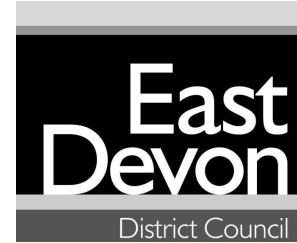


# Agenda Item 11

**Housing Review Board**

**14 January 2010**

**Jg**



## Housing stock condition survey

### Summary

This report takes forward the need to undertake a sample housing stock condition survey in order to underpin our improvement and modernisation programmes and complete the refresh of the HRA Business Plan.

It is business critical that we have an up to date and comprehensive understanding of the condition of our property portfolio. Our future expenditure proposals need to be shaped around the need to maintain and improve the housing assets in our ownership, so this survey work will update the existing information we hold on our housing stock.

### Recommendation

**To approve the arrangements for a sample housing stock condition survey as set out in the report.**

#### a) Reasons for Recommendation

To ensure that our stock condition and investment information is accurate and comprehensive sufficient to produce a robust Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.

#### b) Alternative Options

To use a different survey methodology, postpone the survey until a later date.

#### c) Risk Considerations

Chosen consultants do not perform the task as requested. Inaccurate data collected and/or data misinterpreted.

#### d) Policy and Budgetary Considerations

We committed to undertake a sample stock condition survey and have made budgetary provision for the work.

#### e) Date for Review of Decision

On completion of the survey and presentation of the survey results.

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## 1 Background

1.1 It is business critical that we accurately know the condition of our housing stock in order to properly plan for future investment in tenants homes. Our investment plans are a key part of our Housing Revenue Account Business Plan and represent the main expenditure items for the foreseeable future.

- 1.2 The tried and tested way of achieving this comprehensive information on the housing stock is through a sample or full housing stock condition survey typically contracted out or an on-going survey often performed in-house.
- 1.3 We have made provision in our budgets for this important piece of work for the past few years and we are now in a position to progress the survey. We have a good database of housing information that was tested and verified during the housing stock options appraisal exercise, however, we committed to updating this database several years ago and are now in a position to proceed.
- 1.4 We have £53,600 in the current year's budget and £50,000 for 2010/11. This will be sufficient for a 50% sample survey which will give a high degree of confidence when extrapolating the results.

## **2 Survey progression**

- 2.1 We have been working with Mid Devon District Council on a number of activities and the stock condition survey is one of the workstreams. Mid Devon produced a specification and organised the tender for the selection of a suitable organisation to undertake the survey work. We considered working jointly on this initiative because there are economies of scale that can be achieved with surveys being undertaken for two housing authorities.
- 2.2 The main objectives of the survey are to enable the Council to keep and manage an effective, accurate and up to date stock condition database to fulfil the following:
  - Improve the quality of information about the nature, condition and sustainability of the housing stock;
  - Use the survey information to make sound, sustainable stock investment decisions that meets the needs and standards of stakeholders both now and in the future;
  - Balance resources against demands on investing in the housing stock;
  - Anticipate and deal with properties at risk of decline;
  - Respond to service users needs and preferences;
  - Deliver investment programmes which provide value for money;
  - Maintain homes that achieve the Decent Homes Standard and any subsequent replacement Government standard;
  - Prioritise work to optimise the target ratio of 30/70 between responsive repairs and planned maintenance;
  - Meet and exceed the expectations of the Audit Commission's Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE 3) on stock condition and asset management.
- 2.2 Our Housing Services Manager has been involved in this work and has been part of a tender evaluation panel with Mid Devon officers.
- 2.3 Three contractors' tenders were assessed – Michael Dyson Associates; Savills and Ridge using a system of weighted quality scores and tender prices.
- 2.4 A pre-contract meeting was held with preferred contractor Dyson on 24<sup>th</sup> November to clarify any matters concerned with the timetable, survey teams, methodology etc.
- 2.5 The main features of the specification are:

- Full survey internal and external, including communal areas and related housing assets, where appropriate.
  - Assessment of non decency in the housing stock.
  - Gather data on type and condition of key building components and confirm anticipated lifespan.
  - Health and Safety Hazard Rating assessment.
  - Identifying 'catch up' repairs necessary.
  - Final report outlining the context, structure methodology, process, findings, conclusions and recommendations including costings for future investment purposes.
- 2.6 We have secured a survey rate of £34 per property and anticipate undertaking approximately 2,000 surveys. The total cost of the survey and reporting work will be circa. £75,000.
- 2.7 We anticipate the survey team starting in March 2010 which is once the Mid Devon survey has been completed. The survey team will be briefed by us and letters will be sent to residents on Council headed notepaper in early March in an attempt to ensure we achieve good access rates. Surveys will commence in mid March and be undertaken over a six week period. Survey methodology, survey forms etc are being agreed prior to the survey commencing. 30 year projections will be undertaken and the draft report should be ready for mid May.
- 2.8 The survey results will be provided in report form and on software that is compatible with our existing systems and any future new housing software system. Once received the data will enable us to complete the updating of the HRA Business Plan that we commenced at the end of last year. I am hoping that the survey confirms our existing knowledge of the housing stock, but there is always the potential for surprise and we need to be aware of any significant future investment implications in order that we can build them into future plans.
- 2.9 I will of course report the findings of the survey to the Board at the earliest opportunity.

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### **Legal Implications**

There are no legal implications requiring comment.

### **Financial Implications**

The financial implications are included in the report.

### **Consultation on Reports to the Executive**

None.

### **Background Papers**

- Stock Condition Survey Agreement & Brief 2009.
- Minutes of set up meetings with stock condition survey contractor 24<sup>th</sup> November 2009 and 4<sup>th</sup> November 2009.

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John Golding  
Head of Housing and Social Inclusion

Housing Review Board  
14 January 2010

