks of flats to monitor the standard of work.</li> </ul>	December 2013	SS/AV  CL	<p>Service Level Agreement has been developed with Clean, Safe and Green and will be operational from March 2014.</p> <p>A campaign to recruit tenants to assist with the monitoring of work will commence shortly.</p>
<b>Tenants living in flats: satisfaction with cleaning of internal communal areas</b>  <b>STAR result:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tenants 64% satisfied</li> <li>• Leaseholders 57% satisfied</li> </ul>	<p>Improve monitoring arrangements for cleaning service.</p> <p>Communicate level of service tenants should expect to receive.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Install signs in all blocks detailing cleaning schedule for completion by cleaners.</li> <li>➤ Issue service standards booklet to all residents</li> <li>➤ Service quality to be monitored through Housing Maintenance and Environment Committee (HMEC) and local residents.</li> </ul>	December 2013	ST	<p>Signs have been installed in all blocks detailing areas to be cleaned. Cleaners record details of cleaning carried out at every visit. All cleaning staff carry devices which help to monitor when visits have taken place. Cleaning supervisors have also been issued with tablets which provide details of all quality inspections carried out.</p>
<b>Tenants living in flats: satisfaction with cleaning of external communal areas</b>					<p>A service standards booklet has been issued to all tenants detailing the service</p>

<p><b>STAR result:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tenants 51% satisfied</li> <li>• Leaseholders 40% satisfied</li> </ul>					<p>they should expect to receive. Cleaning schedules detailing when cleaning will be carried out have also been made available on our website.</p> <p>Updates on how the service is performing have been provided in News and Views.</p> <p>Updates have also been provided to the HMEC, who will continue to monitor progress.</p>
<b>Repairs and maintenance</b>					
<p><b>Thinking about your property, block or scheme: external building repairs and maintenance</b></p> <p><b>STAR result:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leaseholders 42% satisfied</li> </ul>	<p>Increase leaseholder satisfaction with repairs and maintenance service</p>	<p>Consult with leaseholders on repairs and maintenance as part of Leaseholder Service Review.</p>	<p>December 2013</p>	<p>CF/SB</p>	<p>Leaseholder Group meetings will be re-launched following distribution of Leaseholder Handbook.</p> <p>Initial kick-start meeting planned to help identify what the issues are. Meetings will then follow focussing on a different issue each time.</p> <p>Representatives from service areas will be invited to the meetings as appropriate to answer questions/assist.</p>
<p><b>Satisfaction with way DBC as owner of freehold deals with repairs and maintenance</b></p> <p><b>STAR result:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leaseholders 54% satisfied</li> </ul>					
<p><b>Thinking of last repair: time taken before work started</b></p>					

<p><b>STAR result:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leaseholders 49% satisfied</li> </ul>	<p>Increase leaseholder satisfaction with repairs and maintenance service</p>	<p>Consult with leaseholders on repairs and maintenance as part of Leaseholder Service Review.</p>	<p>December 2013</p>	<p>CF/SB</p>	<p>Leaseholder Group meetings will be re-launched following distribution of Leaseholder Handbook.</p> <p>Initial kick-start meeting planned to help identify what the issues are. Meetings will then follow focussing on a different issue each time.</p> <p>Representatives from service areas will be invited to the meetings as appropriate to answer questions/assist.</p>
<p><b>Thinking of last repair: overall quality of work</b></p> <p><b>STAR result:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leaseholders 41% satisfied</li> </ul>					
<p><b>Thinking of last repair: repair being done right first time</b></p> <p><b>STAR result:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leaseholders 53% satisfied</li> </ul>					
<p><b>Thinking of last repair: keeping dirt and mess to a minimum</b></p> <p><b>STAR result:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leaseholders 62% satisfied</li> </ul>					

<p><b>Thinking of last repair: service you received on this occasion</b></p> <p><b>STAR result:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leaseholders 62% satisfied</li> </ul>					
<p><b>Value for Money</b></p>					
<p><b>Leaseholders satisfaction with service charge providing value for money</b></p> <p><b>STAR result:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leaseholders 55% satisfied</li> </ul>	<p>Increase leaseholder satisfaction that service charge represents value for money</p>	<p>Consult with leaseholders regarding service charges and how they are calculated.</p>	<p>December 2013</p>	<p>SB</p>	<p>Queries regarding service charges are responded to in depth. Credits are agreed where charges are deemed unreasonable. Accounts are put on hold while investigations are carried out to ensure no reminders are issued until a final response has been given.</p>
<p><b>Key to Responsible Officers:</b>  <b>CL – Carolyn Leech, SD – Suzy Donaldson, SS – Simon Smith , AV – Andy Vincent , JG – Jules Goodridge, ST- Steve Tarbox, SB – Sue Birrell, CF- Calvin Fisher,</b>  <b>DC – Dharini Chandarana</b></p>					

**AGENDA ITEM:12****SUMMARY**

<b>Report for:</b>	<b>Housing and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>13 November 2013</b>
<b>PART:</b>	<b>I</b>

<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>Housing Development Strategy 2013-20</b>
Contact:	Margaret Griffiths, Portfolio Holder for Housing  Jack Burnham, Housing Development Manager  Isabel Connolly, Strategy, Policy and Private Sector Housing Team Leader
Purpose of report:	To approve “Building for the future – Dacorum Borough Council’s strategy for new council homes 2013-20” as the Council’s development strategy for new Housing Revenue Account (HRA) homes until 2020.
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To approve “Building for the future – Dacorum Borough Council’s strategy for new council homes 2013-20”.</li> <li>2. To recognise the New Build Project Board as the working group to monitor the progress of the Council's development programme, reporting into Corporate Regeneration Group.</li> </ol>
Corporate Objective:	Affordable Housing
Implications:	Financial  The HRA Business Plan currently has the capacity to deliver the aims of this strategy.
Value For Money Implications:	Value for Money  The Housing Development Strategy 2013-20 sets out the vision and strategic long-term plan for new council homes that will provide high quality housing at an affordable cost to the Housing Revenue Account. The resources required to deliver the homes in this strategy are available in the HRA business plan.
Risk Implications	Risk Assessment completed within the New Build PID.
Equalities Implications	Equality Impact Assessment completed within the New Build PID/Housing Strategy
Health And Safety Implications	All development sites have been registered with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in line with the CDM 2007

	(Construction Design and Management Regulations) as required by statute, by the Council's appointed CDM Coordinator.
Consultees:	<p>New Build Project Group, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Corporate Director - Housing and Regeneration</li> <li>Assistant Director - Finance</li> <li>Assistant Director - Housing</li> <li>Group Manager - Strategic Housing</li> <li>Group Manager - Commissioning Procurement and Compliance</li> <li>Group Manager - Commercial Assets and Property</li> <li>Group Manager - Estates</li> <li>Team Leader - Commissioning Procurement and Compliance</li> <li>Lead Officer - Housing Development and Delivery</li> <li>HRA Accountant</li> </ul>
Background papers:	<p>Cabinet Report – 23 October 2012  <a href="#">"Update on Council Home New Build Programme – Phase 1"</a></p> <p>Cabinet Report – 30 April 2013  <a href="#">"Housing Revenue Account Business Plan Update"</a></p> <p>Cabinet Report – 22 October 2013  <a href="#">"Housing Strategy 2013-18"</a></p>
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	<p>HRA – Housing Revenue Account  HCA – Homes and Communities Agency  Social Rent – Homes rented using the HCA's Target Rent formula (traditional Council housing)  Intermediate Rent – Homes rented at 80% of open market value to households who in employment  Shared Ownership – Homes where part of the property is sold to a buyer, who pays a rent on the unsold equity  Shared Equity – Homes where 80% of the property is sold to a buyer, who must buy the remaining share between 1 &amp; 25 years. Also known as "Help-to-Buy"  Private Sale – Homes that are sold on the open market</p>



## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 In April 2012 the Council agreed its 30 year Housing Revenue Account (HRA) business plan. The Localism Act 2011 introduced new powers for councils to keep their rental income and thereby generate growth capital to fund investment in their housing stock (this was called 'self-financing', and replaced the HRA Housing Subsidy System). A business plan was a requirement of self-financing to plan the investment of the capital.
- 1.2 The resources available following the move to self-financing created the opportunity for the Council to be strategic in its approach to its housing stock for the first time. It was possible, and essential, to not only consider the existing housing stock, but also wider issues such as community development, improving the environment and the potential to build new council homes to address the increasing demand for affordable housing.
- 1.3 Following the first year of self-financing, the business plan was reviewed in consultation with tenants, as well as members of the Council's Cabinet, before being approved at the Council's Cabinet meeting in May 2013. The Council's first new-build programme in over 20 years is a core element of the business plan. The report also included approval for further development of new council homes from 2015 onwards.
- 1.4 This report recommends the adoption of "Building for the future – Dacorum Borough Council's strategy for new council homes 2013-20" as the development plan for the next two phases of council development. This plan provides the direction and detail required to successfully implement further phases of council housing delivery.
- 1.5 The "Building for the future" document will ensure that future council homes meet the objectives of the Core Strategy, Housing Strategy and other associated council policy. All development will be delivered within the current capacity of the HRA business plan.

## **2. BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE: DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL'S STRATEGY FOR NEW HOMES 2013-20**

- 2.1 The "Building for the future" strategy covers the delivery of new council homes from 2013 to 2020. This strategy forms part of the Housing Service framework, containing the strategies and policies that take forward housing provision and services within the borough. It builds on our Corporate Plan and Housing Strategy 2013 - 2018, specifically in relation to the delivery of affordable housing.
- 2.2 In April 2013 the Council's Cabinet committed to, at least, a further two development phases of council homes. As part of this agreement a requirement for a strategy was identified, in order to set the vision for development and ensure that the Council builds homes of the right type, size, quantity and quality.
- 2.3 "Building for the Future" sets out four key objectives that will be fulfilled in the future planning, development and delivery of new council homes. These four key objectives are set out below:
  - **Embark on an ambitious programme of development underpinned by strong risk management and financial viability principles**

- **Take a planned approach to development opportunities that provides value for money while maximising supply**
- **Develop a lasting and positive legacy of distinctive and well thought of homes**
- **Build homes that contribute to successful communities and growth in the local economy**

- 2.4 The Council is committed to building homes for rent and these homes are the priority within the new strategy.
- 2.5 In order to deliver an ambitious programme of development, new forms of tenure may be used in order to cross-subsidise the cost of developing homes for social rent. These tenures may include shared equity, shared ownership and private sale. Tenures will be considered on a site-by-site basis, taking into account the financial impact, the size and location of the site, and the mix considered appropriate to create a sustainable community.
- 2.6 An innovative financial strategy is considered essential to a successful long-term development programme and cross-subsidy can play a key role in the delivery of larger sites, by making these sites more viable through the generation of surplus. This strategy will support the Council to be competitive with major developers when seeking to acquire the best sites for development in the borough.
- 2.7 The General Fund (GF) has a large land-holding in the borough. The majority of this land serves an important amenity use and is therefore not suitable for development. The sites that are suitable for development may be sold, or potentially leased, to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the development of new homes. The strategy makes a commitment to explore additional innovative forms of funding as and when is appropriate.
- 2.8 Under the HCA's framework of funding for 2011-15 the Council was awarded funding from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) for the homeless hostel due to be built by March 2015 as part of the Council's first phase of new-build development. It is not yet known if, or how much, grant funding will be available from 2015 onwards, and therefore the HRA business plan has assumed that grant funding will not be available.
- 2.9 This strategy details the required standards for new-build Dacorum Borough Council homes, setting out the minimum standards required for the following elements of development:
- Energy and Sustainability
  - Space and Safety
  - Design
  - Quality
  - New Business
  - Procurement and Legal
  - Governance
  - Development
  - Customer Service

- 2.10 By reaching the minimum standards prescribed in the “Building for the future” strategy, the Council can be confident that its developments will provide a legacy of high quality, well designed homes that will meet local housing needs.
- 2.11 The Council is particularly committed to the development of energy efficient homes. Rising energy prices are putting pressure on household budgets. The development of new energy efficient homes will reduce the impact of issues such as fuel poverty across the new stock.

### **3. GOVERNANCE**

- 3.1 This report recommends that a project board is established to monitor the progress of the Council’s New-build programme. This group will meet quarterly and will include the Portfolio Holder for Housing, in addition to officers representing the key parts of the organisation related to the development of new homes (Legal, Finance, Procurement etc.). This group will be known as the New Build Project Board.
- 3.2 The New Build Project Board will report into the Corporate Regeneration Group (CRG), providing a regular update on the progress of the development of new council homes, as well as taking a steer from CRG when considering potential schemes.
- 3.3 The Council’s Cabinet will receive a regular update on the progress of the development of new council homes, as will the Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and the Tenants and Leaseholders Committee.
- 3.4 New sites and acquisitions will be approved by Cabinet, with subsequent main contract awards being approved by the Portfolio Holder for Housing, as agreed at the September 2013 Cabinet meeting.

### **4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 To approve “Building for the future – Dacorum Borough Council’s strategy for new council homes 2013-20”.
- 4.2 To recognise the New Build Project Board as the working group to monitor the progress of the Council's development programme, reporting into Corporate Regeneration Group.

**AGENDA ITEM:13**

**SUMMARY**

<b>Report for:</b>	<b>Housing and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>13 November 2013</b>
<b>PART:</b>	<b>I</b>

<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>New Build Update</b>
Contact:	Margaret Griffiths, Portfolio Holder for Housing Jack Burnham, Housing Development Manager
Purpose of report:	To update Housing and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the progress of the current New Build Programme (Phase I)
Recommendations	To note the progress of the new build programme phase
Corporate Objective:	Affordable Housing
Implications:	Financial  The financial budget for phase I was agreed at the October 2012 Cabinet meeting and the September 2013 Cabinet meeting.  Value for Money  All of the schemes are set to deliver high quality homes to the prescribed budget, timeframe and standards as agreed by Cabinet.
Risk Implications	Risk Assessment completed within the New Build PID
Equalities Implications	Equality Impact Assessment completed within the New Build PID/Housing Strategy
Health And Safety Implications	All development sites have been registered with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in line with the CDM 2007 (Construction Design and Management Regulations) as required by statute, by the Council's appointed CDM Coordinator.

Consultees:	<p>Corporate Director – Housing &amp; Regeneration</p> <p>Assistant Director – Finance</p> <p>Assistant Director – Housing</p> <p>Group Manager – Strategic Housing</p> <p>Group Manager – Commissioning Procurement &amp; Compliance</p> <p>Group Manager – Commercial Assets &amp; Property</p> <p>Group Manager – Estates</p> <p>Team Leader – Commissioning Procurement &amp; Compliance</p> <p>Lead Officer – Housing Development &amp; Delivery</p> <p>HRA Accountant</p>
Background papers:	<p>Cabinet Report – 23 October 2012 “<a href="#">Update on Council Home New Build Programme – Phase 1</a>”</p> <p>Cabinet Report – 30 April 2013 “<a href="#">Housing Revenue Account Business Plan Update</a>”</p>
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	<p>HSE – Health and Safety Executive</p> <p>CDM – Construction Design and Management Regulations</p> <p>JCT – Joint Contracts Tribunal</p> <p>HCA – Homes and Communities Agency</p> <p>NAHP – National Affordable Housing Programme</p> <p>HRA – Housing Revenue Account</p>

## 1. BACKGROUND

In April 2012 the Council agreed its 30 year Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan. It was a requirement following the introduction of Self Financing (replacing the HRA Housing Subsidy System) for Local Authorities with housing stock to have such a plan.

A new webpage has been created to update the public on the progress of the New Build Programme. This is located at [www.dacorum.gov.uk/newbuild](http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/newbuild)

## 2. PHASE ONE UPDATE

### THE ELMS HOMELESS HOSTEL

41 Rooms & Ancillary Facilities



Pre-application planning advice was sought on the 9th May 2013, and a public consultation event took place on the 28th May 2013 at the Maylands Business Centre. Full planning permission was granted at the September Development Control Committee.

The procurement process to appoint a main contractor commenced in May 2013, with the first pre-qualification questionnaire stage closing in June 2013. The invitation to tender was sent to shortlisted bidders in July 2013, with tenders returned in September 2013. The contract was awarded to Durkan Ltd in September 2013 who have since taken possession of the site.

#### **Increase to 41 Bed Homeless Hostel**

Following the appointment of the project architects in January 2013, the hostel design concept was further developed and it was considered to be acceptable in principle to develop a four storey building (as opposed to a three storey building as originally proposed as part of the initial feasibility exercise).

A Proposal for a hostel with 41 bedrooms comprising four storeys and a basement were presented to the planning case officer as part of the pre-application planning advice application (REF – 4/00722/13/PRE). The planning case officer returned the following comments as part of their initial advice and guidance:

*“The proposed development, although tall is considered to be acceptable in terms of height for several reasons. Firstly, it is noted that the four-storey maximum height is not repeated across the development. Rather there are two staggers in height with the southernmost section limited to single / one and a half storeys in height and the*

*easternmost section of the northern main building three storeys in height. This staggers are critical in breaking up the bulk and mass of the building.*

*Secondly, it is noted that the site is set slightly below the road and that the ground floor of the building has been dug below the existing levels. These factors would help to reduce the perceived height of the building.*

*Thirdly, it is noted that there a considerable number of semi-mature or mature trees along Redbourn Road and this would provide a softening and a screening of the development. Finally, it is recognised that there are equally tall buildings within the adjacent Industrial Estate, such as Viking House.”*

The revised layout and size of the hostel to include 41 bedrooms was agreed by September Cabinet and has since been granted full planning permission and included in the main build contract.

Key dates:

- **NOVEMBER 2013** – Completion of the demolition and preparation phase
- **BY MARCH 2015** – Completion of the development

## **FARM PLACE, BERKHAMSTED**

12 x 1 Bedroom Flats, 8 x 2 Bedroom Flats, 6 x 3 Bedroom Houses



The planning permission and intellectual rights were purchased from Aldwyck in January 2013. The Council has appointed an Employers Agent (Robinson Lowe Francis) to assist in transposing the technical work to date into a format, which has now been tendered over during Summer 2013. The site has full planning permission for 26 new Council homes.

Invitation to Tender (ITT) returns were submitted to the Council in August 2013. The main contract was awarded to Hill Partnerships in November 2013 and is currently on programme to complete in January/February 2015. The site has been hoarded to match the other Council developments, with sufficient hoarding to last the duration of the redevelopment.

The tender process asked contractors to provide a price for this development to be built to the Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 standard. Hill's contract has included this clause, meaning that the new homes will be built to Code level 4, making them amongst the highest environmentally efficient dwellings in the Borough. The new homes will be built to this level and still come in under the original budget.

Officers have met with Hills to ensure that good relations are maintained with local neighbours throughout the duration of the build. Hills and the Council will engage with the local primary school and offer their pupils the opportunity to have an interactive presentation about construction provided by Hills at the school.

Key dates:

- **FEBRUARY 2014** – Completion of foundation works
- **BY MARCH 2015** – Completion of the development



## **GALLEY HILL, GADEBRIDGE**

9 x 2 Bedroom Flats to 'Passivhaus' standard



Planning permission was obtained in January 2013 for the development of 9 Passivhaus flats at Galley Hill, Gadebridge. Architects and Engineers have been appointed to complete the further design work, and undertake detailed studies regarding the site, such as the ground condition (which is favourable for development).

This development is being built to the Passivhaus standard, providing very high levels of thermal efficiency to keep gas heating bills to around £100 per annum per property. Further information on Passivhaus is available at [www.passivhaus.org.uk](http://www.passivhaus.org.uk)

### **Tender Process**

The original tender process for the procurement of the main contractor to construct the new dwellings began in February 2013. Five contractors were shortlisted following evaluation of their skills, experience and qualifications to deliver the proposed Passivhaus homes. The second stage of the tender process started in July 2013 with the issue of more detailed documents. Within three weeks of the issue of documents, four of the five contractors withdrew from the process. It would not have been possible to demonstrate value for money or competitiveness with only one prospective bidder, and therefore the tender process was aborted on the 13<sup>th</sup> August 2013

The affordable housing construction market is currently experiencing a heightened level of demand. This is due to the lack of supply in the construction industry, which shrank rapidly as a result of the economic downturn of 2008. There is currently a considerable increase in the supply of work which contractors are able to choose from, as a result of the HCA's grant funding deadline of March 2015 for the completion of affordable housing development. Schemes which complete after March 2015 will not be eligible for grant funding from the HCA.

Galley Hill is a relatively small scheme of a highly complicated technical nature, which carries considerable risk for contractors who (under the proposed tender route) would have taken all responsibility for design under a JCT Design and Build contract.

### **Revised Tender Process**

Officers have worked closely with the design team at Galley Hill to come up a revised proposal for the tender of the main contract. The revised tender process will use the JCT Standard Form of Contract as opposed to Design and Build. Both forms of contract are briefly explained below:

#### *Design & Build Approach*

*The Design & Build approach for construction projects consists of the appointment of a designer & a contractor on the one side who take responsibility for all design and construction works and risk.*

#### *Traditional Approach*

*The traditional approach for construction projects consists of the appointment of a designer on one side, and the appointment of a contractor on the other side.*

*Using the traditional approach, the Council employs its own designers for the scheme, who will carry insurance for negligence. The Council then works with the contractor to sign off each stage of the development, maintaining complete control over all aspects of the build.*

Feedback from contractors in the market has shown that there is considerable interest in this development using this method. Demolition was be arranged and carried out by the Council in October 2013 which marked the start of physical works on site, and ensured that the Council do not lose time on the completion of the scheme. These changes have slightly change the procurement timetable, but have not affected the key completion date of March 2015:

	<b>Previous Date</b>	<b>New Date</b>
<b>Contract Award</b>	Sep 2013	Nov 2013
<b>Demolition</b>	Oct 2013	Oct 2013
<b>Complete Detailed Design</b>	Dec 2013	Oct 2013
<b>Site Preliminaries</b>	Dec 2013	Dec 2013
<b>Foundation Works</b>	Jan 2014	Jan 2014
<b>Completion</b>	by Mar 2015	by Mar 2015

The use of this procurement route will mean that the Council pays an increased fee to its design team, rather than pay the main contractor to undertake the detailed design. The Invitation to Tender is currently with interested contractors who will return their prices to the Council in mid-November.

Key dates:

- **OCTOBER 2013** – Started on Site
- **JANUARY 2014** – Foundation works to start
- **BY MARCH 2015** – Completion of the development

## LONDON ROAD, APSLEY

13 x 1 Bedroom Flats, 23 x 2 Bedroom Flats



The site has been acquired by the Council, and has been secured with hoarding and gates. The land is currently owned by the General Fund and the site will be appropriated as a whole to the Housing Revenue Account's ownership.

Several site investigations have been concluded and an ecology report has confirmed that there are no habitat/ecology concerns with regard to developing homes on this site. A full planning application was heard by the 8<sup>th</sup> August 2013 Development Control Committee who gave a resolution to grant the scheme planning consent subject to s106 agreement.

The tender for a main contractor began in June 2013. The first stage of the tender (the Pre-Qualification Questionnaire) concluded in September 2013, and the second stage of the tender (Invitation to Tender) began in October 2013. The total procurement process (including selection, interview and authorisation to appoint) will take 3-5 months with an appointment expected in November/December 2013.

The substation relocation will be undertaken outside of the main contract, to ensure the scheme is completed by March 2015. Work on relocating the substation has already begun with payments made to UK Power Networks in October and November 2013 to allow this work to progress.

### Key Dates:

- **AUGUST 2013** – Planning consent granted
- **NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2013** – Start on site
- **MARCH 2015** – Practical Completion

**AGENDA ITEM:14****SUMMARY**

<b>Report for:</b>	<b>Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>13 November 2013</b>
<b>PART:</b>	<b>1</b>
If Part II, reason:	

<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>Homelessness Strategy 2013-2018 (Second stage service review and post-consultation report) and Homeless Review Process</b>
Contact:	Cllr Margaret Griffiths – Portfolio Holder for Housing  Julia Hedger – Strategic Housing Group Manager  Isabel Connolly – Strategy, Policy and Private Sector Housing Team Leader
Purpose of report:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To update Members on the new Homelessness Strategy 2013 - 2018 (Appendix 1).</li> <li>• To provide detail of the second stage of the homelessness service review and its outcomes.</li> <li>• To provide a summary of the consultation on the Homelessness Strategy and the Council's response to this.</li> <li>• To provide detail of a review of the member review panel for homeless decisions, in the context of increasing homeless applications, and in line with the Council's new strategic objectives for taking forward its homeless service.</li> </ul>
Recommendations	<p>That Members note the new Homelessness Strategy 2013 - 2018 and give their feedback.</p> <p>That Members note the recommendation to be made to Cabinet: That Cabinet recommend to Council that the constitution be amended to adopt a homeless review process carried out by a senior officer not involved in the original decision, and that the current member review panel process is discontinued.</p>
Corporate objectives:	Affordable Housing
Implications:	<p><u>New proposed staff structure to commence from January 2014</u></p> <p>The second stage of the homelessness service review provided the Council with the opportunity to carefully scrutinise its service delivery, informed by the key areas for investment</p>

	<p>and improvement already identified from the first stage of the review, which used a broad range of existing evidence about the service and its performance.</p> <p>The result of this service review was a proposal for a restructure of staff within the Strategic Housing service (the new structure is now within the main strategy document, 5.2, p.22). The Council is confident that the proposed changes will assist the Council to achieve its strategic objectives set out in the Homelessness Strategy 2013 – 2018.</p> <p>Budgets for this structure to commence in January 2014 have been agreed through usual internal processes, and the budget for the financial year 2014/15 has been drafted to be agreed through the usual annual budget review process.</p> <p><u>Partnerships</u></p> <p>In response to the consultation the strategy has now further highlighted some of the plans and aspirations of partners. The Council welcomes the recognition from partners of the strong role that can be played by successful partnerships.</p> <p>In addition to this, the strategy now also reflects the Council's recent commitment to the 'joint front door' model for 16 and 17 year olds, in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council's Targeted Youth Support and the charity Herts Young Homeless.</p> <p><u>Constitution change to adopt new process for homeless reviews</u></p> <p>A report will go to Cabinet with the recommendation: That Cabinet recommend to Council that the constitution be amended to adopt a homeless review process carried out by a senior officer not involved in the original decision, and that the current member review panel process is discontinued.</p> <p>This change is in line with the Council's new strategic objectives for taking forward its homeless service, and will have benefits for the Council in terms of providing good customer service, and a process that is transparent and value-for-money.</p>
Risk Implications	<p><u>Implementing new ways of working</u></p> <p>The service changes that have been proposed as a result of the two stage service review will require staff across the Council's Strategic Housing service to embrace new ways of working in order to implement a team structure that can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• successfully prevent homelessness,</li> <li>• improve outcomes for households who become homeless, and</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide suitable housing options and advice.</li> </ul> <p>Officers across the service have been fully involved in developing the plans for the new service. From 1 May until 16 September 2013 a number of whole team and individual team strategy meetings and other events were held (for the full timescale and event details, please see Appendix 2).</p> <p>Embedding these new ways of working will now need the full commitment of all officers. A communications programme to officers in other frontline teams (Customer Service Unit, Tenants and Leaseholders, Property and Place, and Housing Benefit) and external partners has been underway over October 2013. In addition, press releases and articles for Dacorum Digest and News and Views have been prepared for the public.</p> <p>The Council is confident that the proposed structure will assist the Council to achieve its strategic objectives set out in the Homelessness Strategy 2013 – 2018, and that staff are committed to and understand the reasons behind these changes.</p> <p><u>Implementing the new homeless review process</u></p> <p>Risks presented to the Council from this change are very low.</p> <p>The proposed senior officer review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would work to a published checklist;</li> <li>• Is consistent with the Council's ethos of customer service and care;</li> <li>• Will prevent delays from waiting for an available day to hold hearings, and therefore reduce risks of falling outside the 56 days to hold reviews and inform applicants of the outcome; and</li> <li>• Will prevent the applicant having to go through any unnecessary questioning that includes irrelevancies to the case, and which could therefore potentially get challenged through the judicial review process.</li> </ul>
<p>Equalities Implications</p>	<p><u>Homelessness Strategy</u></p> <p>An Equality Impact Assessment for the Homelessness Strategy was completed and provided with to Cabinet with the report in July 2013.</p> <p>No reasons to expect discrimination have been identified that the Council does not have processes in place to mitigate.</p> <p><u>Proposed change to homeless review process</u></p> <p>Council policy requires that all steps are taken to ensure that</p>

	all homeless applicants are given access to the information they require and in a format that they can use. No negative equality issues have been identified resulting from the proposed change.
Health And Safety Implications	There are no direct Health and Safety implications from the strategy or proposed process change.
Consultees:	<p>Cllr Margaret Griffiths – Portfolio Holder for Housing</p> <p>Dacorum Borough Council Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>Tenants and Leaseholders' Committee</p> <p>Mark Gaynor – Corporate Director Housing and Regeneration</p> <p>Elliott Brooks – Assistant Director Housing</p> <p>Andy Vincent – Group Manager for Tenants and Leaseholders</p> <p>Natasha Brathwaite – Housing Advice and Homelessness Team Leader</p> <p>Teresa Wood – Housing Options Team Leader</p> <p>Jack Burnham – Development Manager</p>
Background papers:	<p>The Housing Allocations Policy</p> <p>Housing Strategy 2013 - 2018</p> <p>Localism Act 2011</p> <p>The Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Localism Act 2011)</p> <p>The Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012</p>
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	<p>H&amp;C OSC – Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>TLC – Tenants and Leaseholder Committee</p>

## 1. Background

- 1.1 The Homelessness Strategy 2013 – 2018 replaces the expired Homelessness Strategy 2008 – 2013. In this new strategy the Council commits to meeting the Ten Local Challenges set by the Coalition Government, and to attaining the Gold Standard for homeless services.
- 1.2 The draft Homelessness Strategy 2013 – 2018 was presented to H&C OSC and Cabinet in July 2013 and was followed by a three month consultation period which has now closed.



1.3 As part of the strategy development the Council carried out a homelessness service review, using evidence from a number of sources including a peer review and internal audit. The key areas for improvement and investment, identified from this review, informed the development of the four key strategic objectives set out in the Homelessness Strategy 2013 - 18:

- To make every contact count in the primary prevention of homelessness
- To secure suitable and affordable accommodation for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness
- To provide support to prevent repeat homelessness and improve outcomes for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness
- To tackle the root causes of homelessness through much earlier intervention and prevention through education.

The review has now been followed by a second stage review of the Council's Strategic Housing service, informed by the key areas for improvement and investment already identified.

1.4 This report presents the final strategy with the details of the second stage homelessness service review and amendments made to the strategy in response to the consultation.

1.5 This report also presents details of the review into the Council's homeless review process. This review has taken place in the context of increasing homeless applications, and in line with the Council's new strategic objectives for taking forward its homeless service.

## 2. Second stage homelessness service review

2.1 In the draft Homelessness Strategy presented to Cabinet in July 2013, Section 4 provided detail of the homelessness service review that had been carried out using a broad range of existing evidence about the service and its performance.

2.2 A second stage homelessness service review commenced on 1 May 2013 (see Section 5 of the final strategy "Homelessness service review part two"). This second stage of the homelessness service review has provided the Council with the opportunity to carefully scrutinise its service delivery, informed by the key areas for investment and improvement already identified.

2.3 From 1 May until 16 September 2013 a number of whole team and individual team strategy meetings and other events were held (for the full timescale and event details, please see Appendix 2). The team took part in a number of job swaps in order to understand the roles across the service and open discussions about how the service could be improved in line with the strategic objectives set within this strategy. These job swaps were very successful and resulted in good feedback from officers across the service (for examples of feedback from the job swaps, please see Appendix 3).

2.4 The result of this service review was a proposal for a restructure of staff within the Strategic Housing service (the new structure is now within the main strategy document, 5.2, p.22).

2.5 The Council is confident that the proposed changes will assist the Council to achieve its strategic objectives set out in the Homelessness Strategy 2013 - 2018:

- The changes introduce a dedicated team to manage all incoming housing need (whether this because someone approaches the customer service unit, completes a housing register application, or presents to the Council as homeless or threatened with homelessness). This dedicated team will focus resources on the prevention of primary homelessness and early intervention in those situations where the Council may be able to assist someone to continue living in their current home.
- The changes introduce a team that brings together the private sector and temporary accommodation services. This team will manage the Council's property options in terms of access into the private rented sector, as well as the temporary accommodation, welfare and support available to homeless applicants.
- The changes introduce a team dedicated to managing the allocation of council and housing association homes. This team will focus on the allocation of property and pro-active verification of information within application forms prior to offers for those applicants bidding with high points. This will assist the delivery of a number of the changes that have been introduced in the new Housing Allocations Policy, as well as responding to the need to reduce void times. The team will work closely with the private sector team when considering offers of re-housing for homeless applicants with the full homelessness duty, who require one suitable offer, which may be in the private rented sector.
- The changes make permanent the development team within Strategic Housing so that the Council can continue to successfully progress with its new-build programme, which will increase the supply of council homes available in the borough.

### 3. Consultation

3.1 The consultation included:

- Consultation through the Council's online consultation portal;
- Hardcopies of the consultation sent out on request;
- A press release to the Gazette signposting people to the consultation;
- A multi-forum housing event with partners held at the civic centre; and
- A homeless forum with local partners.

3.2 A formal written response was received from DENS, a local charity running a number of services to support homeless people locally. The consultation response from DENS is summarised below (points 1 – 4). Four written consultation responses were received through the public consultation online portal and are also summarised below (points 5 – 8).

1) Compliment to the strategy and its focused approach.

- 2) Suggestion that there could be greater emphasis given to the plans and aspirations of local partners and consideration of areas where partnership working between the Council and partners could be value-for-money or expand potential for receiving grant funding.
- 3) Caution was expressed that the strategy's commitment to early intervention through work with schools and community groups could be threatened by pressure on budgets, given that even though the preventative value of this work is very great, this is hard to demonstrate.
- 4) Concern was expressed about the significant increase in 18-35 year olds experiencing homelessness locally. Confirmed that DENS have experienced high numbers of this age bracket presenting to the day centre and night shelter, which mirrors the high numbers who have presented to the Council from this age bracket who have been owed the full homeless duty. Those presenting to DENS are more likely to be single people, without dependents, who are only eligible for housing benefit at the shared room rate, and the borough does not have large numbers of properties offering rooms with shared facilities.
- 5) Concern was expressed over the private rented sector and the local rents being charged
- 6) Support was expressed for a dedicated funding commitment to on-going education, training and employment initiatives, backed by one-to-one key workers, coaches or mentors working with homeless people for at least six months after move-on housing.
- 7) The idea of a crash pad was welcomed as innovative, but with the caution that this would need to be coupled with appropriate move-on options, rather than becoming an extension of the main hostel. Support was expressed for schemes that assist access into private rented accommodation, to be combined with DENS Rent Aid services.
- 8) Concern was expressed about the local picture of increasing homelessness, and in particular the position of fathers who are separated from their children after relationship breakdown and who are not in priority need for re-housing. Again, concern was expressed about the local rents being charged in the private rented sector.

3.3 The Council is grateful to DENS and those who took the time to respond to the consultation and has considered this feedback with other informal feedback in producing the final strategy document for approval by its Cabinet.

3.4 In response to the consultation:

- 1) The Council welcomes a compliment of its strategy and its proposals for a focused approach to taking forward the homeless service over the next five years.

- 2) The Council recognises that for some of the objectives further emphasis could be given to partner plans and aspirations. These have been added where appropriate into the key objectives, for example, the commitment by DENS frontline staff to complete the Engage to Change qualification, a six month course that focuses on developing approaches to gaining successful outcomes for clients.
- 3) The strategy makes a very specific commitment to maintaining investment in education and early intervention over the five-year lifespan of the strategy. There is support from the Council's elected members to this commitment, recognising the long-term reductions in homelessness that the Council needs to work to and the need to increase awareness of housing options to improve early planning for housing in adulthood. Recognition has been added into the strategy that the Council's partners will play an important role in accessing and approaching educational and community settings.
- 4) The Council recognises concerns about the recent increases in the numbers of people aged 18-35 presenting as homeless. Young single people and young families have become very vulnerable in terms of their housing, and are finding it increasingly difficult to meet the financial demands of the private rented sector. This strategy commits to more mediation work with private landlords at the earliest opportunity from when the Council becomes aware that a notice has been served. More housing options advice will be delivered through this strategy with an emphasis on providing people with realistic housing advice and setting expectations on chances of being housed through an offer of a council or housing association home.
- 5) The Council recognises the difficulties presented by the private rented sector and the very high rents that are charged locally. These rents are determined by the market and therefore fall outside the Council's influence. Where possible the Council will work with landlords of properties for rent through its deposit guarantee scheme 'Help to Rent' in order to support families to access the private rented sector. The Council is committed to improving this partnership by investing in the service and the offer it can make to landlords. The Council has a partnership with DENS Rent Aid and Druglink, who are providing similar deposit guarantee schemes for landlords of properties for single homeless people in the borough.
- 6) The Council recognises the very important role that support for homeless people moving into settled accommodation plays. The strategy sets out an objective (Key Objective 3) with commitments to:
  - Increase tenancy sustainment
  - Develop the training and back-to-work pathwayThese commitments include a review of the Welfare and Support service that is provided for people once a homeless application has been made, and then continues (for all but very low risk households) for at least six months after the household has moved to settled accommodation.
- 7) The Council agrees that very strict rules and expectations will need to be set regarding the use of the crash pad that will be provided as part of the design of the new 41 bed hostel being built for March 2015. This facility is certainly not

intended to become an extension of the main hostel, but rather to provide an option to prevent someone spending a night on the streets. The facility will not form part of the main hostel building where the other bedrooms are provided, and in the morning someone who has spent the night in the crash pad will need to evacuate that space, for use as a training room, and they will need to attend an assessment of their housing needs. From this housing needs assessment someone could be referred into the hostel if appropriate, and if a bed space was available.

- 8) The Council recognises the concern expressed about the local increases in homelessness, and the hardship that some families experience as a result of relationship breakdown. The Council is working with local partners DENS and Druglink to improve the range of housing options in the private rented sector available to single households.

#### 4. Homeless review process

- 4.1 A local authority has a legal duty to offer housing assistance to help people about to be made homeless. Housing assistance must support people in their efforts to find secure accommodation. The local authority must assess a person's housing needs before providing this assistance. The service must be free. Persons subject to immigration control are not eligible for housing assistance. If a homeless application is taken from an applicant who is homeless or threatened with homeless within 28 days then the Council will need to consider whether the applicant is in priority need (for example, if the household contains a pregnant woman). If the applicant loses their home and he or she is believed to be eligible for assistance, homeless, and in priority need the Council must provide temporary accommodation while the homeless application is investigated.
- 4.2 The Council will only have the full duty to re-house an applicant where the result of the investigation is a positive homeless decision that the applicant:
- is eligible;
  - is homeless;
  - is in priority need;
  - is unintentionally homeless; and
  - has a local connection.
- 4.3 Homeless decisions are judged on the balance of probabilities and do not have to be beyond all reasonable doubt. Investigating officers are required to demonstrate that they have given reasonable consideration to the evidence in reaching their decision. The English legislation provides the right to applicants not satisfied with the Council's decision on their homeless application, to appeal against the decision by requesting a review.
- 4.4 The applicant has the right to request a review and, even if no further information or evidence is provided, the Council must review the decision. The applicant (or someone acting on their behalf) does, however, have the right to make further written representations to support the request. A review must be requested within 21 days of the date on which the applicant is notified of the decision. When a review is requested, the Council has 56 days to review the decision and inform the applicant of

the outcome. This deadline can be extended where agreed in writing by the applicant and the Council.

- 4.5 The review can be conducted by a person who was not involved in the original decision. This could be:
- Another council officer, in which case they must be senior to the person who made the original decision and not directly involved in the initial investigation,
  - A panel of councillors,
  - An independent person - some councils employ a private company to conduct reviews, some other councils have a mutual arrangement so that an officer from another Council will conduct reviews.

- 4.6 The use of a panel of councillors is now not common practice, and most appeals processes being conducted by local authorities use senior officers or independent specialists, and in most cases where appropriate these reviews are based on paper evidence. An oral review is not a statutory part of the process.

**Note:** Applicants are provided with an opportunity to make oral submissions at the pre-decision stage. These are heard by the investigating officer prior to the final decision.

- 4.7 The decision on review may:
- Straightforwardly uphold the original decision,
  - Find fault with the manner in which the original decision was made, but still uphold the original decision, or
  - Overturn the original decision and replace it with one that is in the applicant's interests.

The Council must inform the applicant of the decision on review in writing. If the decision is against the applicant's interests, the letter should give reasons for the decision.

- 4.8 Dacorum Borough Council is currently operating a member review panel made up of:
- Five elected members (including the panel chair)
  - One legal representative
  - One senior officer
  - The officer who made the original decision

This panel holds an oral review hearing to which the applicant is invited to attend, and to which a legal representative may accompany them.

- 4.9 Dates are scheduled once a review request has been received. Dates are scheduled to take place on Mondays and each review takes approximately two hours on the day. The maximum number of reviews that could therefore reasonably be held on one day is three. There are currently seven reviews pending and all available dates up to the end of December have been booked (some dates are unavailable due to employment hearings).

- 4.10 From April 2012 – March 2013 Dacorum Borough Council held 14 review hearings and all decisions were upheld. Nine of those reviews were between January and March 2013, and since April 2013 there have been 11 further reviews. All decisions since April 2013 have been upheld (one adjourned). This demonstrates a trend of increasing numbers of reviews, consistent with local increases in homeless presentations.

- 4.11 The costs for one legal representative for two hours are £240 and there are additional costs for:
- Senior officer time spent at the review hearing
  - Investigating officer time spent at the review hearing
  - Member Support time arranging and providing administrative support for the review hearing
  - Reprographic costs for printing
- This provides an estimated total cost of £300 per review.
- 4.12 Other councils that have at some point operated similar panel hearings have nearly all now amended this process to operate senior officer reviews.
- 4.13 In addition to the costs and time consuming nature of the hearings, and the delays to applicants when a high number have to be booked into the available days, there are several disadvantages of councillor review panels that have been identified:
- The oral hearing creates an environment that is considered (judging by feedback from applicants and their representatives) to place applicants at a disadvantage due its formal, somewhat intimidating, atmosphere at a time when the applicant is in a very stressful situation. This seems inconsistent with principles of good customer service and care.
  - The process puts applicants through intensive questioning occasionally straying into areas of no material relevance to the application, and it may be unclear to the applicant what information will be used in the decision making process.
    - Applicants are excluded at the point of decision making
    - Minutes of the process are not taken so the Council does not have a record to evidence and justify the information used at the point of decision making
    - If questions have been asked that are not ultimately relevant then the applicant has no knowledge that this information has not been used to bias the decision making process.
  - The hearing takes the form of a 'courtroom' process, which provides the opportunity for legal representatives of applicants to make an adversarial process out of a process that should be inquisitorial.
  - Having the Council's legal representatives involved at this stage prevents them being involved in the future were the case to go to county court on a point of law (thus requiring more senior and expensive representation).
  - A perceived lack of transparency associated with this process is contradictory to the Council's own ethos to be open and respond to challenge.
- 4.14 The Council understands that having councillors involved in this process provides an insight into the situations of their constituents, however at a time of rising homelessness any benefits from this are outweighed by the disadvantages, costs and delays from continuing to operate this process.
- 4.15 The proposal in the report to Cabinet is that the Council should change its constitution to adopt a review process carried out by a senior officer not involved in the original decision, which in most cases where appropriate would be paper-based.

4.16 The full process would then be:

Pre-decision by investigating officer → opportunity for oral submission to investigating officer → final decision letter → review request made within 21 days from the date of the decision → invitation to make further submissions (orally or in writing depending on the case) for review by senior officer → written outcome of the review with reasons for the decision provided within 56 days from the date of request.

4.17 This process is considered to be fairer and more transparent.

- The senior officer would work to a published checklist;
- It does not place the applicant in an intimidating environment;
- It is consistent with the Council's ethos of customer service and care;
- There are no delays from waiting for an available day to hold the hearing, and therefore no risk of falling outside the 56 days unnecessarily;
- The applicant does not have to go through unnecessary questioning that could include irrelevancies to the case;
- Legal representatives of the applicant are not provided with the opportunity to make the process adversarial; and
- It is better value for money due to the time and costs associated with the member review panel.

4.18 The time and cost savings made by changing the process will benefit the service by:

- Freeing up resources and the time of highly trained staff; and
- Producing a cash saving to the Council.

Resources that would otherwise be spent on preparing and attending the reviews could be re-focused to areas of service delivery identified as priority areas.

4.19 As detailed in this report the new Homelessness Strategy 2013 – 2018 has set out four key strategic objectives to drive forward its homeless service. It is considered necessary to now amend the constitution to change the homeless review process to support the Council's other strategic aims.

## 5. Recommendations

5.1 That Members note the new Homelessness Strategy 2013 - 2018 and give their feedback.

5.2 That Members note the recommendation that will be made to Cabinet: That Cabinet recommend to Council that the constitution be amended to adopt a homeless review process carried out by a senior officer not involved in the original decision, and that the current member review panel process is discontinued.



## Appendix 1



















































































































## Appendix 2

### The Strategic Housing service review staff engagement process

#### Email to whole team from Julia Hedger, Group Manager – Wednesday 1 May 2013

An initial email was sent to inform the team of the commencement of the service review, providing key messages:

- *The purpose of the service review is to improve the Council's service to achieve the prevention of homelessness and provide clear housing advice to applicants as early as possible in order to support them to manage their housing situation.*
- *The aim is to work towards a service based on quality, which is deliverable on a daily basis.*
- *The review is not about losing any posts with the team.*
- *There will be a commitment to long-term training plans recognised as essential if officers are to be successful in delivering the necessary service.*
- *Team meetings over the next couple of months will allow officers to have the opportunity to discuss the review and to be part of the conversations and developments over the course of the process.*

#### Whole Team Meeting – Monday 13 May 2013

Each team gave a presentation on their service area, including both team leader and officer presentations.

Elliott Brooks, Assistant Director, attended to comment on the service review being carried out as part of the Homelessness Strategy.

*From the minutes: "EB requested that the review is not just top-down, and that staff take the opportunity to make their suggestions on any improvements that can be made to improve the front line service."*

#### Team leader planning session – Thursday 16 May 2013

An afternoon planning session was held out of the office with team leaders Teresa Wood, Isabel Connolly and Natasha Brathwaite attending.

#### Service review email "Getting ready for the Gold Standard" – Thursday 16 May 2013

Staff were asked to get into pairs and provide answers to the following questions:

- 1) *What are the qualities in the department that make it high performing?*
- 2) *Are there particular things you can identify that we are really good at?*
- 3) *How could we make even more of what we're good at?*
- 4) *Do you have other skills that you would like to use at work to make a positive difference?*

Good feedback was received from all pairs.

#### Housing Options Team strategy session – 21 May 2013

A team session called “Feeding into the homelessness strategy” was held with the Housing Options Team to provide an overview of the strategic objectives and aims of the service review.

Service review email “Getting ready for the Gold Standard - the service review and why it's so important” – Monday 10 June 2013

Three information sheets were prepared specially for the service review and emailed to staff.

Housing Options Team strategy follow-up sessions – 12 and 20 June 2013

A follow-up session was held to discuss the on-going service review and Homelessness Strategy developments with the Housing Options Team. From this session the team requested and arranged an away morning out of the office to brainstorm ideas to feed into the service review.

Housing Advice and Homelessness strategy session – 20 June 2013

A team session was held to discuss the service review with specific focus on the primary prevention of homelessness as households approach the Council in housing need.

Strategy and Private Sector Housing Team strategy session – 21 June 2013

A team session was held to discuss the service review in the context of team specific changes around the delivery of the Council’s private rented sector access scheme.

Whole Team Meeting – Monday 24 June 2013

A whole team meeting was held, with the following initial agenda item:

1. Service review

*Introduction from Julia*

*Discussion with staff to go through:*

- *Feedback from team strategy sessions so far*
- *Information to staff about job swaps*

Job swaps – 1 July 2013 to 6 September 2013

First week 1 – 5 July 2013

Debrief sessions with the ‘job swap teams’ were held during 8 July 2013

Second week 29 July – 2 August 2013

Debrief sessions with the ‘job swap teams’ were held during 5 August 2013

Third week 2 – 6 September 2013

Team away-day with housing consultant – Wednesday 11 September 2013

The whole team received an interactive all-day session with a housing consultant on national good practice and new ways of working in housing and homelessness.

Team meeting to discuss results of the team review and proposed new structure – Monday 16 September 2013

A whole team meeting was held to provide an opportunity for staff to feedback as part of an informal consultation on the proposal for a new team structure.

Team meeting to commence formal 30 day consultation process – Monday 28 October 2013

A whole team meeting was held by Julia Hedger and attended by Strategic Housing's Human Resources representative. Detail of the formal consultation was provided and set out in letters provided to all officers and team leaders within Strategic Housing. An opportunity was provided for questions to be asked and for the full detail of the proposed changes to be discussed.

## Appendix 3

### Strategic Housing 'job swaps' – staff feedback

After each week of job swaps officers across the Strategic Housing service were asked to respond to a number of questions. Examples of the responses are provided below. The success of these weeks and the responses were considered as part of the second stage of the homelessness service review.

Please provide an example of something you have learnt that you will be able to take back with you to your job:

*I have learnt how much shared information we have on applicants which is available to all of us via our systems, I can now ask my colleagues from other teams and check our database instead of a time consuming back-and-forwards letter process to applicants.*

*As the only member of my team that remained in the section, I believe that I played a key role in ensuring that all the usual targets were met. In turn this encouraged me to problem-solve without the usual support of my teammates.*

*Flexibility in where I work and who I work with.*

*I am now able to talk with confidence about the process of seeking housing through the housing register, and can give people a good idea of what to expect when they do so. I am also able to explain to people how their points work, and can offer advice to people who may be on the wrong points.*

*I have a greater understanding of what is asked on the housing register application form that will make it easier to get reports from the system to inform our service.*

*I feel that I can now navigate and use the system to look up information on applicant's documents they have sent in for another department.*

Please provide an example of teamwork within your job swap team:

*Working with two colleagues assessing applications, we all had shared knowledge and skills to bring to the process (housing law and acts, plus knowledge of external agencies), which made it a rounded process and much quicker than a normal application. We were able to supply the customer with a solution that I wouldn't have reached just by myself.*

*Different teams supported each other to learn new things and were not worried or concerned to try new things and ask questions, which led to a more positive attitude generally.*

*The team have worked really well to support each other during this week and work has been shared out fairly, there has been a willingness to answer queries and ensure that the week has been successful.*



*We delegated roles and responsibilities fairly, and throughout the week we monitored each other's progress and where necessary provided additional support.*

*A colleague doing the job swap sat in on an interview with me and gave input around the housing register. We had discussions about the work we do and supported each other.*

*Team leaders were working closer with their teams. Individuals were working together in each of the job swap teams to learn new tasks. The week gave individuals in the department a chance to get to know individuals in different teams.*

*I saw teams who normally work separately working on the same thing to achieve shared goals.*

*It was good to work with people from the department that I haven't worked with directly before as part of a team.*

*The team were totally committed to this week and worked really well together, there was a lot of support to each other with the work that they were doing and also checking what each other had done against procedure to ensure tasks were done correctly.*

Using your learning from the job swaps please suggest how you think the service and staff roles in the future could be shaped going forward:

*In regards to the housing register, I feel that a rota timetable of work/roles would make a difference to the team. This change would enable the team to focus on one task at a time, as I found there were a lot of different tasks to complete on a daily basis.*

*Having seen staff recognising the contributions of their colleagues more it could now be useful to visibly display what part of the 'customer journey' each team contributes to.*

*Focus on certain areas each day / different staff to focus on certain areas. Link housing options service with housing advice and homelessness*

## **15. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

To consider passing a resolution in the following terms:

That, under s.100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 Schedule 12A Part 1 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 the public be excluded during the item in Part II of the Agenda for this meeting, because it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, that if members of the public were present during this item there would be disclosure to them of exempt information relating to an individual which is likely to reveal their identity.

: