

City of York Council

Housing Business Plan

2001/2004

Contents

1.	Summary	1
1.1.	Introduction	1
1.2.	Major Successes	1
1.3.	Key Challenges	1
1.4.	Specific Areas Requiring Attention	1
2.	Introduction	2
2.1.	Wider Context	2
2.2.	Local Context	3
2.3.	Preparing the Plan	3
3.	Demand and Supply of Housing	5
3.1.	Demand for Housing	5
3.2.	Homelessness	5
3.3.	Supply of Affordable Rented Housing	5
4.	Housing Stock	6
4.1.	Profile of the Council's Housing stock	6
4.2.	Assessment of Stock Condition	7
4.3.	Performance in improving the condition of stock	8
4.4.	Key messages	8
4.5.	Future Strategy	9
5.	Management of the Service	10
5.1.	Introduction	10
5.2.	Tenant Satisfaction	10
5.3.	Vacant Dwellings and Re-Letting	10
5.4.	Repairs and Routine Maintenance	11
5.5.	Customer Services	12
5.6.	Key messages related to management of service	13
5.7.	Future strategy for improving the management of service	13
6.	Tenant Relationships	15
6.1.	Communication and consultation with tenants	15
6.2.	Participation of tenants	15
7.	Finance	16
7.1.	Introduction	16
7.2.	Trends in position of the HRA Account	16
7.3.	Revenue Stream	16
7.4.	Costs	19
7.5.	Capital	21
8.	Financial Plan	22
8.1.	Introduction	22
8.2.	Asset Management Plan Options	22
8.3.	Net Present Value	23
8.4.	Social Housing Occupancy	24
8.5.	Return on Capital Employed (ROCE)	24
8.6.	The Model's Projections	24
8.7.	Sensitivity Analysis - Rent Levels	25
8.8.	Conclusions	25
9.	Related Strategies	26
9.1.	Nuisance and Anti-Social Behaviour	26
9.2.	Home Energy Conservation	26
9.3.	Area Regeneration	27
9.4.	Key Messages	27
9.5.	Future Strategy	27
10.	Existing Plans and Future Plans	28
10.1.	Review of Existing Targets	28
10.2.	Future Direction	28
11.	Annexes	30
11.1.	Condition	30
11.2.	Tenant Relationships	31
11.3.	Stage 3 Complaints Profile	35
11.4.	Reducing Rent Arrears	36
11.5.	Capital Investment – Schedule of Improvements	37

11.6.	Sensitivity analysis for rent increase	40
11.7.	Anti-Social Behaviour	40
11.8.	Improvement Plan	42

1. Summary

1.1. Introduction

The business plan sets out an assessment of the current position of the housing stock and management of the service. It identifies areas of high performance and those that require action.

1.2. Major Successes

York housing services continue to:

- Offer a high quality service with most areas of performance placing the Council in the top quartile of authorities
- Improve properties in accordance with its planned schedule with the active involvement of tenants. Satisfaction with these improvements is good
- Actively involve tenants in issues and keeps them informed of developments.

In addition

- York is seen as a leader in energy efficiency and housing services have made a significant contribution to this issue.
- Its mediation service (Face to Face) tackles neighbour disputes in an innovative and effective manner
-

1.3. Key Challenges

The continued success of the service is against a backdrop of significant challenges:

- A best value review of the landlord function, including an appraisal of future options for the ownership and management of the service is in progress
- The Government's agenda for change in the housing field is extensive and has major implications for how the service is provided. eg rent restructuring.
- The departure of key personnel in the strategic services and client functions with a significant period with vacant posts.
- A projected shortfall of around £13 million over the next 10 years between what is required to improve the stock and anticipated income from the Major Repairs Allowance (MRA).
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1.4. Specific Areas Requiring Attention

Two aspects of the service that will form the focus of key aspects of the Best Value Review will be improving parts of the repair service and the management of rent arrears.

2. Introduction

This business plan takes account of the recent guidance on both business planning and the development of housing strategies issued by the DTLR. Its focus is therefore on the City Council's landlord function over the next 3 to 5 years. All plans work within a changing environment. Some of these changes are predictable and can be accommodated in setting out future directions. However, as set out in some of the following section there are significant factors that are unpredictable. These will mean that the plan is likely to require significant revision in the next 12 months.

2.1. Wider Context

2.1.1. Housing Strategy

The business plan should be read in conjunction with York's Housing Strategy. The key aspects of the strategy that are relevant to this plan are:

- Increasing population over next 10 years and marked increase in older people.
- New needs survey during 2001/02
- Continuing strong demand for social and affordable housing in York, particularly for family sized property
- Strong increase in house and land prices in York in the last 2 years.
- The Council's plans related to supported housing for people in social need

The following areas are dealt with in the Housing Strategy and will not be covered in this business plan:

- Homelessness Strategy
- Allocations Policy

2.1.2. Central Government Policy

There are several major policy initiatives that will impact on the delivery of the Council's landlord services over the coming period. The most significant are :

- The introduction of a new Decent Homes Standards that will require a reassessment of the condition of the Council's stock.
- Rent re-structuring.
- Common Tenancy contracts

2.1.3. Building Industry¹

2.1.3.1. Prices and Costs

Output prices (price levels of work under construction) have continued to rise well above the level of general inflation, reflecting tender price movement in previous years. The DTLR All New Construction Output Price Index rose 4.1% in the year to June 2000 while the Retail Price Index (excluding changes in mortgage interest rates) rose 2.1% in the same period.

Tender prices (price levels of construction tenders) have also risen indicating a further increase in output prices to come. The DTLR All New Construction Tender Price Index rose by 5.3% in the year to June 2000.

2.1.3.2. Capacity

The substantial increase in public sector capital investment planned for the next three years poses the question whether the construction industry has the capacity to deliver. By far the most important capacity issue is the supply of skilled labour, including professionals, experienced management and skilled site trades

Survey evidence shows that building companies are already utilising a high proportion of their existing capacity, but civil engineering companies have more slack. Most forecasters predict total industry output growth of around 2.5-3% per year for the next two years, with the public sector share rising while some important areas of private workload decline. This is not an excessive rate of growth and should be deliverable, particularly if there is a shift of workloads from building to civil engineering contractors. However delivery will require continuing efforts to improve recruitment and training and may put some additional upward pressure on labour costs.

¹ Construction Industry Board, The State of the Construction Industry, Autumn 2000

2.2. Local Context

2.2.1. Best Value Review

The Council is committed to providing quality and choice for its customers and ensuring the most effective and efficient way of investing in its stock and services. It has therefore brought forward its planned Best Value review of housing services as they relate to the landlord function. The review covers:

- Customer Services
- Repairs and maintenance
- Lettings
- Participation and Consultation
- Care-taking Services
- Tenancy and Leasehold Management
- Homeownership Services
- Rent Management
- Performance management

It is due to report towards the end of the year. The outcome of the review will cover many of the areas that are contained in this plan and will need to inform the revision of the plan next year.

2.2.2. Financial Appraisal of Future Management Arrangements

As part of the Best Value Review external consultants, Chapman Hendy, are currently undertaking a financial appraisal, on behalf of the Council, of the options for the future status of its landlord services. This assessment will not be available until September and further work on the way forward will be required, including consultation with tenants. It is not envisaged that the final decisions will be reached until 2002. The impact of this work on the Business Plan is highly significant. It is therefore predicted that the Business Plan will require significant revision next year.

2.2.3. Management Structure and Capacity

When York became a unitary authority Housing Services were combined with Social Services to form a new Community Services Department. A joint review by the Social Services Inspectorate and Audit Commission identified many strengths in these arrangements. Weaknesses were found in the Department's strategic and commissioning functions. Changes have been introduced in the last 6 months to increase the capacity in this area. However, these changes have occurred during the course of the preparation of the Housing Strategy and Business Plan. A clear distinction has been made between the strategic and landlord functions as required by the Government. This plan represents a further step in developing a more focussed approach to the delivery of the Council's landlord services.

2.3. Preparing the Plan

2.3.1. Preparation

Given the brief timescale available the plan has been prepared by a small group of officers. Tenants have been consulted via the tenants federation meetings. It was not possible to actively involve tenant representatives in the working group directly, however this is the intention for future plans.

2.3.2. Structure of the plan

The plan is divided into the following sections:

- Condition of the housing stock
- Managing the Service
- Finance and Financial Planning
- Tenant Relationships
- Related Strategies
- Future Plans and Monitoring Arrangements

In most sections there is an assessment of performance and identification of key issues followed by a description of future strategies to address the issues.

2.3.3. Sub Authority Analysis

The housing stock is managed through two area teams covering Acomb and the City and through 18 estate management patches. Last year's business plan identified the need to

examine information on an area basis and not solely citywide. This business plan includes data structured to show performance and costing related to Acomb and City teams as well as city wide. The intention in future years is to further break this down into the patch areas and by housing type.

2.3.4. Performance

The various sections of the business plan evaluates our performance in 2000/01 and compares achievements with the Council's own historic performance and, for national indicators, the performance achieved by other similar authorities for the year 1999/2000 (this is the last published performance assessment available). The plan will be updated later in the year when the assessment of national performance is carried out by DTLR.

Where appropriate customer satisfaction information gathered from the Annual Service Monitor (ASM) and other surveys undertaken throughout the year is used to give a further perspective on the service. The ASM has been carried out every year since 1990 and is used to monitor the attitudes and opinions of Council tenants towards the Community Services Directorate and the housing service it provides. The results of the questionnaire used are accurate to within +/- 3.2% with 95% confidence.

Nationally based methods of assessing using Best Value Performance Indicators are identified as BVPI, local indicators by LPI.

3. Demand and Supply of Housing

3.1. Demand for Housing

York operates a joint list with registered social landlords (Housing Associations) in the City.

At the 1st April 2001 a total of 4,425 customers had registered representing a slight fall on the previous year of 4,496 customers.

Table 1 compares the proportion of lettings from the waiting list and transfer for the last four years.

Activity	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01
Total lettings to Council homes	715	794	721	764
Of which - % to waiting list (non homeless)	51%	52%	51%	44%
% to waiting list (homeless)	20%	22%	14%	20%
% to transfer applicants	29%	26%	35%	36%
Direct exchanges	191	195	78	94
Housing Association nominations	132	144	276	186
Of which - % to homeless households	17%	23%	29%	29%

Table 1 Proportion of homes let to waiting/transfers

3.2. Homelessness

The number of people presented as homeless has increased from 679 in 1996/97 to over 1000 in 2000/01. Acceptances in the same period have more than doubled from 221 to 499. Issues related to Homelessness are dealt with further in the Housing Strategy.

3.3. Supply of Affordable Rented Housing

Estimates of the type of homes available for letting through the joint list

Table 2 shows the estimated supply of housing in 2001/2 based on the percentage of each property type available for letting in previous years.

	COUNCIL	RSLs ²	TOTAL
Houses	295	87	382
Flats	425	45	470
Bungalows	45	8	53
Maisonettes	25	0	25
All homes	790	140	930

Table 2 estimated that the supply of homes to let in 2001/2002

This has been projected in Table 3 into a pattern of allocations for Council and Housing Association homes by the type of household.

	Transfer	Waiting list (not homeless)	Homeless	TOTAL
Families ³	102 (21%)	145 (29%)	250 (50%)	497 (100%)
Single/childless couples	58 (22%)	182 (70%)	20 (8%)	260 (100%)
Elderly (Sheltered/ warden call)	90 (53%)	71 (42%)	9 (5%)	170 (100%)
Total	253	398	398	927
% of all homes	27%	43%	30%	100%

Table 3 Projected pattern of allocations

² New build and re-lets through nominations

³ The properties allocated to families will include family size flats and maisonettes

4. Housing Stock

4.1. Profile of the Council's Housing stock.

58% of the stock comprises of houses and bungalows, 402 of which are of non-traditional construction and the remaining 42% represents low and medium rise flats. The authority has no high rise blocks of flats.

35% of the stock was built prior to 1945 and 38% between 1945 and 1974.

Property type	pre 1945	1945- 64	1965-74	Post 1974	Total
Houses and bung					
1-2 beds	835	769	252	281	2137
3 plus beds	1,715	663	75	216	2669
Sub total	2,550	1,432	327	497	4,806
Non Trads		402			402
Flats and mais's					
Up to 2 storeys	570	692	252	522	2,036
3 to 5 storeys	35	892	547	260	1,734

Table 4 Profile of the Council's Housing Stock by type and age.

Table 5 provides a geographical breakdown of housing type.

Area	1 bed	2 bed	3-4 Bed	House	Bung	Med Rise Flats	Low Rise Flats
Nunnery, Cambridge Street, Clementhorpe & Leeman Road	434	241	103	183	29	267	299
Walmgate, Navigation, Hull Road, Rawdon Ave, Hadrian & Horseman Ave.	308	282	172	276	59	313	114
Villages (West)	6	48	51	63	42		
Villages (East), including Heslington and Fulford	168	94	114	129	127	30	90
Tang Hall (South)	180	164	323	483	51	35	98
Heworth & Tang Hall (North)	182	122	171	273	61	65	76
Muncaster	94	47	118	140	6		111
Clifton	294	194	586	706	17	58	252
The Groves	306	129	15	24	9	327	90
Bell Farm	46	46	210	247		10	45
Dodsworth	154	133	70	177	3	45	132
Kingsway West	293	190	203	344	16	138	157
Dringhouses, Lowfields and Bachelor Hill	241	226	145	289	48	51	224
Foxwood and Tedder	59	72	200	235	31	29	29
Cornlands	120	150	149	214		124	81
Lindsey Avenue	176	145	45	71	21	141	133
Carr and Ouseburn	20	83	346	404	38		7
Chapelfields	36	279	126	365	11	16	49

Table 5 Type of Housing by Geographical Area

4.2. Assessment of Stock Condition

4.2.1. Historical Context

Prior to the mid 1980's the focus of the Council's improvement and maintenance work was on the fabric of its properties – walls, roofs etc. Since then a more customer focussed approach has been adopted through the Tenant's Choice programme, The scheme covers the replacement of kitchens, bathrooms and central heating systems together with any necessary rewiring and structural work. Following dissatisfaction with the cost and quality of modernisation work being undertaken in the conventional block contract method all modernisations have been undertaken through this programme since 1989.

A housing Conditions Survey was conducted in 1998 of 10% of the housing stock. The full report is available and has been previously supplied to Government Office.

The key messages from the 1998 findings were:

The stock was in good condition. There was a comparative low level of existing defects, largely attributable to the ageing of the stock and the inevitable deterioration of particular external building attributes.

There was a backlog of £66m of repair and improvement work that was needed over the next ten years, equivalent to £7,000 per home. Of this sum £15.4m was required to fund catch up repairs over the following five years.

4.2.2. Installation, Replacement or Major Repairs

4.2.2.1. Current Condition of the Housing Stock

Table 6 shows the work that is still required to be undertaken over the next 7 years, based on the existing stock conditions survey and known improvements undertaken in the last 3 years. This provides best estimates as a new conditions survey is intended for this year that will take account of the Government's new Decent Homes guidance.

Element that require repair or replacement	Number of dwellings April 2001	Percentage of total stock still requiring improvement
Rewire	5923	67
Roof structure	3965	45
Roof covering	968	11
Chimneys	3982	45
Windows	3140	36
Doors	4765	54
Structural works	1070	12
Central heating	1013	12
Insulation, Thermal and sound	672	8
Kitchen	1131	13
Bathroom	3175	36
Common areas	1353	15
Environmental works	965	11
Other	1211	14
Security	218	2
Adaptations	900	10

Table 6 Nature and extent of improvements required over the next 10 years to bring stock up to decency standard⁴

The figures show that remedial work is mainly required in the areas of structures – roofs, rewiring, doors and windows. This reflects the emphasis that has been given in the last decade or so on areas of modernisation that are customer priorities. It is also in keeping with the outcome of the conditions survey in 1998 which anticipated a rise in projected expenditure between 5 and 30 years. After 30 years the expenditure is expected to reduce as the major structural elements have been replaced or repaired.

⁴ from HRA Business Plan Statistical Annex, Section B.

4.2.3. Energy Efficiency

Around 90% of the stock has central heating installed.

All homes have had cavity wall insulation where this is technically feasible (7,800 homes in total). SAP ratings are above benchmark levels (NHR average is 7.3).

1996	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01
51	62	62	62	64

A detailed breakdown of the profile of SAP ratings is given in the annex "Energy Efficiency" on page 30.

4.3. Performance in improving the condition of stock

4.3.1.1. Previous improvements

Between 1989 and March 2001 a total of £57million has been invested in the housing stock through the capital programme.

Table 7 shows the number of dwellings improved since the last conditions survey and as a percentage of dwellings that needed improvement or replacement in 1998. The table only shows those elements where the information has been consistently collected e.g. the requirement to provide details of thermal and sound insulation only came into force in 2000.

Element	Number Dwellings	%
Rewire	177	3
Roofs	143	3
Windows	1202	28
Structural works	872	45
Central heating	962	49
Kitchen	817	42
Bathroom	797	20

Table 7 Aspects of Dwellings Improved 1998 – 2001

The figures are in keeping with priorities established at the time of the last conditions survey and show significant improvements have been made in reducing the numbers of homes where structural aspects, central heating and kitchens require improvement.

Good progress has also been made in the areas of window replacement and bathrooms.

Progress in rewiring and roof replacement has been at a slower rate.

The need to increase the rate of renewal of re-wiring and roof structures will be reviewed in light of the forthcoming stock survey and is evident in our planned schedule of work.

4.4. Key messages

Strengths

The housing service has a strong track record in the following areas:

- Housing modernisation with active involvement of tenants in determining priorities.
- Energy efficiency with 80% of homes insulated, 40% with double-glazing, and 88% having central heating.

Areas presenting challenges

- The balance between work still required to modernise homes and ensure the integrity of the fabric.
- The likely increasing capacity problems in the building trade.

4.5. Future Strategy

4.5.1. Introduction

The future strategy for bringing the stock up to the decency standard by 2010 as required by the Government is dependent on a number of factors that cannot be predicted at present. The basis of the proposed schedules are therefore based on the following assumptions:

- The stock remains within the Council's housing services.
- The new stock conditions survey to be undertaken in accordance with new Government guidance does not highlight significant new areas of disrepair
- The capital investment levels are as predicted in the section on finance.
- The restructuring of rents does not effect HRA resources.
- Capacity within the building trade does not decrease
- Prices within the building industry are kept within the RPI.

4.5.2. Future Strategy

4.5.2.1. Information on Stock Condition

A new stock conditions survey will be commissioned during 2001/02 to reassess the Council's dwellings in line with the recently issued Government Guidance.

The introduction of a new IT system to log improvements to properties is on track. This will be in place by March 2002. It will bring together data held in a variety of other sources and allow easier recording of year by year improvements to individual properties. This will allow more accurate forecasting for the purposes of capital investment and the business plan.

4.5.2.2. Scheduled improvements over the next 10 years

The detailed schedule for tackling improvements in the condition of stock are set out in Annex E and F of the HRA Business Plan. The emphasis is to continue to focus on the priorities of tenants for modernisation to their homes. Once this programme has been completed the focus will be towards ensuring the fabric of the properties are sound. However, this prioritising will be reviewed in the light of the forthcoming stock condition survey to assess whether the programme of work related to the fabric of properties should be scheduled earlier.

For the purposes of local scheduling based on geographical areas and to fit with the Council's approach to Tenants' Choice a programme of improvements is set out in the annex "Capital Investment – Schedule of Improvements" on page 37. This is subject to consultation with tenants and to revision from year to year dependent on changing local circumstances. Historically the specific areas of the city to be improved are identified over a three year period. This is continued in this plan and the annex only shows those areas that will be improved over the next three years.

The capital investment to support this schedule is dealt with in the section "Financial Plan" on page 22.

5. Management of the Service

5.1. Introduction

This section covers how the service is managed, focusing on the following key aspects:

- Tenant Satisfaction
- Vacant dwellings
- Repairs and Routine Maintenance
- Customer Services

5.2. Tenant Satisfaction

Overall 85% of tenants surveyed in 2000 agree with the statement that the Council is a good landlord, with only 8% saying they either tended or strongly disagreed with the statement. This continues to be an excellent level of satisfaction.

Also in 2000 82% of Council tenants surveyed said they were satisfied with the Housing Department.

When asked the reasons for dissatisfaction the key reasons given are : the repairs service 56% and the poor condition of property 33%. This is further examined in the section "Repairs" on page 11.

The target satisfaction level for 2000/01 given in the Best Value Performance Plan was 88%, given current year performance this has been adjusted to 86% in the Best Value Performance Plan.

5.3. Vacant Dwellings and Re-Letting

5.3.1. **Average time taken to re-let a property (BVPI)**

The latest comparative figures are shown in the following table

All England quartiles	99/00	Family group quartiles	99/00
Highest	2	Highest	1.8
High performance	4.3	High performance	4.4
Average	6.0	Average	6.4
Low performance	7.1	Low performance	8.0
Lowest	10	Lowest	12
York	5.48	York	5.48

Table 8 Average re-let times in weeks (BVPI 68)

The outcome for 2000/01 for York shows a significant improvement at 3.29 weeks and is likely to place York in the top quartile of all councils.

Future targets set for this area of activity in our Best Value Performance Plan are:

2001/02	2002/0	2003/04	2004/05
3.29 weeks	3.2 weeks	3.15 weeks	3.1 weeks

5.3.2. **Customer satisfaction with the re-letting process (LPI)**

We ask questions on the re-letting process during the Annual Service Monitor and in our New Homes questionnaire

The proportion of new tenants who rated their home as good or satisfactory when they moved in 2000 was 68%. Following a decline in 1999 satisfaction levels have returned to those experienced between 1995 and 1998.

Our Customer satisfaction target for the coming year is set at 70%.

5.3.3. Strategy for tackling issues related to vacant dwellings

Details of specific action are contained in the Annex "Improvement Plan" on page 42. They cover areas such as :

- Ensuring gas and electrical checks to properties
- Improving new tenant information packs

See also financial aspects of vacant properties on page 19.

5.4. Repairs and Routine Maintenance

5.4.1. External Painting

There is a six year cycle of external painting, commissioned through 6 annual contracts with private contractors of between 200 and 300 homes. Approximately 1500 homes are painted each year. 83% of customers indicate they are satisfied with the repainting programmes slightly below benchmark figure although proportion of very satisfied has increased by 11% over 2 years.⁵

5.4.2. Time taken to complete urgent repairs (BVPI)

The comparative performance of York is given in **Table 9**.

All England quartiles	99/00 %	Family group quartiles	99/00 %
Highest	98	Highest	100
High performance	95	High performance	94
Average	88	Average	86
Low performance	82	Low performance	82
Lowest	64	Lowest	64
York	90	York	90

Table 9 *Urgent repairs completed within Government time limits (BVPI 72) B5*

In 2000/01 we achieved a 93% completion rate which is a performance improvement from 1999/00

In 2001/02 our target performance was 91% however in the light of our achievement this year our aim is to maintain performance at 93% with a target for 2002/03 to increase to 94%.

5.4.3. Non urgent repairs (BVPI)

In 2000/01 we achieved an average of 8.8 days to complete a non urgent repair against a projected target of 8 days.

This was the first year that we have set and monitored this target. Our target in 2001/02 is 7.8 days, however in view of our achievement this year we have adjusted our target to 8.6 days with a view to achieving the 7.8 days in the longer term.

As this is the first year this target has been set we will review our comparative performance with other local authorities when it is available and also our longer term targets. We believe that our performance will compare favourably with other local authorities.

5.4.4. Repair Jobs and Appointments (BVPI)

York provides an appointment system for repairs that require access to the premises. The basis of performance analysis has changed. The appointment was kept in 97% of those repairs that require an appointment to be made (ie access to the home) .

Comparative data is not yet available on the new basis of assessment, but York is likely to be in the top quartile of the top performing authorities.

⁵ Report of Director of Community Services : Officer in Consultation with Executive Member for Housing Services, 13th March 2001, External Painting and Repairs Research 2000 and 2001 programme, provides further detail if required.

5.4.5. Customer satisfaction with the repairs service

The satisfaction level with the repair service as monitored by the Annual Service Monitor has consistently shown satisfaction rates around 80%. In 2000 the rate had dropped to 73%.

The main reasons given for this dissatisfaction was as follows (respondents were allowed to choose more than one reason):

- 34% failure to complete the repair in a reasonable time
- 29% poor quality of workmanship
- 27% failure of surveyor or workman to turn up when expected
- 26% delays between visits by workmen
- 25% repeat visits by workmen

The Housing Management Best Value Review will be looking at the standard of service received from the contractor who provides the repair service and making recommendations for future improvements.

5.4.6. Handyperson

As part of the Bell Farm Estate Agreement the residents agreed to use part of their Estate Improvement budget to employ a Handyperson to help with keeping the estate clean, help with garden maintenance and undertake simple repairs. The Residents' Association took part in the selection process and management/monitoring meetings. The post proved a success and has now been emulated on Foxwood Estate as part of the Neighbourhood Agreement and in other areas such as Lindsey and Chapelfield funded through the Estate Improvement budget.

5.4.7. Financial Aspects of Repairs

Details of the financial aspects of minor repairs are given in the section "Average weekly cost of maintenance per unit" on page 20

Our overall target for the balance between planned and responsive maintenance is to achieve a 70% planned to 30% responsive expenditure split. In 1999/2000 we achieved a 67% to 33% proportional spend and in 2000/01 we achieved a 63% to 37% proportional spend.

We believe we are on target to achieve a 70% to 30% proportional split in 2001/02.

5.5. Customer Services

Our current Customer First standards were adopted in 1996, and in order to assess whether or not they are still applicable they will be reviewed by the end of this year.

5.5.1. Reception services

Visits in person to our offices account for over 28% of customer contacts. The standard is for people to be seen within 10 minutes.

Performance returns for each office indicate an excellent standard of performance with 100% of people seen within target of 10 minutes at the Acomb office and 99% at City.

Of those people who contacted the office a number of areas of the service have scored well on satisfaction levels:

- 82% thought the opening times were good
- 82% thought the ease of access was good
- 86% thought the level of cleanliness was good
- 80% thought the reception areas were comfortable
- 70% thought the level of privacy was good
- 74% thought the leaflets and information available was good

5.5.2. Correspondence

Contacting the department by letter is used by only 1% of tenants. The standard is to reply within 10 working days of receipt of an enquiry. The target is to achieve this standard in 95% of cases.

The performance for the Contract Teams is as follows:

Citywide 1999/00	City 1999/00	Acomb 1999/00	Citywide 2000/01	City 2000/01	Acomb 2000/01
83%	81%	86%	84%	81%	87%

5.5.3. Telephone service

The majority of tenants (54%) contacted the housing department by telephone. The customer service standard for telephone answering is to answer calls within 20 seconds. The target set for achievement in 2000/01 was 95%.

Housing Services achieved an average of around 84% in 2000/01

5.5.4. Complaints

5.5.4.1. General

The City of York follows a three stage complaints procedure, with recourse to the Local Government Ombudsman as the fourth and final rung in the complaints process.

- Stage 1 is 'problem solving' and attempts to deal with a problem at source.
- Stage 2 is a review of action taken by a line/service manager.
- Stage 3 is a fresh and impartial investigation of all the issues undertaken by the complaints manager.

Table 10 provides a breakdown of the resolution of complaints and the Annex Stage 3 Complaints Profile on page 35 provides greater detail on the nature of the complaints.

	City Wide	Acomb	City
Stage 1	105	20	85
Stage 2	118	78	40
Stage 3	13	10	3

Table 10 Distribution of complaints received by offices

The profile of complaints shows that the Acomb office has a higher proportion of complaints that go on to a later stage. However, none of the complaints that reached stage 3 were upheld.

5.5.4.2. Ombudsmen

The Council has an unbroken record with the Ombudsmen with no findings of maladministration.

5.6. Key messages related to management of service

Strengths

The service is well run and provides a strong customer focussed approach that is efficient and effective in the following areas:

- Overall tenant satisfaction
- Re-letting of property
- Completion of urgent repairs
- Response to customers visiting offices

The following areas require further attention:

- Customer satisfaction with aspects of the repair service
- Condition of the houses on re-letting
- Correspondence and telephone response times

5.7. Future strategy for improving the management of service

The service is currently undertaking a best value review that is examining most of the areas covered in this section. The review will identify good practice and ways of improving performance. The housing services management team have already produced an improvement plan and the key action points from this are contained in the Annex "Improvement Plan" on page 42.

The introduction of a dedicated customer support service on the 1st July, offers the opportunity to directly improve response times for customer calls and correspondence as well as more effective monitoring of responses to customers in relation to repairs. Together with the complaints team it will offer the opportunity to use complaints as a source of information for improving the service.

6. Tenant Relationships

6.1. Communication and consultation with tenants

6.1.1. Keeping tenants' informed

Various methods are employed to keep tenants informed of issues. The magazine for tenants, "Streets Ahead", has received two awards in recent years⁶. It is produced quarterly and one issue contains an annual review as well as area-by-area information on housing services and performance.

Over the last 10 years around 80% of tenants have consistently said that they are very or fairly satisfied with the amount of information they receive.

6.1.2. Seeking tenant views

The Annual Service Monitor provides the main vehicle for tenants to feedback on a variety of areas concerned with their homes and the services they receive. Estate Managers undertake regular "Estate Walk Abouts" to meet customers and seek their opinions. Tenants moving to a new property complete a short questionnaire.

6.2. Participation of tenants

There are 21 residents' associations in York that belong to the York Federation of Residents' and Community Associations. The federation provides the main forum for discussion between the Council and tenants on issues of mutual concern. In addition tenants are represented on various working groups such as the Best Value Review group and performance monitoring group.

6.2.1. Tenant Compact

A comprehensive Tenant Participation Compact was agreed in June 2000 and is available. The first annual review of performance against the compact has been completed and is included in the Annex "Tenant Compact Annual Report 2000/01" on page 31.

6.2.2. Tenant satisfaction with the opportunity for involvement (BVPI)

A new question was added to the ASM to judge tenant satisfaction with opportunities to participate. 66% of people interviewed were happy with their opportunities. The target for 2001/02 is 70%.

6.2.3. Resourcing of Tenant Participation

	2000/01	Notes
Number of Staff (FTE)	5	Community Development Team, the North Clifton Project, estate management staff, Citizens Unit.
Funding to tenant groups	£208,700	Funding for estate improvements and the Tenants Federation
One off Capital Projects	Nil	
Training for Tenants	£2,000	

The amount we will provide in 2001/02 for tenant groups is £238,700. The budget for tenants training is programmed to rise to £4,000 by 2005/06. Further details are contained in the Annex "Resources supporting tenant participation in York on page 33.

6.2.4. Key Messages

The Council has a strong record of informing and seeking the views of tenants and actively seeks their participation in housing issues

⁶ Class winner "News Magazine Section" of the national British Association of Communication in Business Awards 1999 and a Certificate of Merit in the regional event as "Best Magazine".

7. Finance

7.1. Introduction

This section examines:

- Trends in the HRA account
- Revenues and how they can be maximised
- Costs and how they can be reduced

7.2. Trends in position of the HRA Account

A balance arises on the HRA where the income exceeds expenditure. The resulting surplus is available for further revenue spending, a reduction in rents or can be used to pay for capital (CERA). As York has been able to make a considerable CERA until recently, the financial health of the HRA can therefore be measured in this way. The following table shows the original budget for the CERA from 1996 to date, discounted for any surplus carried forward from the previous year.

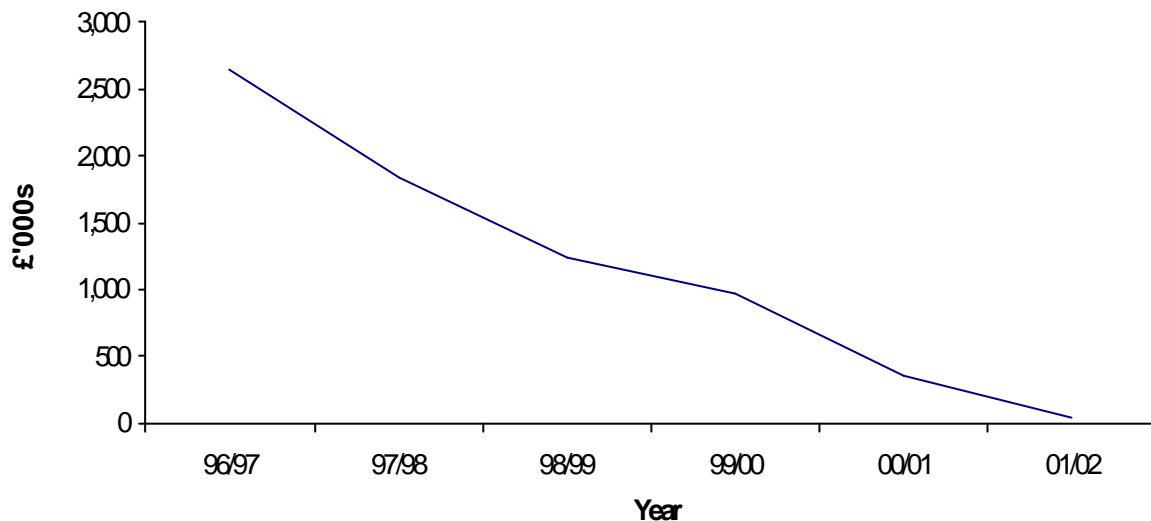


Figure 1: Revenue Contribution to Capital

The gradual decline in surpluses on the HRA account reflects declining revenue and increasing costs. The following sections examine these in greater detail. In summary revenue has declined because of a reduction in the size of the stock through Right to Buy, increasing levels of arrears and to a lesser extent loss of income because of voids. Management and repair costs have risen.

7.3. Revenue Stream

7.3.1. Assessment

7.3.1.1. Average rent per dwelling (BVPI)

The average rent for the dwelling has increased from £37.66 in April 1996 to £45.60 in April 01, which represents an increase of 21.1%. 85% of tenants surveyed in 2000 think that their rent represents good value for money. These response levels have remained fairly steady since 1992.

Rent restructuring has to be achieved in the years 2002 to 2012 with increases capped to £2.00 per week plus inflation every year. Preparation for these changes is under way and the full impact, on tenants and the Council's revenue will be assessed once the Government's guidance is finalised.

7.3.1.2. Percentage of rent lost through re-lets (BVPI)

In 2000/01 the percentage of rent lost through re-lets was 0.88%, which while above target of 0.47%, was a substantial improvement on last year's performance of 1.33% and reflects the improvement made in processing empty properties. The 1999/2000 figure was below the all England average at 2.1% and 2.3% by other family group unitaries. York was also among the top performing unitaries.

The target set for 2001/02 in the Best Value Performance Plan was 0.86% however this has been adjusted to 0.88% to reflect our experience in 2001.

7.3.1.3. Percentage of rent collected (BVPI)

In 2000/01 the percentage of rent collected against total amount of rent due was 99.66% which is a slight improvement from 1999/2000 when 99.41% was achieved and better than the target set for 2000/01 of 98.8%.

The target set for 2001/02 is to collect 99.71% that is a change from the target set in the BVP of 98.9% to reflect the improved performance.

7.3.1.4. Rent arrears

The arrears shown in the authorities accounts at the year end covers rents, service charges and garage rents i.e. all income collected from tenants through their rents. There has been a substantial increase since 1996 as shown in the following chart split between current and former tenant arrears. This indicates an increase of some £492k i.e. 73 % in current tenant arrears and £74k i.e. 25% in former tenant arrears since 1996/97.

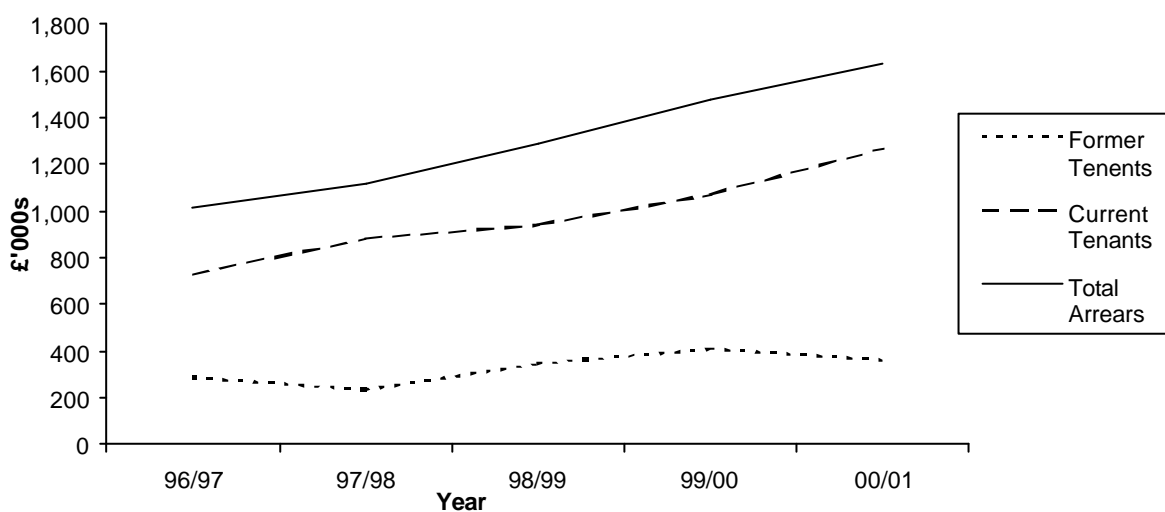


Figure 2: Rent and Associated Service Charges Arrears

Table 11 shows the breakdown of current tenant rent arrears by geographical area for the last three years⁷.

Service Area	2000/01			1999/2000			Mar 1999
	Citywide	Acomb	City	Citywide	Acomb	City	Citywide
Rent arrears as % of gross debt	4.20%	5.12%	2.65%	3.44%	4.61%	2.65%	3.83%
Amount of arrears	£0.89m	£0.45m	£0.44m	£0.70m	£0.38m	£0.32m	£0.77m

Table 11: Levels of rent arrears⁸

⁷ Disaggregation into areas has only recently been introduced.

The majority of work to reduce arrears is undertaken by Estate Managers, assisted by two rent assistants who have focussed on low arrears as well as monitoring agreements for tenants owing over 12 weeks. In October 2000 a rent arrears awareness campaign was launched with articles in Streets Ahead, leaflets sent to tenants in arrears and posters in community centres and offices, warning of the dangers of falling into arrears and of losing the home.

The impact of these approaches is evident in the reductions over a five month period in the numbers of tenants in arrears and an increased use of statutory procedures, see the Annex "Reducing Rent Arrears" on page 36.

7.3.1.5. Bad or Doubtful Debts

Authorities are required to make a provision within the HRA for bad and doubtful debts resulting from arrears, which is charged to the HRA.

The provision has to be calculated in line with the following guidance

Age of Arrears	Provision Based on Rent Value
	%
Up to 4 weeks	0
4 – 13 weeks	10
13 – 26 weeks	25
26 – 39 weeks	50
39 – 52 weeks	95
Former Tenants	95

The resulting provision required as a result of the arrears shown above has increased since 1996/97 by £434k i.e. 220 %. The provision since 1996 is as follows:-

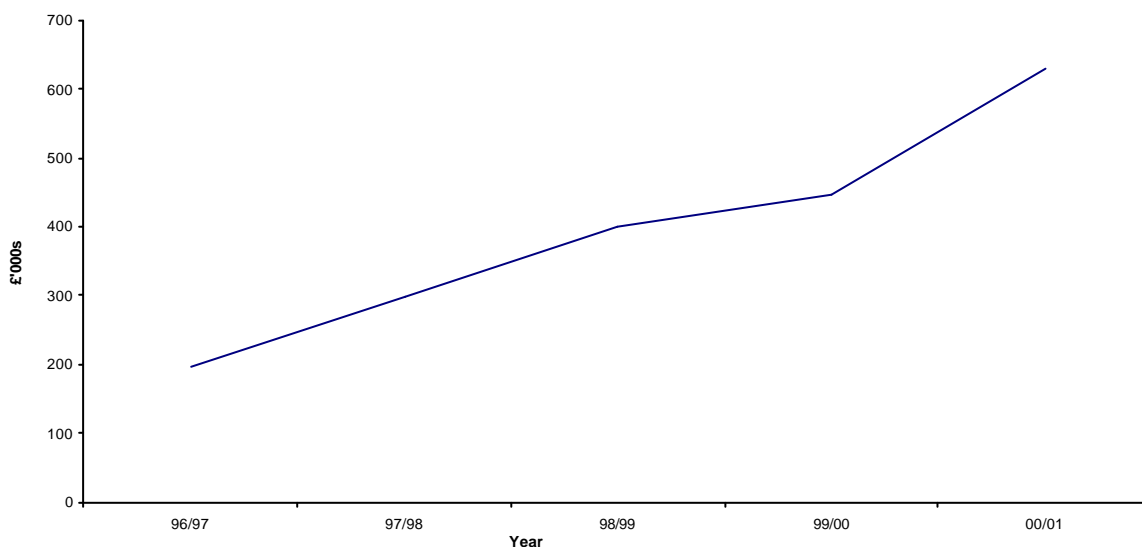


Figure 3: *Provision for bad Debts – Rents (Charge to Revenue)*

The percentage of rent written off in 2000/01 was 1.48% of the LA's rent roll (BVPI) against a target of 0.67%, which was due to the clearance of some long standing debts.

The target set for 2001/02 in the BVP was 0.7%; however this has been increased to 1.2% because we recognise that we still have some outstanding debts to clear. Our long-term target is to reduce write offs to 0.60% by 2010/11.

⁸ The table is not directly equivalent to the graph, which reflects arrears including service charges. The table only reflects the rent element of arrears.

7.3.2. Key messages related to revenue stream

The trend in revenue shows a steady decline in income generated. The main factors are:

- Decreasing numbers of properties because of sales through Right to Buy
- An increase in the size of rent arrears by current tenants and former tenants of £492k over the last 5 years to around £1.6M
- A loss of approximately £190,000 per year through vacant properties awaiting re-letting

7.3.3. Future Strategy to Improve Revenue Stream

7.3.3.1. Increasing rents

The Council's capacity to increase revenue through increasing rent levels is very limited and is not considered as a viable option, as confirmed by the financial option shown in the annex. In addition the Council is assessing the implications of restructuring rents from April 2002, however the lack of guidance on any potential changes to the current HRA subsidy system is a significant disadvantage.

7.3.3.2. Payment of Rents

The authority is introducing or examining a number of approaches to the collection of rents, the reduction and avoidance of arrears.

- Establish one stop shop for Housing Management/Housing Benefits and Resources
- Re-launch rent arrears campaign along with Direct Debit promotion
- Release additional time for estate managers to spend on Rent Arrears through the introduction of the Customer Service Team (established 1st July 2001)
- Establish targets for individual estate managers and teams
- Consult on implementing reward system for customers who pay their rent and implement trial in current year subject to Executive Officer Approval
- Set up a small staff group to work with the District Auditor on reviewing current methods of collection and arrears recovery
- Agree and implement option for the future of door to door collection of rents
- Monitor Arrears transferred through Former Tenant Arrears
- Consider the implications of the Government's proposals on Social Rent Reform.
- Prepare specification for Rent module of new IT system

7.3.3.3. Loss of rent through voids

The turn around of vacant properties has improved significantly over the last 12 months. Major improvement in income loss is unlikely.

7.4. Costs

7.4.1. Assessment

7.4.1.1. Average weekly cost of management per unit

All England quartiles	99/00	Family group quartiles	99/00
Highest	28.10	High	
High spending	11.88	Higher spending	11.50
Average spending	10.84	Average spending	10.06
Median	9.77	Median	9.87
Low spending	8.08	Low spending	8.19
Lowest	5.56	Lowest	
York	10.52	York	10.32

Table 12: Average weekly costs for management (BVPI 65a) (B9a)

York's management costs are £10.52 per week. This is below the average costs for 'all England' but above the lower spending authorities. In terms of unitary authorities York's management costs are higher than the average

The out turn for 2000/01 is £10.85 against a target given in the Best Value Performance Plan of £11.40 for 2000/01.

The reasons for the increasing trend in management costs over the years are complex. The introduction of a new IT systems represent one element but further investigation is required and will be undertaken within the current Housing Management Best Value Review.

7.4.1.2. Average weekly cost of maintenance per unit (BVPI)

As the comparative figures show in Table 13 York's average weekly cost for repairs is £11.37. This is below the average costs for 'all England' but higher than the lower spending authorities. In terms of the unitary authorities York's costs for repairs are again less than the average but greater than the lower spending authorities.

All England quartiles	99/00	Family group quartiles	99/00
Highest	19.45	Highest	
Higher spending	13.98	Higher Spending	13.56
Average	12.36	Average	12.26
Median	11.96	Median	11.65
Lower spending	10.12	Lower spending	10.71
Low	7.88	Low	
York	11.37	York	11.37

Table 13: Average weekly costs for repairs (BVPI 65b) (B9b)

The average weekly cost of maintenance per unit for 2000/01 was £11.60 against a target of £11.40. An analysis of the reasons for this increase has identified the following main causes - joinery, processing empty properties, gas checks, electrical repairs and rubbish removal/vandalism.

7.4.1.3. Cost of repairing empty properties (LPI)

In 2000/01 we spent an average of £875 per property to bring them up to a lettable standard, which represents an increase in expenditure from the 1999/2000 figure of £734. This has primarily been caused by vandalism to empty properties.

7.4.2. Key messages related to costs

In summary the areas where costs either show a marked annual increase or can be influenced by management action are:

- Volume of responsive repairs and proportion relative to planned maintenance
- The cost of preparing empty houses for new tenants
- Support costs associated with delivering the housing service – properties, IT, HR etc

7.4.3. Future Strategy to Reduce Costs

7.4.3.1. Repairs

- Invest in regular maintenance & improvements to reduce responsive repairs
- Target the properties that are at risk of requiring substantial repair work prior to re-letting in order to reduce the cost and improve turn round times.
- The Financial Options Appraisal and Housing Management Best Value Review will undertake an evaluation of this expenditure to identify further action that can be taken to reduce the unit cost of maintenance.

7.4.3.2. Management Costs

It would be anticipated that a decreasing stock size would require less management. However, there is some evidence⁹ that the tenants that have bought their own homes on the whole paid

⁹ An analysis of tenancy records for homes sold during 1999/00 showed that of a sample of 135 of the 265 homes sold during 1999/00; 26 tenants (19%) had any history of rent arrears the majority of a minor nature, compared to the average of 34%, and that certainly during the last years of their tenancy they had made few demands on the housing service, they paid their rent, ordered few repairs and had not been involved in any nuisance or anti social behaviour.

their rents on time, required less repairs and demanded less staff time for other reasons. Thus an increase in unit management cost is partly a consequence of a reduction in the size of the stock while costs remain the same.

More detailed analysis of where these costs fall, in order to determine what efficiencies can be made, will be part of Housing Management Best Value Review to be completed by the end of the year.

7.5. Capital

7.5.1. Value of Stock

The Council owns 8775 homes at the 1st April 2001 with an estimated value of £221,644k.

<u>Operational</u>	<u>£.000</u>
Dwellings	221,644
Sheltered	14,086
Other Specialist: Hostels	900
Other Non Housing: Shops, Garages	2,292
Total Operational	<hr/> 238,924
<u>Non Operational:</u> Community centres, land	9,011
 Grand Total	<hr/> <hr/> 247,935

There has been a decline in the properties owned by the Council from 9618 properties since 1996 as a consequence of the Right to Buy Option. Capital receipts have been invested in new dwellings, improvements and major repairs.

It is predicted that the number of properties owned by the Council will decline to 7340 by April 2010. See HRA Business Plan Annex Section H.

The impact on revenue of this decline in the number of properties owned by the authority is highlighted in the section " Revenue Stream" on page 16.

8. Financial Plan

8.1. Introduction

The Guidance notes issued by the DTLR state that;

“The essential product of the Business Plan will be the provision of a long term financial plan, consistent with the long life cycles of building components, which demonstrates that the authority can meet its assessed maintenance obligations within the likely level of resource availability, whilst maintaining affordable rent levels”

The estimated value of works required to overcome the defects identified in the 1998 stock conditions survey at April 2001 is £53M. Further details are available in the Housing Investment Programme – Business Plan Statistical Annex B

8.2. Asset Management Plan Options

The Asset Management Plan, **Annex 10**, sets out all the investment planned through both revenue and capital and maintenance and improvements.

Two Asset Management Plans have been produced;

- The first, shown in the table below, shows us what investment is likely taking into account the resources that will be available through the major repairs allowance, capital receipts borrowing and revenue contributions to capital.
- The second shows the investment that we would like to undertake to eliminate all catch up repairs over the next six years, based on the findings of the stock conditions survey and using their recommended expenditure targets.

Year	Responsive R&M £,000	Cyclical R&M £,000	Catch up repairs £,000	Planned Mttte £,000	Other £,000	Imp'ments	Total investment £,000
2002/3	2,613	1,444	878	1,225	856	2,965	9,980
2002/3	2,781	1,519	1,028	1,300	856	3,424	10,907
2003/4	2,609	1,427	872	1,277	532	3,130	9,847
2003/4	2,786	1,506	1,030	1,359	532	3,647	10,859
2004/5	2,609	1,363	867	1,241	559	2,990	9,316
2004/5	2,794	1,529	1,033	1,420	545	4,561	11,883
2005/6	2,610	1,339	863	1,174	559	2,771	9,316
2005/6	2,805	1,513	1,307	1,369	559	4,580	11,863
2006/7	2,612	1,313	859	1,549	573	2,373	9,279
2006/7	2,817	1,496	1,041	1,789	573	4,643	12,359
2007/8	2,552	1,341	0	1,583	587	3,180	9,243
2007/8	2,831	1,533	0	1,869	587	3,846	10,667

Table 14: Asset Management Plan

Projected investment over the next 6 years comparing what we would like to spend against what resources are likely to allow.

After the first five years in option 1, expenditure on catch up repairs comes to an end bringing the difference between the two scenarios to around £1.5m per annum. This gap continues to grow for the next thirty years to reach around £9.5M.

The model then compares the effect, over the thirty year period, which the different investment strategies will have on: -

- Operating account (annex 11)
- Net Present Value (annex 12)
- Social Housing Occupancy Cost (annex 13)
- Return of Capital Employed (annex 14)

The Operating Account sets out the income and expenditure for the Housing Revenue Account indicating the projected surplus or deficit on the account for each year.

The total income and expenditure for the two spending options at year one and year thirty are:

Option	Year	Total income £'000	Total expend' £'000	Cumulative Surplus/ (Deficit) £,000 ¹⁰
1	2002/03	22,337	35,217	917
2	2002/03	22,337	37,678	256
1	2031/32	31,297	189,258	751
2	2031/32	31,297	192,759	(77,594)

Table 15: Income compared to expenditure for options 1 & 2 over thirty years.

The two spending options illustrate the fact that in option 2, the high spending option, the HRA account, taking into account Government subsidy, would fall into deficit in year six 2007/08. At the end of year thirty there would be a major deficit in option 2 with option one showing a relatively small surplus.

8.3. Net Present Value

What is it?

Net Present Value is a common financial method of seeing whether a business should invest its money in a particular project or leave it earning interest in the bank. The net present value is calculated by looking at future income and costs of an activity, in this case managing and maintaining housing, over 30 years. Inflation is excluded so that you get a view of the value of the activity at "today's money". Each year's net income and expenditure is discounted using a discount rate, which in the model is 6%, to reflect the return that you would expect from any money if you left it in the bank.

If the Net present value were negative then in purely financial terms you would be better off investing your funds elsewhere and if the NPV is positive then you will be generating value over and above what you would have gained from leaving it in the bank.

¹⁰ Surplus/deficit after taking into account adjustments including transfer from Asset Management Revenue Account (Annex 11 for full Table)

8.4. Social Housing Occupancy

What is it?

It is a measure designed by the DTLR that attempts to show the value of maintaining homes in a good lettable condition. An occupancy year is one in which a home can be occupied in an "acceptable" standard. If a home is not maintained it will increasingly become unlettable and therefore it will not generate any occupancy years. Well-maintained homes should remain in a lettable condition for a full 30 years.

The guidance stresses that maintenance and investment activity is as much to do with maintaining the occupancy rating of a home by preventing deterioration, as it is with improving already run down areas thereby increasing their lettable and occupancy rating.

Cost per year of Social Housing Occupancy (CYSHO)

What is it?

The cost per year of Social Housing Occupancy is measured by dividing the Net Present value of expenditure only (not including rents and other income) by the net present Value of Occupancy years (which is dependent upon the projected number of empty homes) to arrive at the cost per year of social housing occupancy.

In practice the measure is a way of demonstrating that well maintained popular homes are likely to have a high Net Present Value and a low Social Housing Occupancy rate as they are easy to keep occupied and incur a low management cost than homes which are difficult to let such as a bedsit flat in an unpopular area which would have a low Net Present Value and a high Social Housing Occupancy rate.

8.5. Return on Capital Employed (ROCE).

What is it?

The return on capital employed (ROCE) represents the actual surplus expressed as a percentage of the balance sheet value of the housing stock. The Government have set a target for local authorities of 6%.

8.6. The Model's Projections.

The model estimates the Net Present Value (NPV), the Cost of Social Housing Occupancy Rate (CYSOR) and the Return on Capital Employed (ROCE) across the total housing stock for the two options:

Option	NPV unit cost £	CYSOR unit cost £	ROCE Year 30 %
1	16,716	2,354	6.89
2	12,361	2,839	6.75

Table 16: Projections of NPV, CYSOR and ROCE

In this scenario option 1, spending within the estimated resources that will be available, over the thirty years leads to a higher Net Present Value, a lower Cost per year of social occupancy and a higher percentage return on the capital employed.

The relative costs by area (City and Acomb) have also been calculated for NPV and CYSOR and are shown in Table 17 for option 1.

Area	NPV unit cost £	CYSOR unit cost £
Acomb	19,893	2,218
City	14,816	2,436

Table 17: Financial ratios for different parts of the city

It is not possible to draw any conclusions from these figures at present without further comparative data from the DTLR. Once this is available an assessment on the significance of the differences between different parts of the Council stock can be made.

As the model is developed over the coming years it can also be used to compare the relative costs of types of home comparing flats to houses for instance.

8.7. Sensitivity Analysis - Rent Levels.

A sensitivity analysis based on the consequences of an increase in rents is include as the Annex "Sensitivity analysis for rent increase" on page 40. This indicates that a £1 increase in average rent would generate an additional £150k per annum in revenue. The gross income would be in the region of £450k but would be reduced due to rent rebate limitation formula.

Given the changes that will be introduced by the Government's rent restructuring which will further restrict Council's rent setting capabilities an increase in rent levels to generate funds for capital investment is not considered a realistic option.

8.8. Conclusions.

The model in its current form can only provide a very broad assessment of the projected costs associated with two simple investment strategies when considering the whole stock. As the model is refined it will be possible to compare the affect of investment between different areas and types of homes.

The key message is that, on the basis of the information used so far, it is only possible to sustain an investment strategy similar to that currently in place and retain a balanced account.

9. Related Strategies

9.1. Nuisance and Anti-Social Behaviour

The Tenancy Enforcement Team was established in September 1999 to combat serious nuisance cases linked to Council tenancies. The team comprised of a Tenancy Enforcement Manager located within the Housing Service, a Police Community Safety Officer located within the Safer York Partnership and a Senior Solicitor within Legal Services.

Since they were established the team have made a significant difference to the effectiveness of the Authority's tenancy enforcement measures. During the last year they have achieved:

- Suspended Possession Orders against 3 tenants and
- Full possession orders against 3 tenants.
- Obtained 6 injunctions with 3 people being imprisoned for breaking the orders
- 4 families have been evicted for rent arrears while enforcement action for nuisance was on going and
- 4 people had Anti Social Behaviour Orders awarded against them with 3 of them being imprisoned for breaking the order.

The team was the first in the Yorkshire and Humberside region to use the powers under the Crime and Disorder Act to impose Anti Social Behaviour Orders. The procedures and protocols developed with the Police, Probation Service, Youth Offending Team and Children's Services to manage the Orders are now being used as an example of good practice by the Police.

Details of incidents dealt with are included as the annex "11.7 Anti-Social Behaviour" on page 40.

9.2. Home Energy Conservation

The Council works in partnership with the Energy Partnership covering York, North Yorkshire and the East Riding. The Energy Efficiency Advice Centre has been awarded a Charter Mark.

Work done to Council homes as part of this partnership has included:

- 155 new heating systems installed through Tenants Choice Scheme.
- 80 loft insulation jobs installed through Tenants Choice Scheme.
- 636 low energy light bulbs fitted through Tenants Choice Scheme.
- 20 houses in ETTY Avenue upper floor insulated through rendering.
- 360 windows replaced with double glazed low emissivity glass.

9.3. Area Regeneration.

The Council is currently developing a Citywide framework to address the development of regeneration initiatives and community. Over the last ten years a number of areas within the City have or are benefiting from regeneration initiatives either through external additional funding or Council sponsored initiatives.

The Bell Farm Estate, 325 Council homes, benefited from £6.4 m of capital investment between 1992 and 1995 partly funded through the Estate Action programme. All homes were modernised and the environment of the area improved, at the end of the capital improvements a Multi Agency Estate agreement was put in place which is still operating and which has been used to develop similar agreements elsewhere in the City.

Foxwood Estate, 285 Council homes, the area has established a multi agency Neighbourhood Agreement covering all tenures together with service monitoring arrangements.

North Clifton, 1008 Council homes, the area is in the second year of a four year Single Regeneration (5) programme funded by £1.6m SRB funds. This area based project to tackle social exclusion on a partnership basis is recognised as an area of good practice (Joint Review, 1999).

Chapelfields, 895 Council homes, a community project has received funding during 1999/00 through the final year of the Holgate Road SRB2 bid.

Tang Hall 1,287 Council homes, the East York Partnership is currently developing a strategy to support community regeneration in the area.

9.4. Key Messages

- The Council has extensive experience of tackling regeneration issues
- Nuisance issues are dealt with promptly and the Face to Face mediation scheme offers a positive alternative to court action
- The City is leading on Energy conservation and use.

9.5. Future Strategy

Housing services will actively contribute to the renewal strategy that the Council will develop in response to new Government guidance.

The Council will aim to have the Face to Face mediation scheme nationally accredited.

10. Existing Plans and Future Plans

10.1. Review of Existing Targets

The Business Plan prepared in October 2000 identified a number of milestones for improvement. The following provides a summary of progress on these targets.

Target	Progress
Business Plan development group to prepare redraft of plan taking account of comments and involvement of tenants	The significant staff changes during the last 6 months has resulted in a delay to the establishment of this group
Best Value Review of Landlord services to be undertaken	In progress, to report by end of 2001
Stock Conditions Survey to be completed	Funding approved, awaiting drawing up of specification in line with Government Guidance
Integrated Housing Management System to be specified and contract awarded	Will be completed this financial year.
Production of performance plan to address known weaknesses	Plan submitted and approved by Executive Member Dedicated Customer Services Team established 1/7/01
Allocations Review	Some progress on piloting choice based letting, pilot for one area in York. A wider review is planned as one of the Housing Strategy Objectives
Desegregation of management information initially into two contract teams of Acomb and City and further subdivision into patch areas and property types	First stage has been completed as evidenced in sections of this plan. Further work required on sub-division over next four years

10.2. Future Direction

10.2.1. A year of preparing for change

As indicated elsewhere in the plan there are a number of major pieces of work that will significantly effect housing services over the next 12 months. In many respects a clear vision of the direction to be taken and specific actions to taken need to await the outcome of the Best Value review, stock conditions survey and rent restructuring exercise. It is anticipated that the plan will require significant changes when it is reviewed next year. The service will also be subject to an inspection next year.

10.2.2. Developing and managing the plan

Following a period of staff vacancies there is now some stability in the strategic and client functions. This should allow for a continuous process of developing the plan, monitoring progress and greater involvement of tenant representatives that has not been possible this year.

10.2.3. Approach to Performance Management

York continues to be one of the top performing authorities in the country. The strategy for performance management is two fold:

1. The intention will be to achieve top quartile status, on a rolling three year average in all areas covered by performance indicators. The benefit of this approach will be that efforts will not be directed at dealing with one off fluctuations but focus on continuous long-term improvements. Pegging performance to quartile rating will also ensure that as standards rise generally in the country, York will be keeping pace and in many areas continuing to lead.
2. At an operational level regular monitoring of specific performance indicators, such as rent arrears and repairs, require shorter time frames to ensure that hotspots

can be quickly identified and remedial action taken. This will primarily be the function of the contractor with regular monitoring by the client function.

11. Annexes

11.1. Condition

11.1.1. Historical Improvements

Year	Area	Number of homes	Value £ ,000
89/90	Gale Lane, Danesfort Ave, Dodsworth Ave, Tudor/Stuart, Kingsway West. Bootham/Tang Hall, Rowntree & Horseman Ave, Wycliffe Ave, Heworth, Dodsworth Ave.	254	2,500
90/91	Ouseburn Ave, Crombie Ave, Kingsway North, Burrill Ave, Crichton Ave, Backfill (20)	422	2,175
91/92	Danebury/Water Lane, Backfill (14)	234	1,253
92/93	Bell Farm (Ph1), Ouseburn Ave, Chapelfields(Ph1), Askham Lane, Westfield Place, Backfill (25).	552	4,600
93/94	Chapelfields (Ph 2), Muncaster (Ph1), Bell Farm (Ph 2), Backfill (130)	508	508
93/94	Tang Hall (heating only)	821	1,284
94/95	Muncaster (Ph2), Cornlands (Ph1 &2) Backfill (36) Heating only :- Dringhouses, Pottery Lane, Burton Stone Lane, Tang Hall.	1,038	4,423
95/96	Navigation Rd, Bull Lane, Cornlands (Ph3), Backfill (39). Heating :- Fossway, Lindsey Ave.	680	2,578
96/97	Acquired, Villages, Small Estates, Backfill Heating :- Cambridge St, Nunnery lane, Small Estates.	454	1,993
97/98	Dringhouses, Acquired, Villages Backfill Heating :- Kingsway west, Villages	520	1,884
98/99	Lowfields, Dringhouses, Villages (full TC) Villages heating, Stuart Road, Acquires, Backfill	353	1,984
99/00	Groves (phase 1), Walmgate (phase 1), Walmgate heating, Villages heating, Acquires heating, Fossway	404	2,064
00/01	Groves (phase 2), (Walmgate phase 2) Sutton Way, Backfill	300	1,700
		6,540	28,946

Elemental costs for Kitchens have risen by 123% over the period 1989/90 to 2000/01 bathrooms by 59% and heating systems by only 16%.

11.1.2. Energy Efficiency

SAP ratings

Rating Band	Number of dwellings
40 –50	449
50 – 59	1394
60 - 69	4267
70 – 79	2070
80 – 89	225
90 – 100	4

11.2. Tenant Relationships

11.2.1. Tenant Compact Annual Report 2000/01

1. The Tenant Participation Compact was developed by tenants, staff and elected members and sets out how tenants, residents and leaseholders can influence services and involve themselves in the work of the housing department.
2. This report sets out our achievements in terms of developing the Tenant Participation Compact and the involvement of tenants in housing services over the past twelve months. It also fulfils our commitment to review the performance of the compact in line with the principles of Best Value. Set out in the Annex is the original action plan, covering tasks completed and those tasks yet to do. Funding was made available through the DETR for a further year and the Tenant Compact Panel members agreed, in January, to use the money to fund a Community Adviser. The action plan will inform the work for the year 2001/2002.
3. There is still work to be done on implementing the Tenant Participation Compact across the Tenant and Resident Associations in York, as much of the original action plan covered two years and longer in some cases. This identified work will inform the Tenant Compact Development Panel, who will then agree priorities for the forthcoming year, to be written into an action plan for the Community Adviser assigned to the project.
4. We would like to acknowledge the work of the Tenant Compact Development Panel who have overseen the work and action plans and who became actively involved in measuring satisfaction. The following associations have been involved:

Lindsey Avenue Residents Association
Walmgate Residents Association
Foxwood Residents Association
Tang Hall Residents Association
Clementhorpe Residents Association
Bell Farm Residents Association
Poptleton Residents Association
5. The aims of the Tenant Participation Compact are to, empower tenants, residents and leaseholders; work in partnership; develop and increase opportunities for tenant involvement; and for the Council to continuously improve and provide services people need.
6. The core standards which underpin the Tenant Participation Compact are around supporting and enabling tenant involvement; housing services; information; council meetings; tenants and residents groups; monitoring and measuring performance.
7. In supporting and enabling tenant involvement we have increased the overall budget by £2,500 for the year 2001/2002 to Residents Associations to cover the costs in relation to running their groups. The new amounts for each group are listed in the annex. We have also increased the budget for training by £2,000, now standing at £4,000 and identified a start up budget of £500 for new associations. We were successful in our bid for £5,000 in total.
8. The devolved budget for estate improvements has risen by the cost of inflation for the forthcoming year, the additional city wide fund of £30,000 is again in place and funding has been identified for estate improvements in areas where a residents group is not in place.
9. Through the Community Development Team we have offered associations help, where they need it, with photocopying, printing, typing and arranging venues. The Community Advisers also support the groups who wish to look for sponsorship in producing newsletters and office space and computer and photocopying facilities have been made available in the City and Acomb Housing Offices through a booking system.
10. The Community Development Team also offer support and advice on a day to day basis on a broad range of issues. Over the past year this has been particularly difficult to

sustain in some areas as members of the Community Development Team have been ill, on maternity leave or on secondment. This has now been resolved and the team will be up to full strength from August. Bearing this in mind the team have, wherever possible, covered for absent colleagues in offering support and advice and practical support.

11. We have produced and distributed 'Streets Ahead' the quarterly magazine for tenants. An editorial panel, which includes tenants, has been set up to identify articles and report on issues that tenants themselves feel are relevant. We continue to measure customer satisfaction with the Housing Department and the figures in the Annual Housing Service Monitor for the year 2000 show satisfaction at 82%, a fall on last year of 5%.

12. Training in the use of computers has been provided and will continue if and when required. The Federation training programme has been sustained and all information regarding training is sent out each month along with other training by external agencies.

13. Estate Managers have supported the Residents Associations by attending committee and public meetings; by meeting with chairs of Residents Associations before meetings when requested; fed back at meetings on housing policy issues and provided up dated information on empty homes in the area. They have attended, fed back and provided dates in advance of estate walkabouts. Tenant Representatives have been invited to spend time with Estate Managers and attend training hour sessions.

14. Through the Tenant Compact Development Panel we have made available information on comparative spending of other authorities on Tenant Participation.

15. We have continued to seek the views of tenants and the Federation of Residents and Community Associations in developing the Council's housing policy and strategy, including identifying and appraising investment options.

16. We are involved with the York Youth Forum, have officer representation on the York Racial Equality Network and have agreed to use the 'Talkabout Panel' for issues directly affecting tenants.

17. In developing and implementing regeneration and improvement programmes we continue to work and support Residents Associations in the Bell Farm, Clifton, Foxwood and Holgate Park areas. We continue to consult on budgets, rent setting and finance though we need to be more proactive in providing information and training to support effective involvement for those associations wishing it. Tenants have been involved in working groups on allocations and lettings policies and we provide quarterly information on housing performance.

18. We held a leaseholders meeting in March 2001 and explained how the leaseholds are calculated. There is still work to do with leaseholders in encouraging them to get involved in the local Residents Associations and in supporting the development of a Leaseholders and Private Tenants Forum.

19. We encourage participation and use sheltered accommodation for some local Resident Association meetings. We need to work more on supporting and encouraging the development of groups within schemes.

20. We provide Residents Associations with a quarterly report on the performance of the housing management service and the Tenant Compact Development Panel discuss the report quarterly.

21. We have to look at how we take forward the local area compacts in York and we have to do more work with Ward Committees and Parish Councils to look at issues in local areas.

22. The Federation of Tenant and Resident Groups will be asked to nominate a representative to the Racial Harassment Task Group.

23. We provide information and have standards on information for tenants, and have in place mechanisms for consultation and complaints. We help with transport, care arrangements and interpreters when required.

24. The Tenant Compact Development Panel have an important role to play in monitoring and developing both the tenant compact and the housing management service. Members of the panel have been involved in a 'Mystery Shopper' exercise and they highlighted their concerns over anonymity and ideal answers. They were, however, pleased with the involvement and the insight into the work the housing teams do.

25. In devising work and action plans we set high standards and targets. There are areas and tasks we need to reconsider and set time aside to develop. We've missed some deadlines and we have to manage all the work we set out to do, but for a first year there have been many successes. The Tenant Participation Compact for York is a comprehensive document and owes much to those people involved in developing it. We will continue to work together in partnership.

11.2.2. Resources supporting tenant participation in York

Activity/Item	Budget £ 2001/2002	Budget £ 2000/20001	Individual *	Collective*
Streets Ahead (including Annual Report and area reports) Delivery	£23,380 £7370	22,880 7210	✓	
Housing Information Handbook - update Handbook and print summary Tenant Participation Compact to include with June edition of Streets Ahead		10,000.00	✓	
Area information		400.00	✓	
Leaseholders Handbook On going consultation		100.00	✓	✓
Market research - Annual Housing Service monitor - External painting - Tenants' Choice pre and post modernisation - focus groups	£10,000 £5,000	9,000.00 5,000.00	✓ ✓ ✓	✓
Customer Groups - repairs - Housing management monitoring (photocopying costs and postage)		100.00		✓ ✓ ✓

Lindsey	£310	£210	£136	£8,900
Lowfields	£380	£100	£19	£6,600
Muncaster	£350	£300	£265	£6,600
Navigation	£300	£300	£370	£6,600
Nunnery	£350	£400	£34	£6,600
Poppleton	£350	£150	£130	£7,300
Tang Hall	£800	£500	£557	£22,100
Walmgate	£350	£340	£486	£6,600
York Fed	£1640			£30,000
New Start	£500			
TOTAL	£12,270	£8610	£7676	£238,700

11.3. Stage 3 Complaints Profile

The tables below detail the 21 complaints that were tackled at Stage 3 by the Complaints Manager within the Quality Assurance team.

Key:

Outcome

- N Not upheld
- P Partially Upheld
- U Upheld

Nature of Complaint

- GEM General Estate Management
- NN Neighbour Nuisance
- REP Repair
- HIM Housing Improvement Team
- HB Housing Benefit
- PUB Public HB team

Office

- A Acomb Housing Office
- C City Housing Office

Number	Month	Out	Office	Type	Summary	Outcome
1063	May	N	A	GEM	Dispute over shared access	
1080	May	P	A	GEM	Property in poor repair at start of tenancy	£75 accepted for time and trouble
1094	May	N	A	GEM	Request for decoration allowance	£20 accepted for time and trouble
1043	May	N	A	HIM	Failure to consult leaseholder over cost of work in advance	£100 accepted in reduction of bill. Service now consult on all repairs to leaseholders
0812	May	N	C	GEM	Failure to support tenant with rent arrears	
1053	May	P	A	REP	Delay and quality of repair	£50 accepted for time and trouble
1072	Jun	U	C	GEM	Failure to notify of garage rent increase when RTB completed	Charge waived

Number	Month	Out	Office	Type	Summary	Outcome
1087	Jun	N	A	NN	Poor response by COCY to NN	
0940	Jun	N	C	REP	Failure to undertake repair	
1022	Jul	N	A	REP	Re-chargeable repair	
1155	Oct	N	A	GEM	Refusal to undertake 3 rd party fencing repair	
1181	Oct	N	HB	PUB	Response of COCY to rent arrears and HB claim	
1220	Nov	N	A	GEM	COCY responsible for break-in, and poor administration of benefits	
1222	Nov	N	A	GEM	Failure to undertake security improvements	Security light accepted
1212	Nov	N	C	REP	Attitude of staff, fears that property has subsidence	
0988	Nov	U	C	REP	Inappropriately housed, failure to undertake necessary repairs	Re-housed, repairs undertaken
1219	Nov	P	A	REP	Incorrect charge levied, request for decoration allowance	Admin error, rectified
1256	Jan	N	C	REP	Request for additional radiators	
1284	Feb	N	A	REP	Failure to repair, attitude of staff	
1364	Mar	N	C	GEM	Refusal to grant Mutual Exchange	
1202	Mar	N	C	NN		

11.4. Reducing Rent Arrears

11.4.1. Profile of rent arrears by levels

	November 2000		February 2001		March 2001 ¹¹	
	Number	Value	Number	Value	Number	Value
Less than £100	1705	68,405	1602	68,339	1155	48,807
£100-£250	956	152,515	896	143,456	691	112,021
£250-£500	626	223,176	584	208,518	489	174,561
£500-750	322	196,200	298	182,456	287	175,175
£750-1000	207	179,233	186	160,540	173	149,935
£1000 +	314	464,130	309	458,200	249	372,122
<i>Total</i>	4130	1,283,659	3875	1,221,509	3044	1,032,621

11.4.2. Statutory Actions

Level of action	1999/2000	2000/2001
Number of Notices Served	941	1,217
Number of applications for Court Hearing	307	385
Number of Court Hearings	268	266
Number of warrants obtained	216	198
Number of warrants stayed at Court	113	101

¹¹ The end of year total is adjusted to reflect the level of Court Costs, Housing Benefit over payments and Former Tenant Arrears which are not categorised as part of the current rent arrear total.

Number of warrants suspended due to lump sum payments	54	46
Number of evictions	49	51

11.5. Capital Investment – Schedule of Improvements

11.5.1. Capital investment to meet stock conditions requirements

Element	Number of dwellings April 2000	Total cost April 2000 £'000	Work completed 2000/01 Number of dwellings	Work completed 2000/01. Total cost £'000	Number of dwellings requiring work April 2001	Total cost April 2001 £'000
Rewire	5930	4811	7	8	5923	4803
Roof structure	3982	3973	17	45	3965	3928
Roof covering	968	965	0	0	968	965
Chimneys	3982	1238	0	0	3982	1238
Windows	3517	9724	377	641	3140	9083
Doors	4939	3210	174	114	4765	3096
Structural works	1087	14883	17	237	1070	14646
Central heating	1505	5052	173	638	1013	4414
Insulation, Thermal and sound	672	1344	0	0	672	1344
Kitchen	1342	3673	211	782	1131	2891
Bathroom	3384	3007	209	378	3175	2629
Common areas	1375	410	22	53	1353	357
Environmental works	1003	2047	38	84	965	1963
Other	1236	1148	25	29	1211	1119
Total		55485	1270	3009	33333	52476
Security	218	121	18	16	202	105
Adaptations	900	383	729	316	900	430
		504	747	332	1102	535
Total		55989	2017	3341	34435	53011

11.5.2. Programme for 2001/02

Scheme	Homes	Total £'000
Tenant's Choice Back Fill	83	376
Lindsey Estate	255	1729
Cecilia Place/Bachelor	48	312
Affordable Warmth	65	196
Nunnery TC	34	231
Cavity Denis Wilde	235	50

Scheme	Homes	Total £'000
Firedoors	517	300
Windows	1014	1,130
Capitalised salaries		258
Total	2,281	4,582

11.5.3. Programme for 2002/03

Scheme	Homes	Type of work	Estimated budget £'000	Number of homes based on % takeup
Lindsey Ave Phase 2 Tenants Choice	105	Kitchens & bathrooms, rewire	388	63 on 60% ¹²
Nunnery Phase 2 TC	62	Kitchens and bathrooms, rewire	378	62 on 100%
Backfill TC	100	Various 40 heat	454	100 on 100%
Cambridge St TC	93	Kitchens & bathrooms rewire	504	84 on 90%
Swann Street TC	10	Kitchens, bathrooms, heating, rewire	81	9 on 90%
Prospect Hse & Victor St TC	19	Kitchens bathrooms rewire	102	17 on 90%
Clifton 60's TC	51	Kitchens, bathrooms and rewire	260	43 on 85%
Kingsway West Phase1	38	Kitchens & bathrooms	200	38 on 100%
Villages	66	Various	468	66 on 100%
Window replacement	606	Windows	1082	606
Fire door replacement	400	Front doors in blocks of flats	200	400
Capitalised salaries			268	
Total			£4,285m	1,250 homes

11.5.4. Programme 2003/4

Scheme	Homes	Type of work	Estimated budget £'000	Number of homes based on % takeup
Kingsway West Phase 1	64	Kitchen & Bathroom & rewire	382	64 on 100%
Huby Court	27	Kitchens, Bathrooms & rewire	144	24 on 90%
Backfill	100	Various 40 heat	454	100 on 100%
BISF/Howards	120	Kitchen, bathroom, rewire, heating	972	108 on 90%
Affordable warmth	30	Heating	93	93 on 100%
Tang Hall Phase 1	114	Kitchens & bathrooms rewire	685	114 on 100%
Window replacement	524	Windows	1095	606
Fire door replacement	200	Front doors in blocks of flats	200	400
Capitalised salaries			268	
Total			£4,293	1,509

¹² low % reflects number of current refusals in the remaining phase

11.5.5. Programme 2004/5

Scheme	Homes	Type of work	Estimated budget £'000	Number of homes based on % take-up
Kingsway Phase 2	199	Kitchens, baths. rewire	1,014	169 on 85%
Tang Hall Phase 2	100	Kit/Bath/Rewire	600	100 on 100%
Backfill	100	Various/ 40 heat	454	100 on 100%
Iver Close	11	Kitchen , bath, rewire	66	9 on 80%
Queen Anne	12	Kitchen, bath, rewire	72	11 on 90%
BISF/Howards Phase 2	58	FTC	529	58 on 100%
Window replacement	648	Windows	1095	648
Fire door replacement	200	Front doors in blocks of flats	200	400
Capitalised salaries			268	
Total			£4,298	1,495

11.6. Sensitivity analysis for rent increase

The table below shows the impact on surpluses over a thirty year period that may be available for investment in the stock if average rents are raised by £1 per week.

Year	Surplus	Surplus	Difference
	(Deficit)	(Deficit)	
	for vr	for vr	
	£,000	£,000	
1	895	895	0
2	563	712	(149)
3	(133)	17	(150)
4	(18)	134	(152)
5	(59)	92	(152)
6	(431)	(279)	(152)
7	(86)	67	(154)
8	(191)	(36)	(155)
9	(308)	(154)	(155)
10	(381)	(225)	(157)
11	515	674	(159)
12	409	569	(160)
13	303	465	(162)
14	194	357	(163)
15	82	246	(164)
16	206	373	(167)
17	93	260	(167)
18	(11)	159	(170)
19	(120)	53	(173)
20	(237)	(63)	(175)
21	(51)	127	(178)
22	(174)	6	(180)
23	(283)	(101)	(182)
24	(396)	(212)	(184)
25	(514)	(327)	(187)
26	18	209	(191)
27	(95)	99	(193)
28	(198)	(2)	(196)
29	(305)	(105)	(200)
30	(416)	(213)	(203)
	(1,133)		(4,930)

11.7. Anti-Social Behaviour

	2000/01		
	City	Acomb	City-wide
Noise	58	42	100
Threatening Behaviour	30	15	45
Problems with children/youths	32	14	46
Drugs	9	3	12
Parking	7	1	8
Condition of home	12	10	22
Animals	10	1	11
Racial harassment	5	0	5
Illegal behaviour	8	2	10
Mental Health Issues	12	4	16
Other	7	6	13

	2000/01		
	City	Acomb	City-wide
Total number of active cases	190	98	288
Cases where notice served	3	1	4
Cases where police involved	29	25	54
Cases referred to TET	9	7	16

11.8. Improvement Plan

Housing Improvement Team = HIT

R10 Monitoring Group (representatives from Commercial Services, Housing Contract teams and Tenants) = R10

Improving Revenue Stream	Responsibility
Prepare report for members on the implications of the Government's proposals on Social Rent Reform.	Strategic Services
Prepare specification for Rent module of IHMS	Housing IT Manager/Housing Team Leader
Agree and implement option for the future of door to door collection	AD Housing Services/Contract Managers/Snr Administrator
Establish one stop shop for Housing Management/Housing Benefits and Resources	AD Housing Services, Contract Manager City/Support Services Team Leader/Resources
Consult on implementing reward system for customers who pay their rent and implement trial in current year subject to Executive Officer Approval	AD Housing Services/Contract Managers
Release additional time for Estate Managers to spend on Rent Arrears through the introduction of the Customer Service Team	Customer Services Manager
Establish a culture of targets for individual Estate Managers and teams	Housing Team Leaders
Set up a small staff group to work with the District Auditor on reviewing current methods of collection and arrears recovery	Housing Team Leader
Monitor Arrears transferred through FTA's	Housing Team Leaders
Re-launch rent arrears campaign along with Direct Debit promotion	Contract Manager City

Repairs	Responsibility
To work with District Audit on the review of the service during June 2001 and to implement the finding of the review.	R10.
To work with Commercial Services and the other corporate clients in the replacement of the Client Management System.	Housing IT Manager and Contract Manager City
To assess the options for replacing the current Housing Repairs Appointment System through either the CMS replacement or IHMS.	Hsg IT Manager/Support Services Team Leader.
To work with Commercial Services to increase the number of repairs that can be completed at the first call and to reduce the number of inspections required prior to a job being completed.	R10
To improve the chain of communication between customers, Housing Assistants, Maintenance Surveyors, Commercial Services office staff and operatives.	R10 /Customer Service Team.
To improve the response time to P1 repairs from the current 85% to 90% and P2's to 95%.	R10
To reduce the number jobs completed on day works and reduce the number of variation orders issued.	R10
To review monitoring arrangements of variation orders and to set clear targets for reclaiming costs from contractors.	Contract Managers City/Acomb
Meet targets for the number of post inspections undertaken	R10

Repairs	Responsibility
through visits, phone and post.	
To establish monthly monitoring of void budgets for individual officers	Contract Manager City/Acomb
Review current arrangements for inspecting and letting empty homes in the light of feedback received during our Beacon year. Set standards for empty homes and seek Member approval to introduce gas and electric checks in order to comply with best practice.	HIT
Painting	
To deliver the programme within or below the agreed budget.	HIT
To improve customer satisfaction from 83% to 85%	HIT
To review the performance of individual contractors within the context of the new contract arrangements	HIT
To update procedure documents for all aspects of the service	.HIT
Tenants Choice	
To complete the programme within the year and within the agreed budget.	HIT
To complete work to individual homes within the proscribed time in the customer contract.	HIT
To reduce the number of snagging items on individual jobs.	HIT
Gas Servicing	
To reduce the number of no access calls recorded during the year and implement a programme of action to ensure access to homes that have not received a gas service during the past year.	

Customer Services	Responsibility
Complete the training of the Customer Service Team to enable the team to become operational in July 2001.	Customer Services Manager
Working with the Complaints Manager undertake an analysis of patterns of complaints and develop strategies to tackle service weaknesses building on the issues identified through the Annual Service Monitor, New Homes Questionnaire and mystery shopping exercise.	Complaints Manager/Customer Services Manager
During the year set up and run IT awareness sessions through team meetings to identify good practice and training needs in the use of current systems linking into the planned implementation of the Integrated Housing Management System.	Housing IT Manager/Customer Services Manager
Relocate the reception area at 2 St Leonard's to the Banking Hall to provide one stop shop for Housing Benefits, Finance and Housing Management with disabled access.	BV HB / HG
Establish database to enable effective monitoring to meet CRE Standards	Housing IT Manager
Undertake postal survey of all tenants to increase Ethnic origin database to improve quality of monitoring information and enter returns on data base	Contract Manager/Housing IT Manager.
Meet corporate target of 93% of letters answered in 10 days and 93% of telephone calls answered in 20 seconds	All staff monitored by team leaders
Develop a comprehensive Training Plan for the Housing Division based on staff appraisals and	Customer Services Manager

Customer Services	Responsibility
skills audit	
Implement initiatives resulting from the Best Value Review of the service.	Housing Services Management Team.

Empty Homes	Responsibility
Seek Member approval to incorporate gas and electric checks within the empty homes process	HIT/Asst Director Housing Services
Reduce the number of scenario three voids and overall expenditure on these homes.	Contract Manager City/Acomb
Improve the new tenants information pack in line with comments from Compact Group and New Homes Questionnaire	Contract Manager City/Acomb
Work with temporary tenancies team to improve the sustainability of secure tenancies and development of supported housing initiatives.	Contract Manager City /Acomb/Temp Tenancies team