

Appendix II: Stock Condition Survey

Background

During the last eight years City of York Council has on two occasions employed external consultants to undertake stock condition surveys of council owned stock. The most recent survey was undertaken in December 2001 by Property Tectonics, this formed the basis of the business planning processes of the time. A number of issues were raised with the suitability of the IT system used in terms of its future modelling manipulation and day to day operational use. Therefore, as part of the council's Integrated Housing Management System upgrade a suitable replacement was sought. The council decided to purchase "Codeman", which holds the required information in a more robust format and allows for data collection via hand held technology, with the intention of undertaking an in-house stock condition survey. An in-house stock condition survey was undertaken in Summer 2004 using Codeman Version 3. Codeman Version 4 was then used to analyse the survey's results in late 2004. As work is completed the information is now updated into Codeman on a rolling basis, ensuring stock condition information is up-to-date.

Summary of 2004 Survey

Survey methodology

A brief for the stock condition survey was to:

- (a) provide information required to assess and plan for the requirements of the ODPM's Decent Homes Standard (DHS); and
- (b) drive forward the capital programme of modernisation and business planning processes for council owned housing stock.

The questions within the survey were formatted to be both specific to the elemental requirements of the Decent Homes Standard and to provide valuable information of not only when an element was in danger of failing decent homes due to age (e.g. Kitchen over 30 years) but also when the element was required to be replaced due to surveyed condition. Certain questions on energy efficiency were also included as Codeman has replaced a previously isolated energy efficiency database.

The stock condition survey was undertaken in-house during June, July and August 2004. It involved five full-time equivalent surveyors, a full-time housing maintenance surveyor, a post made up of a rota of the remaining maintenance team, and three temporary staff.

In order to survey a representative sample of properties the stock was broken down into archetypes based on:

- Build type (traditional / non-traditional)
- Built Form (house, bungalow, flat, etc.)
- Non-traditional build type (Discus, Airey, etc.)
- Position (semi-detached, end terrace, etc.)
- Age groups (1919-1944, etc.)

These archetypes were then split into five separate geographical patches (based upon current maintenance surveyor patches) to take into account any geographical variations and reduce waste in travelling time.

A the time of survey the stock was made up of:

- 4594 houses and bungalows;
- 3572 flats and maisonettes;
- 381 blocks of flats; and
- 460 communal entrances

Of which surveyed as follows:

- 817 internal property surveys (all property types);
- 461 external property surveys (houses and bungalows);
- 39 block external surveys; and
- 46 communal entrance surveys

Giving a sample size of 10.02%

It was decided that an appointment system for access to the properties for surveying would be extremely difficult to manage and honour, as access rates per appointment are low, therefore a system of cold calling was successfully used. All surveyors were instructed to survey 10% of each archetype in their respective geographical patch. Surveyors carried official council photocard identification and a letter from the Housing Improvements Manager that could be left at the property for information purposes. Each surveyor downloaded the surveys from their handheld computer every two days.

Cloning process

Following the survey of the initial 10% of the stock, the results were then equally cloned over the remaining 90% in a representative method. Due to previously mentioned technical restrictions with the Codeman IT package no cloning of data could be carried out until the entire 10% had been surveyed.

The results of the 10% sample were cloned over the remaining 90% using a representative method to provide the whole 100% base of information (rather than analysing the initial surveys for 'average' results prior to cloning over the remaining un-surveyed properties, which dramatically reduces the ratio of actual:cloned data).

For example, all 10 discus bungalows surveyed were equally used to 'gross up' over the un-surveyed 90 to the total 100 discus bungalows in the full stock, giving a 1:10 ratio as opposed to using the most common results from the 10 surveys to produce an average survey that is then grossed up over the rest of the un-surveyed bungalows giving a 1:90 ratio.

Following this exercise the archived data of historical work programmes was overlaid over the full database to increase accuracy. Archived data included previous survey data, information from the Tenants' Choice Modernisation Scheme, window replacement programme data, and, where possible, relevant responsive and void repairs data.

Validation of information

A number of validation checks were performed and amendments made prior to the results being used for business analysis, these involved question completion rates and adjustments for missing answers; inputting Schedule of Rates costs using approved publications or current contract costs; seeking anomalies within calculations e.g. kitchen installation year before property construction date etc; and investigating significant variations from the results of the previous stock condition survey of 2001. The results were then subject to external validation by Lightly and Lightly Building Consultants of York, who stated,

“We are satisfied that the method of cloning was acceptable, and consequently, the basis of data for preparing the business plan was sound. We are of the opinion that the complete exercise has been carried out in a professional manner, and has made every attempt to provide a fair reflection of the housing stock. The exercise has produced a clear business plan, outlining areas where expenditure is required by 2010 and for the next 30 years”.

Summary of survey findings

- The results of the stock condition survey indicated that 1,574 dwellings or 19% of stock failed the Decent Homes Standard.
- Key areas of work were central heating, electrics, kitchens, bathrooms and roofing.
- The 2005/06 year-end results show that the number of dwellings now identified as failing the Decent Homes Standard has reduced to 1034.
- A breakdown of numbers of dwellings failing the standard by element is given overleaf.
- An investment of £36.6 million is required to meet the Decent Homes Standard by end March 2011.

Decent Homes failures - March 2006

A: Fitness		3	C: Modern Facilities		190
Structural Stability	2		Kitchen < 20yrs	2423	
General Disrepair	0		Kitchen Adequate	0	
Dampness	0		Bathroom < 30yrs	729	
Adequate Lighting/Heating/Ventilation	0		Appropriate location bathroom and WC	0	
Wholesome Piped Water	0		Adequate noise insulation	200	
Adequate Drainage	0		Common areas	12	
Suitably Located and Exclusive WC	0				
Bath/Shower	0				
Food Preparation Area	1				
B: Disrepair		424	D: Thermal Comfort		451
<i>Key Elements</i>	<i>413</i>		Heating Type	0	
Wall Structure	0		Roof Insulation	1876	
Wall Finish	0		Wall Insulation	327	
Chimney	0				
Roof Structure	0				
Roof Covering	56				
External Doors	61				
Windows	8				
Gas System	96				
Electrical Supply	154				
Heating Boiler	122				
<i>Non-Key Elements</i>	<i>24</i>				
Kitchen Amenities	202				
Bathroom Amenities	33				
Heating System	231				

Total properties failing 1034

Criteria A: The Fitness Standard. A failure of any of these components means the dwelling will fail Decent Homes.

Criteria B: State of Repair. A failure of any key elements or a failure of two or more non-key elements will result in the dwelling failing Decent Homes.

Criteria C: Modern Services and Facilities. A failure of three or more components will result in the dwelling failing Decent Homes.

Criteria D: Thermal Comfort. A failure of any component will result in the dwelling failing Decent Homes.

Note: The sub-totals do not sum to the overall total as some dwellings are failing in more than one criteria, so are not counted twice.