

# **Report to Housing Scrutiny Panel**

**Date of meeting: 19<sup>th</sup> March 2012**

**Portfolio: Housing – Cllr D. Stallan**

**Subject: Housing Revenue Account (HRA)  
Business Plan 2013-14**

**Officer contact for further information:**

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**Committee Secretary: Mark Jenkins**



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## **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

**That the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2013/14, incorporating the HRA Financial Plan and the Repairs and Maintenance Business Plan 2013/134(attached as an Appendix to this report), be recommended to the Housing Portfolio Holder for adoption.**

## **Background**

1. The Government's Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) requires all local authorities to produce annual Business Plans for their Housing Revenue Accounts (HRAs). The CLG's intention is to ensure that local authority housing is used and maintained to maximum effect. HRA Business Plans deal with councils' plans and performance for the delivery and quality of its housing services to tenants. Detailed guidance was issued by the former ODPM (the predecessor to the CLG), which prescribes the form in which business plans must be produced, and includes the requirement for clear repair and maintenance strategies to be set out and, ideally, for detailed financial forecasts to be produced for thirty years hence.

## **HRA Business Plan 2013/14**

2. The Council's Audit and Governance Committee requires that all of the Council's Business Plans are completed and published by 31 March each year. Therefore, all the statistics and information within the Business Plan relating to the "last financial year", and the most up to date information, relates to 2011/12, which is the last year that full year statistics are available.

3. The development of the Business Plan and the main changes this year include:

- Updated statistics relating to 2011/12
- General updated information throughout the Business Plan to ensure that it remains current
- Updated Plain English Summary
- Updated comments of the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation on the latest Business Plan (Section 1.6)
- Updated Summary of Key Activities and Achievements in 2012/13 (Section 3.5)
- Updated section on Key Housing Priorities and Action Plan to Meet the Objectives (Section 3.6)

- Updated section on tenant participation, to include details of the new model for the introduction of a new Tenant Scrutiny Panel (Section 4.6)
- Updated section on Strategic Housing Market Assessments (SHMAs), covering the results of the most recent SHMA Update (Section 4.10(b) and 4.10(f))
- Updated section on the Housing Improvements and Service Enhancements Fund, with the latest information on likely funds available in future years (Section 4.13)
- Updated section on tenant satisfaction, with the headline results of the latest Tenant Satisfaction Survey undertaken in March 2012 and the results of Housemark's Benchmarking Exercise undertaken in January 2013 (Section 5.3)
- Updated chapter on the HRA Financial Plan and cash flows (Chapter 10 and Appendices 5(a) and 5(b))
- New Key Action Plan (Chapter 12)
- Updated Repairs & Maintenance Business Plan (Appendix 1)
- Updated Appendix on Performance on Performance Indicators and Future Targets (Appendix 4)

### **HRA Financial Plan**

4. Chapter 10 and Appendices 6(a) and 6(b) of the Business Plan set out the Council's updated HRA Financial Plan, which has been produced by the Council's HRA Business Planning Consultants, CIH Consultancy, following the Cabinet's approval of the Council's strategic approach to the HRA Financial Plan in December 2011.

5. In accordance with the Cabinet's instructions, the previous Financial Plan has been formally reviewed by officers on a quarterly basis over the past year. The Cabinet also asked the Housing Scrutiny Panel to formally review the Financial Plan bi-annually. The Scrutiny Panel undertook its first bi-annual review in October 2012, and its second review will be undertaken at this meeting, through the consideration and recommendation of the proposed Financial Plan (within the draft HRA Business Plan) to the Housing Portfolio Holder.

### **Repairs and Maintenance Business Plan 2013/14**

6. An important part of the HRA Business Plan relates to the Council's objectives, strategies and plans relating to the repair and maintenance of the Council's housing stock over the next 30 years. This includes the Council's plans to ensure that the Council continues to meet the Government's decent homes standard in the short term, and maintains the Council's housing stock to a full modern standard in the longer term, as a result of the additional resources that have been made available as a result of HRA Self Financing. Indeed, the Repairs and Maintenance Business Plan defines the Council's new modern maintenance standard for the first time. It should be noted though, that it will be a number of years before all of the Council's properties will meet the new standard, due to the amount of "catch-up" work that needs to be undertaken.

7. As in previous years, the Repairs and Maintenance Business Plan forms Appendix 1 to the main HRA Business Plan.

### **Scrutiny Panel**

8. The Scrutiny Panel is asked to consider and recommend the HRA Business Plan 2013/14, incorporating the updated Repairs and Maintenance Business Plan and Financial Plan, to the Housing Portfolio Holder for adoption.

9. The draft HRA Business Plan is also due to be discussed by the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation at their meeting on 21 March 2012, and the Housing Portfolio Holder will be advised, and take account, of their comments before he adopts the final version of the Business Plan.