

	
<b>Meeting of Executive Member for Neighbourhoods &amp; Housing</b>	<b>15<sup>th</sup> March 2011</b>
Report of the Assistant Director - Housing and Public Protection	

## **Achieving the Decent Homes Standard**

### **Summary**

1. This report advises the Executive Member that City of York Council (CYC) met the Decent Homes standard in December 2010, in line with central governments expectations, through a programme of modernisation and improvement outlined as set out within the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.

### **Background**

2. Prior to the implementation of The Decent homes standard in 2004 CYC had spent 14 years carrying out its internal modernisation programmes under the highly successful banner of Tenants Choice which focuses on customer choice, respect and whole house modernisation rather than elemental works over a prescribed period of time.
3. In this area it was felt that meeting the Decent Homes Standard in its prescribed form would have been a backward step in the evolution of Tenants Choice and hence we developed our own standard which exceeded the national prescribed one, known as the 'York Standard'.
4. The Decent Homes standard prescribes 'life spans' for the internal elements covered under Tenants Choice (kitchens, bathrooms, electrical rewiring and heating systems), these differ from 15-40 years and hence a rolling programme of whole house modernisation is not possible due to the differing replacement 'life spans' of the elements which would lead to customers receiving the elements individually rather than all at the same time.
5. This would have had a negative impact on customers in terms of disturbance, decoration and expectation hence CYC have retained their whole house modernisation commitment under the York Standard.
6. Whole house modernisation is reflected as, should a property fail the decent homes standard CYC will look beyond this and evaluate the other ageing internal elements for replacement as well. Clearly quantifiable limits must be imposed in order to financially evaluate the affect of this and hence the commitment is that:

- should one or more of the internal elements of kitchen, bathroom and electrical rewiring fail the Decent Homes Standard CYC will aim to modernise the remaining elements that have reached or passed 66% of their 'lifespan'\* at the same time.
- We also offer an additional allowance of up to £700 per dwelling for tenants to 'add' elements, i.e. extra tiling / kitchen cupboards / electric showers etc.

## **STOCK CONDITION SURVEY**

7. In 2004 an independent stock condition survey was carried out to determine what investment was required to meet DH by December 2010. As a result, 2635 homes had some element of refurbishment carried out. As part of the Tenants Choice programme:
  - 2359 homes have had new Kitchen fitted;
  - 2298 homes have had new Bathrooms fitted;
  - 2498 homes have been Rewired; &
  - 2721 homes have had new Heating installed.
8. In addition to the Tenants Choice programme we have:
  - Installed Heating only to 1477 homes;
  - Re-roofer 677 homes;
  - Replaced Windows in 1160 homes.
9. The total investment in our homes to carry out the above works over the period is just under £34m.

## **Consultation**

10. Regular consultation has taken place with tenants over the years through a number of annual events. The Tenant Choice exhibition allows customers to choose what products will be fitted during the scheme and provides feedback on the service. In 2008 we introduced the Tenant Choice focus groups, these have been highly informative and have allowed us to adapt the service we provide to meet customer needs, these are now held annually.
11. Customer satisfaction for all Decent Homes works has consistently reached 95%

## **Options**

12. Option 1 – Continue to maintain the York Standard, as set out within the Housing Capital Programme, as the way forward when developing the revised HRA Business Plan.
13. Option 2 – To not continue with the York Standard as the basis for improving our homes.

\* As defined by Decent Homes guidance

## **Analysis**

14. Option 1 – Would enable the council to continue to maintain the current high levels of specification for modernisation works as well as maintaining a high level of customer satisfaction.
15. Option 2 – Not continuing with the York Standard would result in a reduction in the level and quality of works that were being carried out. It would also lead to reduced customer satisfaction.

## **Corporate Priorities**

16. This report contributes to the following corporate priorities:
  - *Sustainable City* - We aim to be clean and green, reducing our impact on the environment while maintaining York's special qualities and enabling the city and its communities to grow and thrive.
  - *Thriving City* – We will continue to support York's successful economy to make sure that employment rates remain high and that local people benefit from new job opportunities.

## **Implications**

17. **Financial** – The costs of maintaining the current level of works as the basis for the current capital programme which has recently been approved by Members.
18. **HR** – Not maintaining the current York Standard may result in the loss of Technical Surveying staff.
19. There are no other implications arising from this report.

## **Risk Management**

20. The risks associated with the proposals in this report are low and score less than 16. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy there are no direct risks.

## **Recommendations**

21. The Executive Member is asked to:
  - Note that the Council has met the Decent Homes Standard in line with the Governments Dec 2010 Target: &
  - Approve Option 1 as outlined in Para 12, to continue to maintain the York Standard, as set out within the Housing Capital Programme, as the way forward when developing the revised HRA Business Plan.

**Reason** – To ensure that the council maintains its housing stock to an excellent standard

Contact Details

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	Report Approved	✓	Date	2 <sup>nd</sup> March 2011
Wards Affected: <i>List wards or tick box to indicate all</i>				All
				✓
For further information please contact the author of the report				

Background Papers:

None.