

Wolverhampton City Council

OPEN EXECUTIVE DECISION ITEM (AMBER)

Cabinet/Cabinet Panel	CABINET	Date	16 JUNE 2010
Portfolio(s)	REGENERATION & ENTERPRISE/COUNCILLOR MRS BRADLEY		
Originating Service Group(s)	REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT		
Contact Officer(s)/ Telephone Number(s)	KERRY BOLISTER EXT 472	DAVID AUSTWICK EXT 1343	
Title	<u>ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR COUNCIL-OWNED HOMES</u>		

KEY DECISION:	YES/NO
IN FORWARD PLAN:	YES /NO

RECOMMENDATION

That the Asset Management Strategy for Council owned housing be approved.

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. The Asset Management Strategy sets out how Wolverhampton Homes will manage the properties, for which it is responsible under its Management Agreement with the City Council. The Asset Management Strategy is appended to this report.
- 1.2. This includes all aspects of planned and response repairs, delegated Capital works, and the Decent Homes programme.
- 1.3. The Asset Management Strategy also looks forward by thirty years and considers future trends, stock condition expectations, and risks that may arise in relation to the stock.
- 1.4. In preparing the Strategy officers were mindful of the need to co-ordinate with all other relevant strategies and policies of the Council and Wolverhampton Homes. The Strategy has been jointly prepared by officers from both organisations.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. Wolverhampton Homes was formed by the Council in October 2005 and operates under the Management Agreement which is supported by the annually negotiated Delivery Plan.
- 2.2. The Delivery Plan supports the Council's wider strategies and policies for Sustainable Communities, Safer Neighbourhoods, Equality & Diversity and Local Employment & Training and sets out key performance indicator targets.
- 2.3. Performance of Wolverhampton Homes is monitored monthly by the Housing Performance Monitoring Team and Quarterly at the Delivery Plan Monitoring Meeting, the latter chaired by the Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Enterprise. A progress report to Members is delivered quarterly to Scrutiny Board.
- 2.4. Following review, during 2008/9 the Council approved the delegation of Capital funds and the TUPE transfer of staff resources to Wolverhampton Homes from Regeneration & Environment. The change was effected in April 2009 and from that time the joint Asset Management Group, which had been steering the work related to capital housing programmes, was reviewed and revised to comprehensively monitor, manage and plan the work at a strategic level.
- 2.5. The Asset Management Group is chaired by the Chief Officer Regeneration & Neighbourhoods and attended by the Chief Financial Officer. From Wolverhampton Homes the Chief Executive, Directors of Housing & Finance, Head of Stock Investment attend along with other senior appropriate officers from both organisations. (Terms of Reference attached as Background Paper 7.1)
- 2.6. Meeting every six weeks the Group identified the need to work to a Strategy that encompassed both Wolverhampton City Council and Wolverhampton Homes policies and strategies in relation to the long term future of Council owned housing.
- 2.7. A small subgroup lead by the Head of Stock Investment (WH) and supported by Service Development Manager (WCC), Housing Performance Manager(WCC), and other technical officers from both organisations was set up to produce a draft. Other officers provided information and attended as necessary.
- 2.8. The Asset Management Strategy has been consulted upon with tenants by Wolverhampton Homes at the periodic "Get-togethers " in late 2009 and spring 2010.

- 2.9. The Asset Management Strategy was presented to Wolverhampton Homes Board on 23 March 2010 and adopted formally.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. Approval of the Housing Asset Management Strategy does not in itself generate any financial commitments for the council. The expenditure plans referred to in the Strategy will, at a later stage, be subject to approval by members in accordance with the council's financial procedure rules (concerning budgets). This approval will be sought when the plans have been devised in greater detail, and taking into account updated estimates of available resources. The figures included in the strategy should therefore be considered indicative only and subject to change.
- 3.2. However, it is important to be aware of the scale of the potential financial implications associated with the Strategy. Central to the Strategy is Decent Homes funding, in respect of which the council received approval for the first phase of Government-supported borrowing in November 2007, in line with a bid totalling £287M. This was in support of a programme estimated at that time to have a total value of £341M. Decent Homes funding has been approved up to and including the 2010/2011 financial year, to a total value of £187M. Funding over and above this has not yet been formally secured.
- 3.3. The Strategy is based in part on an updated financial model for the Decent Homes programme prepared by Wolverhampton Homes. This model indicates significant shortfalls in the overall financial resources available to the programme. Securing the resources to meet such a shortfall will be a major challenge.
- 3.4. The Strategy also makes reference to a number of other initiatives that could have significant financial implications if put into practice: for example, attracting inward investment opportunities, identifying and developing new business opportunities, and developing a strategy for 'new build opportunities'. It is too early to say what these financial implications might be at this stage: if any of the initiatives are developed in greater detail and result in financial implications for the council, they will be evaluated and reported as part of a future report.

[DK/14052010/W]

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. There are no direct legal implications. The Asset Management Strategy is a best practice tool which will inform the Asset Management Group deliberations.

5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. Implementation of the Asset Management Strategy will lead to greater choices of social housing for all applicants, reduction in fuel poverty and Decent Homes for all tenants.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. The Asset Management Strategy encompasses Decent Homes work and so will show benefits to the SAP rating, reducing carbon emissions through reducing fuel use and the contracts for Decent Homes work include targets for recycling of waste, use of landfill disposal will be less than otherwise might have been expected.

7. SCHEDULE OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1. Asset Management Group – Terms of Reference.

7.2. Master Asset Management Strategy

Note- there are 14 background supporting documents to the AMS these will be available in each of the Members' rooms from 8 June 2010

'A city where people can Thrive'



Wolverhampton Homes

Wolverhampton
City Council



Asset Management Strategy

2009 - 2013



'Being the Landlord of choice in Wolverhampton and supporting sustainable communities'

Contents	Page No's
<i>Foreword</i>	4
<i>Executive Summary</i>	5
Section 1 ... Introduction & Context	6 - 8
1.1 <i>Introduction</i>	
1.2 <i>Purpose of the Asset Management Strategy</i>	
1.3 <i>Review of Existing Strategy</i>	
1.4 <i>Achievements to date and Future Focus</i>	
1.5 <i>Our Strategic Approach</i>	
1.6 <i>Risk Management</i>	
Section 2 ... Setting the Scene	8 - 11
2.1 <i>Background</i>	
2.2 <i>Monitoring & Review Arrangements</i>	
2.3 <i>Addressing Housing Need</i>	
2.3.1 <i>Sustainability Appraisals/Neighbourhood Profiling</i>	
2.3.2 <i>Sheltered Schemes Review</i>	
Section 3 ... Property Portfolio & Asset Profile	12 - 17
3.1 <i>Stock Type Analysis</i>	
3.2 <i>Stock Condition/Asset Database</i>	
3.3 <i>Stock History/Achievements</i>	
3.4 <i>Properties Requiring a Different Approach (PRADA)</i>	
3.5 <i>Obsolete/Disposal of Properties</i>	
3.6 <i>HRA Asset Portfolio</i>	
3.6.1 <i>Introduction</i>	
3.6.2 <i>Garages</i>	
3.6.3 <i>Estate Shops</i>	
Section 4 ... Energy Efficiency & Environmental Sustainability	18 - 19
4.1 <i>Energy Efficiency</i>	
4.2 <i>Environmental Sustainability</i>	
Section 5 ... Resources/Investment Needs	19 - 23
5.1 <i>Summary of Key Investment Needs/Review of Building Costs Model</i>	
5.2 <i>Bridging the Funding Gap</i>	
5.3 <i>Programme Development and Prioritisation</i>	
5.4 <i>30 Year Business Projections</i>	
5.5 <i>Income and Expenditure</i>	
5.6 <i>Innovative Solutions for Service Delivery</i>	
5.6.1 <i>Inward Investment/New Business Opportunities</i>	

Section 6... Programme Delivery and Contract Management 24 - 34

- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Repairs and Maintenance
 - 6.2.1 Responsive Repairs
 - 6.2.2 Programmed/Zoned Repairs
- 6.3 Health & Safety
 - 6.3.1 Housing Health & Safety Rating System
 - 6.3.2 'FLAG' Monitoring Meetings
 - 6.3.3 Gas Servicing and Installations
 - 6.3.4 Asbestos Management
 - 6.3.5 Mechanical and Electrical
 - 6.3.6 Management and Control of Legionella
 - 6.3.7 Fire Safety Management
 - 6.3.8 Passenger Lifts/DDA
- 6.4 Planned Improvement Programme (PIP)
- 6.5 Void's (Capital and Revenue)
- 6.6 Meeting the Decent Homes Standard
- 6.7 Sustainable Communities
 - 6.7.1 Addressing Worklessness/Training & Employment Opportunities
 - 6.7.2 Identified Neighbourhood Schemes
 - 6.7.3 Neighbourhood Focus & Sustainability
- 6.8 Disabled Adaptations and Lifetime Homes
 - 6.8.1 Disabled Adaptations
 - 6.8.2 Lifetime Homes

Section 7 ... Procurement/Value for Money (VFM) 35 - 36

- 7.1 Efficiency and Value for Money
- 7.2 Introduction
- 7.3 Partnered Contracts
- 7.4 Benchmarking

Section 8 ... Tenant Consultation, Participation and Satisfaction 36 - 38

- 8.1 Consultation and Participation
- 8.2 Tenant Satisfaction
 - 8.2.1 Response Repairs/Decent Homes Programme
 - 8.2.2 Annual Tenant Satisfaction Survey (STATUS)
 - 8.2.3 Mystery Shopping
- 8.3 Equality & Diversity

Section 9 ... Conclusion & Way Forward 38

Glossary of Terms & Appendices 39 - 41

Foreword

Welcome to Wolverhampton Homes (WH) and Wolverhampton City Council's (WCC) Joint Asset Management Strategy 2009 - 2013. This document explains the strategic approach towards maintaining and improving the condition of council housing in Wolverhampton, outlining how programmes will efficiently manage future investment requirements and statutory requirements, whilst meeting our customers' needs and overall community aspirations.

It establishes a framework through which the management of the City Council's HRA assets can effectively be delivered, offering choice and value for money, with planned action to continually improve asset use.

WH in partnership with WCC sees the quality and maintenance of the Council's housing stock as a vital function. Both organisations are fully supportive of the strategy and recognise they have a role to play in ensuring its successful delivery.

The actions identified will contribute to the wider corporate priorities contained within the City's Sustainable Communities Strategy 2008 - 2026 and Wolverhampton's Housing Strategy 2009 - 2026, an integrated cross tenure strategy, aimed at helping the City and Wolverhampton Homes to achieve their long term economic and community goals, and the visions of:

'A City where people can thrive'

&

'Being the landlord of choice in Wolverhampton and supporting sustainable communities'

The Council's Strategic Role

The Council has a strategic role and responsibility to promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of the City and to implement the Central Governments initiatives for the benefit of the local community. Wolverhampton's Housing Strategy 2009 - 2026 is seen as key to fulfilling the Council's overall strategic role. Its' primary objective being to bring partners together, to achieve twelve housing related objectives:

- ❖ *People who can drive business growth now and in the future actively choose to live in the City*
- ❖ *The local economic opportunities arising from housing activity are maximised*
- ❖ *Significant steps are taken to improving the sustainability and energy efficiency of all housing*
- ❖ *Housing and neighbourhood designs are attractive, inclusive and safe*
- ❖ *The mix of types, sizes and tenures of homes is increased across the City*
- ❖ *All social homes are maintained to a decent standard and the condition of owner occupied and rented housing is improved significantly, particularly in regeneration areas*
- ❖ *The gap between the most deprived and most affluent areas is reduced*
- ❖ *No one is held back in life because of inadequate housing*
- ❖ *All needs, demands and aspirations for housing are met*
- ❖ *All people are helped to make good choices about their housing at different times of their lives*
- ❖ *Older people are enabled, through their housing and housing-related support, to live active lives for longer*
- ❖ *Rented housing (social and private) is managed to a high standard*

Wolverhampton Homes as the largest Managing Agent for the City Council's housing stock has a pivotal role in helping to achieve these objectives.



Wolverhampton Homes

Sue Roberts
Chair of Wolverhampton Homes



Councillor Paddy Bradley
Cabinet Member for Regeneration
and Enterprise

Executive Summary

This document records and represents WH and WCC's new and updated Asset Management Strategy. It sets out a number of key actions that will achieve excellence in service delivery, and address customer priorities/aspirations. The strategy clearly demonstrates how it forms part of a wider strategic approach towards housing across the City, through its' contributions to Wolverhampton's Housing Strategy 2009- 2026, the City's Sustainable Communities Strategy 2008 – 2026 and overall Corporate Asset Management plan.

Scope of this Joint Asset Management Strategy

- ❖ Outlines our position in relation to the asset management of housing assets, and how this aligns to the core business objectives
- ❖ Identifies the stock, its condition, use and required investment over the next 30 years.
- ❖ Records the risks and issues relating to those assets and how they may be eliminated, reduced and/or managed.
- ❖ Identifies needs, future trends and changes that will influence how we manage our assets.
- ❖ Establishes the methods for monitoring and evaluating the delivery of the aims of the strategy.
- ❖ Explains the methods through which we will procure and deliver programmes of work to our assets.

This Asset Management Strategy examines and highlights the differences between the cost of achieving and maintaining the Government's Decent Homes Standard and the limited capital and revenue resources available. The document further attempts to show options that will help to 'bridge the funding gap' and the projected timescales involved.

We have embraced the principles of effective asset management and the importance associated with maintaining good stock condition data, sustainability assessments, future options for poorly performing stock, effective procurement, and the effective delivery of capital and revenue programmes of works required to keep the stock in good condition.

To ensure the actions identified helps the City achieve its' long term economic and community goals, a number of strategic objectives which underpin the document, have been agreed, including:

- ❖ Creating and developing effective partnerships with the community and other agencies.
- ❖ Providing a range of good quality homes to people in housing need and those requiring care and support.
- ❖ Consulting and working with tenants and leaseholders in planning, designing and prioritising improvements for their neighbourhoods.
- ❖ Improving and maintaining the quality of the housing stock through delivery of the Decent Homes Programme, ensuring properties achieve a SAP rating of 65+.
- ❖ Maintaining homes to a good standard (post decent homes), through the continuing and balanced delivery of effective response repairs and planned maintenance programmes.
- ❖ Continuing to promote energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty.
- ❖ Maximising employment opportunities for local people and delivering local labour initiatives.
- ❖ Ensuring funding is maximised and that value for money is achieved.

Section 1... Introduction & Context

1.1 Introduction

Asset Management is a key function within WH. Fundamentally it is about balancing assets, needs and resources and to efficiently manage the needs of the stock. The aim is to maintain a balance between the economic value of the assets and the social and economic needs of our tenants and leaseholders.

The successful management of the stock (including residential dwellings, shops and garages) relies heavily on the relationship between the WCC and WH as its managing agent. This WCC and WH Asset Management Strategy sets out a joint approach to managing the housing related assets held in the Housing Revenue Account. It covers a range of activities to ensure the housing stock meets the needs standards required, both now and in the future.

The housing stock represents the City Council's most valuable asset and, conversely set against the repair and maintenance costs, its largest liability. Wolverhampton Homes needs to ensure that the properties it manages on behalf of the City Council are:

- ❖ *In good condition*
- ❖ *Developed and situated in the right location*
- ❖ *Designed to fit modern purpose; and*
- ❖ *Sustainable*

The City Council, together with other stakeholders, tenants and leaseholders have been consulted on the content and production of the Asset Management Strategy and will continue to be an integral part of the decision making process through the Joint Asset Management Group and other consultation mechanisms.

1.2 Purpose of our new Asset Management Strategy

This new and updated Asset Management Strategy has been drawn up to complement all other Wolverhampton Homes plans and strategies, and the City Council's wider strategic approach towards the delivery of sustainable communities.

The purpose of this Asset Management Strategy document can be summarised as follows:

- ❖ *To define needs, future trends and any changes influencing these*
- ❖ *To define the stock, its condition, and required investment over the next 30 years*
- ❖ *To identify the risks and issues related to the assets and how to mitigate them*
- ❖ *To define and develop methodologies and implementation processes for the strategy*

Due to a significant funding shortfall, even with the addition of Decent Homes funding, we have limited resources available to spend on HRA Assets. These, therefore need to be managed closely in order to:

- ❖ *Meet housing need in Wolverhampton*
- ❖ *Provide value for money*
- ❖ *Avoid non cost-effective investment in 'maintenance hungry' stock*
- ❖ *Keep dwellings in good condition in cost effective ways*
- ❖ *Achieve the Decent Homes Standard*
- ❖ *Meet customer expectations and demand*
- ❖ *Ensure all works comply with Health & Safety and statutory requirements*
- ❖ *Achieve high standards of energy efficiency*
- ❖ *Provide a balance between responsive/programmed repairs and capital investment*
- ❖ *Reflect equality and local diversity*
- ❖ *Create sustainable neighbourhoods for all residents*

1.3 Review of Existing Strategy

Our existing Asset Management Strategy has been reviewed using the assistance of:

- ❖ *Current best practice guidance from the Housing Quality Network (HQN)*
- ❖ *Relevant Audit Commission Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE) for Stock Investment and Asset Management*
- ❖ *Asset Management Strategies from other Housing providers*

1.4 Achievements to Date and Future Focus

- ❖ *Award of 2 star status (with good prospects for improvement)*
- ❖ *Preparation for 3 star inspection - Autumn 2010*
- ❖ *Procurement of 3 constructor partners to deliver the Decent Homes Programme /Considerate Constructor recognition*
- ❖ *Procurement of Partnership with Travis Perkins to supply repairs and maintenance materials*
- ❖ *Improvements in procurement methods through use of Open Book Cost Management*
- ❖ *68 employment /training opportunities created through the Decent Homes Partnership/ National Skills Academy accreditation*
- ❖ *Introduction and further development of Asset Management Database system ('Promaster')*
- ❖ *Accreditation of ISO 14001 by February 2010*
- ❖ *Development of an Energy and Environmental Strategy/Action Plan by June 2010*
- ❖ *Improved tenant and leaseholder consultation and involvement through 'Get Togethers', Focus Groups and Special Interest Groups (SIG's)*

1.5 Our Strategic Approach

To ensure the successful delivery of this revised and updated strategy, a number of strategic objectives have been adopted, which underpin the document:

- ❖ *Provision of a customer focused responsive repairs and planned maintenance service, which achieves high levels of performance, customer satisfaction and excellent value for money.*
- ❖ *Achievement and maintenance of an accurate 100% stock condition data for the housing stock.*
- ❖ *Provision of a responsive aids and adaptations service, which meets the needs of customers whilst achieving value for money.*
- ❖ *Meaningful consultation with tenants when shaping/planning programmes of capital works, to ensure that priority needs and aspirations are met.*
- ❖ *A Capital Programme that meets tenant's aspirations and priorities, whilst achieving the decent homes programme.*
- ❖ *Prioritisation of capital resources to ensure all dwellings meet all relevant legislative and health and safety requirements so that tenants are able to live in a safe environment.*
- ❖ *Letting void properties promptly, ensuring the standard meets the reasonable expectation for any incoming tenant and repairs costs are kept to a minimum*
- ❖ *Ensuring all sustainable housing stock achieves the Decent Homes Standard by 2012.*
- ❖ *Determination and Development of appropriate solutions for properties defined as 'requiring a different approach' (PRADA)*
- ❖ *Ensuring that our tenants' homes are energy efficient and provide heating at an affordable cost.*
- ❖ *Establishing the longer-term sustainability and desirability of some of the more challenging estates and neighbourhoods.*
- ❖ *Seeking value for money in all investment decisions and contract procurement,*

- including further development of strategic partnering arrangements*
- ❖ *Disposal of dwellings/properties which are either considered surplus to requirements or needing considerable capital investment*
- ❖ *Seeking new business and development opportunities*

The strategic approach adopted will ensure that WH has confidence in its baseline position and long-term financial stability, and that is in a sound position to make the right investment decisions about the stock it manages on behalf of the Council.

1.6 Risk Management

Strategic risks to the organisation are assessed annually as part the WH business planning process; the company has developed a risk management plan and methodology to mitigate identified risks.

A number of key risks have been identified which relate directly to asset management:

- ❖ *Loss of two star accreditation/or failure to achieve three stars at the next inspection*
- ❖ *Reduction/Withdrawal of decent homes funding allocation by CLG/HCA*
- ❖ *Failure to achieve delivery of decent homes to sustainable housing stock*
- ❖ *Failure to 'Bridge the funding Gap'*
- ❖ *Failure of partner contractors to deliver Decent Homes/Housing Capital Programme*
- ❖ *Accuracy of stock condition survey data*

Actions to address these risks are detailed in the risk register. The plan is reviewed and discussed at 6 monthly intervals by the Board and Directors of Wolverhampton Homes. Necessary action is agreed so as to minimise/eradicate any risks causing concern (Updating the Risk Register is the responsibility of the Director of Finance).

Section 2... Setting the Scene

2.1 Background

Wolverhampton, located in the heart of the Black Country is one of the most densely populated local authority areas in England. With a total population of circa 236,400 and 100,000 households, approximately 22.7% (Data source: 2009 HSSA Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix) of properties remain in the ownership of Wolverhampton City Council.

The City faces some very significant deprivation challenges; unemployment at 8.2% is the highest in the West Midlands and second highest in the country. Wolverhampton ranks 28th highest out of 354 councils in the Government's Index of Multiple Deprivation of 2007, placing it in the 10% most deprived in England. Some areas of the City rank more highly than others, in particular the Bilston East, Heath Town, Low Hill South & Bushbury and St Peter's wards which rank amongst the most deprived of all wards in England. These wards also have the highest percentage of Council owned stock.

In order to resolve, some of the deprivation challenges existing within the City and as part of a continuing commitment to regeneration and the creation of sustainable communities, the City's recently launched Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) 2008 – 2026 has been designed to ensure all social, economic, and environmental strategies are properly integrated. The strategy has identified two overarching aims:

- ❖ *To transform the local economy*
- ❖ *To narrow the gap between the poorest and better off*

The Local Area Agreement (LAA), developed by the Wolverhampton Partnership, of which Wolverhampton Homes is a partner, is seen as the three year implementation plan for the SCS. Its focus being on delivering five 'resident outcomes'

- ❖ *We like where we live*

- ❖ *We feel safer*
- ❖ *We have more job opportunities*
- ❖ *We have access to the skills we need*
- ❖ *We'll live longer, healthier lives*

In addition to thematic delivery plans, there are four cross-cutting delivery plans that partners are expected to support:

- ❖ *Skills and employment*
- ❖ *Working Neighbourhoods*
- ❖ *Supporting inclusion*
- ❖ *Increasing young people's capacity*

As the largest social landlord in the City and responsible for the investment of more than £400 million through the Decent Homes Programme, WH has a key role to play in achieving the strategic aims of the Stock Condition Survey. Through the ongoing delivery of the Decent Homes programme we are already making a significant contribution to a number of KPI's contained within delivery plan.

Local Housing Company: The City was selected as one of 14 national pilots to form a Local Housing Company (LHC). The LHC will become the asset backed vehicle used to bring together land and development opportunities within the City to create more housing across all tenures and will be a joint venture with a private sector partner. Whilst the LHC is expected to be operational within the next 12 months, the Council will be commencing preparatory work in early 2010. There are potential management opportunities for Wolverhampton Homes that could emanate from the LHC. WH will work with the City Council to ensure the success of the new company.

Wolverhampton Homes (WH): Set up by Wolverhampton City Council (WCC) in October 2005, as an Arms Length Management Organisation. As part of the delegated arrangements from the City Council (under Section 27 of the Housing Act 1985), WH has responsibility for providing housing management and investment for the majority of Council housing stock, receiving an annual management fee for this service (Appendix 12 details the management fee, maintenance allowances - MMA & major repairs allowance - MRA). It manages the Council's housing maintenance budget of circa £24m, an annual Housing Capital Programme of circa £20m and a further £57.6m per annum to deliver the Decent Homes Programme. In addition to improving services, WH's primary driver is the delivery of the Decent Homes programme for all Council housing with total investment of £400million by December 2012.

The Decent Homes Programme commenced in 2007, following WH '2 stars' accreditation. However, to enable an earlier start to the programme, and continue with earlier commitments made to tenants, additional resources were made available via the Housing Capital Programme 2006/07, to undertake a 'pilot' programme of decent homes improvements to 300 houses across the City, and also to continue with the delivery of a programme, of housing refurbishment, environmental and security improvements already started in a number of the most deprived neighbourhoods.

Although WH's primary objective is to achieve 100% completion and maintenance of the Decent Homes standard for the City's sustainable housing stock, the development of this Asset Management Strategy document will provide a continuing 'way forward' towards the delivery and supporting of Sustainable Communities within the City, and towards achieving a number of targets contained within the LAA.

2.2 Monitoring and Review Arrangements

Wolverhampton Homes Board: The Operations Committee, one of the Board's sub-committees, advises the main Board on all procurement, responsive repairs, planned maintenance and capital improvement strategies; it also has overall responsibility for monitoring the Asset Management and Procurement Strategies. Regular reports will be presented to the Operations Committee, as part of the overall performance management framework reported to the City Council.

Joint Asset Management Group: The Asset Management Strategy has been designed and developed as a 'working' document. Its overall progress and delivery against the KPI's set within

the annual Asset Management Plan will be regularly monitored and reviewed by the Joint Wolverhampton Homes and City Council Asset Management Group. The plan set out a number of priorities for consultation and delivery within each financial year

2.3 Addressing Housing Need

The total amount of social rented stock in the City at 22.7% (Data source: 2009 HSSA Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix) is above national and regional averages and currently shows no signs of reducing; this can be attributed to the continuing uncertainty of the housing market and high unemployment levels existing in Wolverhampton. The current level of housing need and population projections indicate that there is already a shortage of affordable housing within the City. Findings from the Housing Needs Study 2007 confirmed to 'bridge the gap' there was a need to build an additional 702 properties per year.

It seems likely that the economic downturn will increase the gap between supply and demand over the next few years. Since April 2009 only 7 tenants have actually purchased their properties, compared with over 850 in 2004, suggesting that in the current economic climate, property values and difficulty in accessing mortgages limit the ability of many of our tenants to purchase their homes. In addition, many of our tenant's are on low incomes, approximately 65% of tenants are in receipt of Housing Benefit (Data source WCC – HB Team) and therefore cannot afford to exercise their RTB.

The demand for social housing in Wolverhampton remains high and as the table below demonstrates there are no signs of the waiting list reducing.

Year	Housing Register
2005/06	9011
2006/07	8511
2007/08	7244
2008/09	6516
2009/10 <small>(@ 12/11/09)</small>	** 6831

(Data Source: WCC – Easytrieve Report HSG0009/A – UPS Registration/ **Data provided via Northgate Mainframe System)

The vast majority of applicants on the Housing Register have no realistic chance of securing a Council housing tenancy in the near future. Approximately 2,250 properties are available each year for relets, compared with over 3,000 in 2004, the reduction in housing stock has occurred largely as a result of demolitions and Right to Buys (RTB). Reducing the total housing stock number from 25,892 in 2004/05 to 23,705 in 2009/10 (Appendices 13(a) –13 (c) details stock numbers and RTB's etc).

There is still a demand/shortage of available 3+ bedroom family housing in the City, and although future trends indicate an overall reduction in the average household size, the shortage is exacerbated by the current under occupation levels which exist. To try and address this problem, the Housing Strategy sets out intentions to ensure that the majority of new build housing stock is 3+ bedroom family sized housing. It also confirms the need for additional 2 bedroom bungalows, due to the increasing percentage of people living longer. A significant number of tenants are seeking adaptations to their properties due to medical/ill health problems. Demand for adaptations is projected to increase over future years and is already outreaching available resources.

As demand continues to outweigh supply, it is essential that not only does the provision of any new affordable housing adequately reflect the housing need of the city's population, but for the existing stock void turnaround times are improved as an absolute priority.

To ensure that properties currently available for re-letting are allocated fairly and to those in most housing need with effect from November 2009, WH/WCC have launched a Choice Based Lettings scheme – 'Homes in the City'.

The importance of understanding trends concerning future supply and demand cannot be underestimated in the asset management process.

2.3.1 Sustainability Appraisals/ Neighbourhood Profiling

It is important that we continue to invest in assets that are sustainable in the future. Sustainable investment means that our properties provide homes in places where residents want to live and stay. The Government sees mixed communities as the way forward; we have therefore developed a Sustainability Assessment Model which ranks each of the 96 identified neighbourhoods located city-wide. Each of the neighbourhoods has been assessed against a matrix of 10 indicators, which have been combined to produce an overall sustainability index.

Sustainability Indicators			
1	Voids (Current)	6	Outstanding Repairs
2	Voids (Long-term)	7	Empty Properties (All Tenures)
3	Property Turnover	8	Mortality Rates (Standard)
4	No's of Decent Homes	9	Unemployment Levels
5	Level of Rent Arrears	10	Crime & Disorder Statistics

Using this index, all neighbourhoods have been ranked to create a 'league table' of Wolverhampton neighbourhoods, with No. 1 representing the worst; most vulnerable neighbourhood through to No. 96 being the best. (*Appendix 1 provides a brief summary of the scoring matrix and the league table*). The worst letting areas based on this scoring matrix are: Heath Town (Heath Town ward) and Whitmore Reans, Farndale and Dunstall Hill (St Peters Ward).

The Sustainability Assessment Model will ensure that planned investment/resources are focused on solutions ensuring future sustainability.

2.3.2 Sheltered Housing Review

As part of the development Older Persons Strategy ('Every Adult Matters'), the City Council is undertaking a fundamental review of older persons/supported housing provision. The outcome of the review will determine the future need, requirements and suitability of the 18 local authority owned sheltered housing schemes (containing 713 self contained units), managed by WH.

Although it is unlikely that the review will recommend any further demolition, it is likely that some schemes because of their poor demand, unpopularity and suitability issues may be decommissioned and possibly be re-designated as accommodation for younger tenants requiring supported housing.

Not surprisingly several of the schemes meet the 'PRADA' criterion, but before any decisions regarding future investment, disposal or demolition. A joint decision will need to be agreed with the City Council.

Section 3... Property Portfolio and Asset Profile

3.1 Stock-Type Analysis

The housing stock within the Wolverhampton conurbation is located, in 20 electoral wards across 3 parliamentary constituency areas (NE, SE and SW). The majority of the council owned housing stock is located in the NE and SE geographical areas.

At 1st April 2009, the Housing Stock owned by WCC totalled 23,705; the majority of these properties dwellings including 1,926 leasehold dwellings are managed by WH. The remaining 2082 properties are managed by the Council's four Tenant Management Organisations.

Table 'A' - details stock profile of properties owned by the City Council (*2082 of the total, are properties managed by the four TMO organisations – detailed @ Table B)

	Year 2009/10	
	N ^o of Props.	%
<u>Traditional Stock</u>		
Pre - 1945 small terrace houses	980	4.13
Pre -1945 semi -detached houses	3052	12.87
All other pre - 1945 houses	2267	9.56
1945 – 1964 small terrace houses	349	1.47
1945 – 1964 large terrace/semi & detached houses	2903	12.25
1965 –1974 houses	341	1.44
Post 1974 houses	634	2.67
<u>Non –Traditional Stock</u>		
All houses	1820	7.68
<u>Traditional and Non- Traditional Stock</u>		
Pre 1945 Low Rise Flats (1 –2 storeys)	85	0.36
Post 1945 Low Rise Flats (1 –2 storeys)	5014	21.15
Medium Rise Flats (3 –5 storeys)	3026	12.76
High Rise Flats (6 or more storeys)	2230	9.41
Bungalows	1004	4.25
Totals	23,705*	100%

Age Band	N ^o 's
Pre 1945	7183
1945 - 1964	9604
1965 - 1974	3812
Post 1974	3106
Total	23,705

Property Type	N ^o 's
2/3/4+ Bedroom Houses	12346
High Rise Flats – (36 Blocks)	2230
Low Rise Flats & Maisonettes	8125
Bungalows	1004
Totals	23,705

(Data source – 'Promaster' Database)

Stock No's by Constituency Area	Total
<u>Wolverhampton - SE</u>	
Billston	5571
Sub-Total	5,571
<u>Wolverhampton - NE</u>	
Bushbury Hill (TMO)	846
New Park Village (TMO)	308
Wednesfield	5239
Heath Town	1161
Springfield Horseshoe (TMO)	84
Low Hill	5091
Sub-Total	12,729
<u>Wolverhampton - SW</u>	
Merry Hill	4561
Dovecotes (TMO)	844
Sub-Total	5,405
Grand Total	23,705

Table 'B' - details stock profile of properties managed by the four TMO organisations

Archetype/Property Description	Tenant Management Organisation					
	Dovecotes	Springfield Horseshoe	New Park Village	Bushbury Hill	Total	% of stock
Traditional Stock						
Pre - 1945 small terrace houses	-	37	1	21	59	2.83%
Pre -1945 semi -detached houses	-	30	7	195	232	11.14%
All other pre - 1945 houses	-	13	-	75	88	4.23%
1945 – 1964 small terrace houses	-	-	-	3	3	0.14%
1945 – 1964 large terrace/semi & detached houses	-	-	-	-	-	-
1965 –1974 houses	-	-	82	-	82	3.94%
Post 1974 houses	39	-	3	-	42	2.02%
Non -Traditional Stock						
All houses	377	-	-	516	893	42.89%
Traditional /Non- Traditional Stock						
Pre 1945 Low Rise Flats (1–2 storeys)	-	4	-	1	5	0.24%
Post 1945 Low Rise Flats (1–2 storeys)	428	-	27	11	466	22.4%
Medium Rise Flats (3 –5 storeys)	-	-	174	-	174	8.36%
High Rise Flats (6 or more storeys)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bungalows	-	-	14	24	38	1.82%
Totals	844	84	308	846	2082	100%

Different stock types have different repair needs, which obviously impact on overall repairs and maintenance costs. In total there are 1827 non-traditional properties (7.71% of the stock) which have higher on-going repairs and maintenance costs attributed mainly due to inherent defects and the building materials used in their construction.

Table 'C' - details numbers of Non-Traditional properties by type and lettings area

Property Description	Letting Area	No. of props	% of Stock
Arcon	Bridgnorth & Henwood Road	22	0.09
Boswells	Bushbury	576	2.43
BISF	Bushbury & Northwood Park, Warstones	191	0.81
Boot Construction	Green Lanes	5	0.02
Cornish	Bradley & Rocket Pool	96	0.40
Mac Trad	Ashmore Park	61	0.26
No Fines	Rough Hills / Ettingshall / Hickman / Pendeford Dovecotes	391	1.65
Orlits	Bushbury & Northwood Park	54	0.23
Smiths	Rakegate / Wobaston / Long Knowle / Ashmore Park / Scotlands / Underhill	227	0.96
Tarrens	East Park / Portobello / Wood End / Bushbury & Northwood Park	204	0.86
TOTAL		1827	7.71%

(Data Source – 'Promaster' Database)

3.2 Stock Condition/Asset Database

Strategic Objective: To achieve and maintain accurate 100% stock condition data for the housing stock managed on behalf of the City Council

The detail and accuracy of the stock condition data held, is the cornerstone of a well informed investment strategy. Accurate and robust stock condition data provides the information necessary to produce programmes of investment, to appropriately maintain the stock in good condition.

During 2004/05, consultants were commissioned to undertake a 14% representative sample of the stock, the objective being to establish a baseline position to support the ALMO bid. Using the data collected, a 'cloning' exercise was applied to the remainder of the stock, which when overlaid with the available neighbourhood profiles was used to determine the original programme priorities. The original Building Costs Model (BCM) 2004 was based on this information.

Following the start of the Decent Homes Programme in 2007 and a further validation of the stock condition information held, it became apparent that the 'cloned' stock data did not correlate with the actual condition of the housing stock when surveyed.

To remedy this problem, a new Asset Management Database 'Promaster' has been introduced. 'Promaster' holds and provides all attribute information, including replacement and lifecycle costs, enabling correct investment decisions to be made. It is also used to carry out assessments of dwellings against the Decent Homes standard.

'Promaster' provides:

- ❖ A comprehensive single data source for all stock condition information
- ❖ A project management facility for prioritising and developing future works programmes
- ❖ An Asbestos register module in accordance with legal requirements,
- ❖ Historical renewal and cyclical maintenance information
- ❖ A comprehensive Decent Homes analysis
- ❖ Energy audit information/Energy Performance Certificate
- ❖ An interface with the Company's Northgate Housing Management ICT system

WH recognises the importance of effective record keeping and works planning and has created a specialist Stock Investment Team. The team are responsible for gathering, maintaining and improving the database. Although 'Promaster' was only introduced 12 months ago, already the 'in-house' surveying team has carried out detailed individual stock condition surveys for 40% of the entire stock. The Company is on target to achieve 100% stock condition information by April 2012. The data collected will enable resources to be accurately targeted to the neighbourhoods and properties in most need. (*Appendix 4 'Asset Management Data: - Stock Condition Surveys'*) provides data on the number/percentage of properties where stock condition surveys have been completed.

The quality and accuracy of the stock condition data being collected is seen as the key to the sustainability and robustness of the Asset Management Strategy. Undertaking surveys in this way will ensure a continuous process of refinement, increasing the accuracy of the stock condition information held.

Void Properties: - To ensure consistent and accurate stock condition data is collected when any repairs or improvements are made to void properties, Void Inspectors use the same Stock Condition Surveys information being used by the Decent Homes Surveyors.

Energy Efficiency - 'Promaster' is equipped with NHER 'auto-evaluator' a process used to measure the thermal comfort levels. The ability to measure thermal efficiency in this way will help identify/develop ways of reducing the effects of fuel poverty for tenants. It will also assist WCC in meeting its LAA Target in respect of National Indicator 187 (Tackling Fuel Poverty – SAP rating 65+). Since the introduction of Energy Performance Certificates (EPC), early analysis shows that higher than average SAP ratings are being achieved. The current SAP rating for WH is calculated at 67.00^{04/09} (calculation based upon SAP 2001 – Rating 1 - 120), or 56.2^{04/09} (calculation based on RD

SAP2005 model – Rating 1 - 100) from data held in our asset management database. [Appendix 3: 'Energy Efficiency SAP Ratings' provides further detailed information.](#)

Housing Health & Safety Rating System(HHSRS) The identification of HHSRS works are being carried out as part of the ongoing stock condition survey, A record of all failures identified is included on the 'Promaster' Asset Management Database. All relevant staff are being trained to identify potential HHSRS failures.

3.3 Stock History/Achievements

Prior to the establishment of WH in 2005, general repairs and maintenance for the housing stock was undertaken by the City Council's Landlord Services Department, whilst mainstream and other housing regeneration capital schemes were undertaken by the Regeneration Team.

Improvement Programmes undertaken include:

- ❖ *Installation of Central Heating and Insulation to the majority of the stock*
- ❖ *PVCu double glazed window replacement programme for the majority of the stock*
- ❖ *On going programme of disabled adaptations*
- ❖ *Rolling programme of City-Wide Environmental & Security Improvements (Streetscaping) in deprived neighbourhoods – i.e. Low Hill, Bradley, The Lunt and St Annes Estates.*
- ❖ *On-going Housing refurbishment programme for most deprived neighbourhoods i.e. The Scotlands and Lunt Estates*

3.4 Properties Requiring a Different Approach (PRADA)

Strategic Objective: To ensure that investment is only made to those properties where there is a guaranteed life of 30 years plus.

Introduction

For the first time the strategy identifies certain property types which because of their non-traditional construction type, poor condition or undesirability generally, can be designated as properties requiring a different approach ('PRADA'). From the stock condition data now available, these properties also require major investment or refurbishment works in addition to decent homes works e.g. Re-modelling or Structural works.

The identification of dwellings to be included in the 'PRADA' category, and subsequent decisions regarding the cost/value for money of any necessary refurbishment works, have been undertaken following the completion of a feasibility study/sustainability appraisal for each property type. (Appendix 4 – details property types falling into (PRADA) category/priorities for investment)

Investment in the 'PRADA' housing stock will have a significant impact on the future maintenance and improvement of the remaining stock, it therefore features strongly in the Asset Management Strategy, the Revised Building Cost Model, Management and Maintenance Allowance (MMA) and Major Repairs Allowance (MRA).

The feasibility study/sustainability appraisals already undertaken have revealed that of some of the properties identified within the 'PRADA' category, have deteriorated more than anticipated and require immediate attention. Following approval by WH Board it has been agreed that these dwellings are prioritised into 3 categories:

- ❖ **Priority 1 (P1)** – Essential (*Health & Safety or being in breach of our statutory or legislative duties or responsibilities*)
- ❖ **Priority 2 (P2)** – Consider (*Bringing properties back into use i.e. long-term voids, conversion of redundant housing offices*)
- ❖ **Priority 3 (P3)** – Defer (*i.e. Issue of long term sustainability*)

Property Types identified as requiring 'a different approach'

- ❖ **High Rise Blocks:** Of the total of 36 high-rise blocks (9.4% of the total stock), 22 blocks located at Stowlawn, Whitmore Reans, Merry Hill, Graiseley, Chetton Green, Boscobel and the Vauxhalls estates have already received substantial investment, securing their longer term sustainability. This leaves a total of 14 blocks requiring attention mainly, Arthur Greenwood Court, Lakefield, Hickman and Heath Town estates. Apart from necessary health and safety works, detailed feasibility studies/sustainability assessments will be carried out, prior to any further investment decisions being made.

* There are also a number of smaller units such as bedsits and low rise one bedroom flats requiring substantial investment, mainly attributed to their much higher tenancy turnover rate.
- ❖ **Non-Traditional Stock:** There are a total of 1827 (Low Rise) properties located city-wide. Many have had works carried out so are no longer classed as defective. However, a substantial number; including the MHC properties at Stowlawn and Northwood Park, and the Boswell-Type houses at Low Hill and Bushbury Hill still require substantial investment, including re-roofing and 'POD' reinstatement works. Despite their poor condition these property-types remain popular and easy to let.
- ❖ **Structural Defects:** Each year, capital resources are identified to address structural related issues; these may be individual properties (tenanted/void) or larger schemes of work. Mainly located in the South Eastern region, much of the City Council's Housing Stock has been built on the sites of former coal mines; resulting in subsidence from old cellars and redundant mine shafts. Decisions about future investment needs are based upon a range of factors, geo-technical surveys, housing demand, life-cycle/remedial costs and sustainability. Final decisions regarding the future of this stock are made jointly with the City Council., Decisions made range from carrying out necessary remedial works to stock demolition or disposal/sale on the open market.
- ❖ **Sheltered Schemes:** There are some particular requirements for supported and sheltered housing. However, there are a number of issues with some schemes which are more 'difficult to let', e.g. being too small, too far from amenities, or unsuitable for people with mobility difficulties and not meeting the DDA standard. New tenants choosing sheltered schemes tend to be older and frailer further consideration need to be given to addressing the needs of an aging and less mobile tenant population. Decisions regarding this stock will form part of the Sheltered Scheme review currently being undertaken by WCC (Detailed at paragraph 2.3.2).

3.5 Obsolete/Disposal of Properties

Due to the current housing need for affordable housing, both WH and WCC have agreed where possible, that existing housing should be retained and re-invested in. Exceptions will be where specific circumstances provide justification for an alternative course of action, for instance; properties beyond economical repair or can be classed as potentially obsolete.

Any potential 'disinvestment' decisions for void properties are normally made on an individual dwelling by dwelling basis, using the Empty Property Appraisal Toolkit and/or the new Voids Disposal Process, recently introduced by the City Council. All cases are decided by the Joint Asset Management Group, prior to any final decisions being made regarding possible disposal /demolition etc. For groups of properties or those properties located on more challenging estates the use of a wider neighbourhood sustainability model is also used, assisted by the 'Sustainability Appraisal and Neighbourhood Profile' (*Appendix 1 'assessment criteria and lists/ score the estate lettings areas in a league table*)



3.6 HRA Asset Profile/Non Domestic Assets

3.6.1 In addition to residential dwellings WH also manages a number of non domestic/other related assets, on behalf of the City Council. In total at 1st October 2009 within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), WCC owned a total of 109 non-domestic assets, plus 258 shops and approximately 5000 garages/forecourts.

In order to align with the WCC Corporate Asset Management Plan and Capital Strategy requirements, WH is developing a separate Asset Management Plan for the non-domestic assets it manages. The plan will demonstrate how the future strategic direction of the non-domestic assets fits the corporate priorities required as part of the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) KLOE 3.2 – 'Does the organisation manage its assets effectively to help deliver its strategic priorities and service needs'. Further information about the City Council's Corporate Asset Management Plan process can be found at www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/business/property/management

<i>Asset Type</i>	<i>Numbers</i>
Housing Offices	12
Concierge Offices	8
Tenants Meeting rooms	14
Sheltered Schemes	16
Homeless Hostels	1
High Rise communal areas	28
Miscellaneous - Pump Houses etc	10
Laundries (including a number of WCC Social Services laundries)	28
Shops	258
Garages/Forecourts	5000

WH recognises its legislative and mandatory responsibilities in respect non domestic assets, specifically regarding health and safety. As a consequence 19 key attributes have been identified which are proactively managed e.g. Electrical Testing, Gas Safety, Asbestos Surveys, Management of Legionella, fire safety, wet and dry risers etc. However, some of the existing assets listed above need to be reassessed as regards their future use and overall sustainability.

3.6.2 **Garages:** The Company manages approximately 5000 garages/Forecourts on behalf of the City Council. The condition of the garages is generally poor. However a number have received investment over the past five years through a garage improvement programme or minor works budgets. However the improvement programme has been suspended through lack of resource. The majority of garages are of pre-fabricated concrete type construction with asbestos cement roofs. Although car ownership has risen since the garages were built, demand in some areas has reduced significantly, whilst in others has risen, this is evidenced by the waiting list. Our strategic approach is for garages in high demand to remain as garage sites with a programme of investment, whilst redundant and disused garages sites with little prospect of sustainability are recommended for alternative use. A number of former sites have been sold for development and a further number will be sold or used for potential small new build sites. Limited resources and the need to commit available resources to deliver the Decent Homes Programme means that future investment in garages will generally remain a low priority.

3.6.3 **Estate Shops:** The Company manages approximately 258 shops on behalf of the City Council, they are let on a commercial basis and attract rent, resulting in an income stream for the HRA. Estate shops do not attract MRA and as such, although there are resources identified to carry out necessary repairs and maintenance, there are no capital resources identified to invest in them. With the exception of three shopping parades, which are included within the City Council's regeneration/development areas, generally the shopping parades are popular with residents and provide a much needed local facility.

Section 4... Energy Efficiency & Environmental Sustainability

Strategic Objective: To ensure that all the properties managed are energy efficient and sustainable so that tenants live in a safe and warm environment at a cost they can afford.

Priorities to achieve objectives:

- ❖ Incorporating energy efficiency improvements in all maintenance and Improvement programmes
- ❖ Increasing the average energy rating of the housing stock to exceed SAP 65.
- ❖ Working with the City Council and partners to deliver Wolverhampton's Affordable Warmth Strategy and 'Health Through Warmth' Programmes.
- ❖ Providing training, advice and information for tenants as to the most efficient and effective use of their heating systems.
- ❖ Reviewing the benefits of undertaking aerial thermal imaging to target stock 'hot spots' to improve thermal comfort and reduce CO₂ emissions
- ❖ Investigating the use of renewable technologies, including Bio-Mass and Air/Ground source heat pumps
- ❖ Working with the Energy Savings Trust, Department of Energy & Climate Change (DECC), Fuel Utilities and Decent Homes Partners to bid for external funding to enable the installations of renewable technologies, using Sustainable Code Level 3' criteria.
- ❖ Exploring the options of implantation a Retrofit programme (post Decent Homes), as part of our partnership with the Sustainable Housing Action Partnership (SHAP)
- ❖ Achieving ISO 14001 accreditation by February 2010

4.1 Energy Efficiency

Energy use in housing is a significant contributor to climate change, 27% of all carbon emissions derive from the domestic housing sector. As the major provider of social housing WH is acutely aware of its responsibilities towards delivering the carbon reduction targets contained within the City's Climate Change Strategy. Improving overall energy efficiency, together with ensuring that all heating and insulation installations exceed minimum standards, is essential for the future maintenance of the housing stock.

Lack of adequate heating and insulation within dwellings has two main outcomes, a detrimental effect on the building fabric itself, through incidence of condensation and mould growth, impacting on future maintenance costs and potentially the health and well being of tenants, who may suffer from respiratory or asthma problems. Conversely, a highly efficient heating and insulation system helps to reduce maintenance costs and the numbers of void properties, as well as improving living conditions and the health and well being of our tenants.

The Wolverhampton Partnership has developed an Affordable Warmth Strategy; it sets out the policy for tackling fuel poverty in the City. The strategy identifies Fuel Poverty and the provision of Affordable warmth as a major issue for households in the City. A clear set of aims and objectives have been established to enable the eradication of fuel poverty. Wolverhampton Homes as a member of the steering group is responsible for monitoring its action plan/KPI's.

'The recognised definition for fuel poverty is where 10% or more of a household's disposable income is spent on fuel, main causes are low income, lack of or an inefficient heating system, together with poor levels of insulation' (source: World Health Organisation)

To address the fuel poverty issues and ensure highest levels of energy efficiency, our investment programme provides the following initiatives:

- ❖ *Partnership:* with British Gas to develop potential renewal technology solutions and to provide/fund alternative energy efficient systems i.e. Installation of Biomass Boilers, air or ground source heat pumps for estates requiring alternative heating systems.
- ❖ *Partnership:* with a number of energy supply providers, to install wall and/or roof insulation to all properties where achievable.
- ❖ *Partnership:* with Worcester Bosch, to supply highly energy efficient condensing gas boilers

when replacement boilers are required.

- ❖ *Partnership; with All Saints, Blakenhall Community Development - ABCD (NDC Partnership) to develop a 'Carbon Close' initiative for a number of long term voids in the All Saints area*
- ❖ City-Wide thermal imaging exercise to highlight properties/areas of greatest heat loss, to assist in correct targeting of resources
- ❖ Ongoing programme of energy advice and awareness for residents, advising about energy savings measures and ways to reduce energy consumption
- ❖ Training/Awareness raising for staff regarding City's 'Health through Warmth' Programme

4.2 Environmental Sustainability

WH are committed to limiting the environmental impact of all of its activities as well as ensuring that its contractors have robust environmental policies and use environmentally friendly products where possible. As part of its commitment to wider Climate Change and Carbon Reduction, the Company is undertaking an environmental management audit, with a view to obtaining ISO 14001 accreditation by February 2010.

- ❖ Progress to date includes reviewing the type of materials used, with the aim of rationalising material components and the use of more sustainable products.
- ❖ Maximum recycling of waste from the Decent Homes Programme – Target 75%
- ❖ Recycled/Plastic Fencing – In partnership with a local manufacturer developing a specification for provision of recycled/plastic fencing as part of the city-wide fencing programme
- ❖ *Partnership:* with the Energy Savings Trust to undertake a 'Green Fleet' review.
- ❖ *Partnership:* with City Council (Transport Division) to develop a Work Travel Plan for staff

Section 5 ... Resources/Investment Needs

Strategic Objective: Develop and resource a capital programme that meets tenant's aspirations and priorities, whilst also working towards meeting the Decent Homes Standard

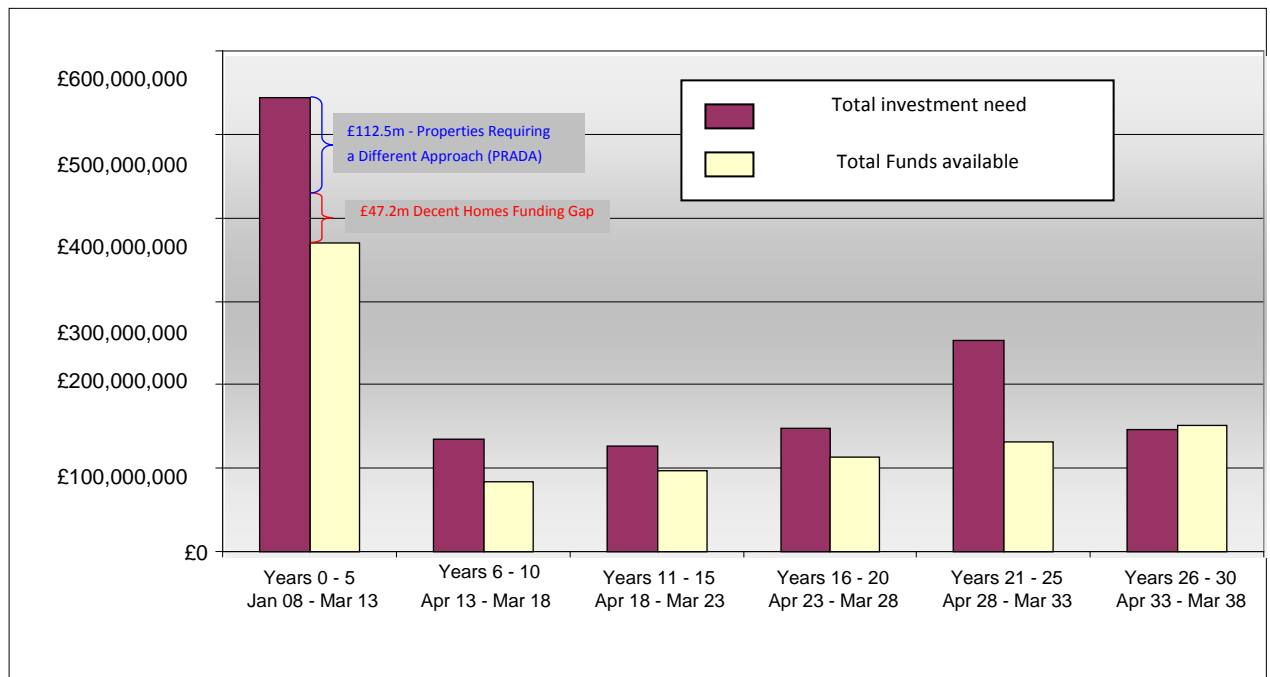
Priorities to achieve objectives

- ❖ *To ensure that all available MRA funds are directed towards meeting the Decent Homes Standard*
- ❖ *Ensure expenditure reflects tenants' priorities and aspirations*
- ❖ *To explore all inward investment opportunities i.e. additional prudential borrowing, energy efficiency grants etc.*
- ❖ *To identify and develop potential new business opportunities*
- ❖ *To develop a Repairs & Maintenance Service attractive for 'buy in' from the Private Sector*
- ❖ *To develop a joint strategy with the City Council for 'new build' opportunities.*

5.1 Summary of Key Investment Needs/Review of Building Costs Model

The Building Cost Model 2009 (BCM) for the next thirty year period has been reviewed and updated using the latest stock condition data, provided via the 'Promaster' database. The increased accuracy of the stock data has raised a major area for concern, in as much as that the replacement of some higher - cost components were not accounted for in the original 2004 model, providing an additional cost pressure for the programme of some £97.4m beyond 2012.

The chart below shows the total investment needed to maintain the housing stock over the next 30 years. The funding shortfall for the entire 30 year term is estimated to be £300.01m. For the period January 2008 to March 2013 the Decent Homes shortfall (excluding properties requiring a different approach 'PRADA') is estimated at £47.2m.



The BCM 2009 has been built up using the established 13 Archetypes (detailed in Section 3). This information features strongly in our endeavours to design out maintenance hungry stock.

To strengthen this approach, the database is being reviewed and refined to smooth out and re-profile future renewal programmes so as to reflect future spend potential. This is necessary mainly as a result of the stock being older and needing more components to be replaced to meet decency, than previously identified by the older 2004 BCM model.

Over the next 30-year period the majority of each property's main components will require renewal; this has been included in the re-profiling. However, the accuracy and reliability of these types of projections must be viewed with a degree of caution. This is due to the surveyors having to make life cycle projections and being able to accurately forecast a buildings' probable condition in 10 – 30 years time. The 100% accuracy of the stock condition is essential, so as to minimise judgements and being able to accurately forecast longer-term investment. The review of the BCM 2009 has identified the following continuing funding requirement/key investment needs:

- ❖ *The funding shortfall for the entire 30 year term is estimated to be £300.01m*
- ❖ *£112.5m required to fund identified 'unfunded' pressures and to address properties defined as 'requiring a different approach' (PRADA)*
- ❖ *£47.2m shortfall in meeting decent homes target by 2012. (Confirmation has been received from the Homes & Communities Agency (HCA) that no additional resources are available)*
- ❖ *Additional cost pressure for the programme of £97.4m beyond 2012.*

Following completion of the BCM 2009, and the identified shortfall of £159.7m, WCC have agreed to divert 100% of the available MRA to assist in funding the £47.2m shortfall, to enable internal decency works to be completed. However, it is apparent that the required resources of £112.5m needed to address the 'PRADA' are unavailable. To undertake any of the works required, other sources of funding still need to be confirmed.

Appendix 5: 'The 2009 Building Cost Model' provides valuable/key investment information in terms of investment need and anticipated total fund availability.

5.2 'Bridging the Funding Gap'

Discussions are ongoing between WH and the City Council as to alternative ways 'To bridge the funding gap'

Summary of Actions:

- ❖ *WH working with WCC to identify any available resources which could be brought forward from future years*
- ❖ *Commitment by WCC to divert any available MRA to support Decent Homes Programme*
- ❖ *Potentially resources could be made available in future years to support the PRADA programme and other identified unfunded pressures through the emerging Local Housing Company.*
- ❖ *Agreement to introduce open-book cost management system (OBCM) realising potential saving of £29m over the life of the programme*
- ❖ *Deferring all non-essential works, and only carrying out internal improvements, achieving the required decency target for all sustainable stock by December 2012.*
- ❖ *Decent Homes Programme – Through 'Value Engineering' a reduction in time-scales from 25 to 15 days per dwelling has been achieved.*
- ❖ *Decent Homes Programme – Working with partner constructors to identify efficiency savings (During Year 1 - 8% efficiency savings were achieved, with a further 12% planned for Year 2)*
- ❖ *£170k grant secured through HCA (SHESP) programme for Cavity Wall Insulation,*
- ❖ *Further inward investment being sought via Central Government's/Fuel Utilities Energy Efficiency Programmes – to support energy efficiency initiatives in Heath Town, New Park Village and All Saints ('PRADA' properties)*

Even though efforts are being made to resolve the 'funding gap', the situation still presents a further range of challenges, which WH will and still need to manage:

- ❖ *Meeting/Managing tenants' expectations, through continuing consultation and prioritisation of future renewal programmes*
- ❖ *Delivery decent homes to sustainable stock by December 2012*
- ❖ *Delivery of 'deferred' External Improvements Programme*
- ❖ *Maintaining the Decent Homes Standard to those properties originally classed as refusals beyond 2012 and those properties becoming non-decent*
- ❖ *Ensuring that financial resources are prioritised in line with investment need*
- ❖ *Reducing ongoing future maintenance need through the Planned Improvement Programme.*
- ❖ *Identification and prioritisation of resources for properties designated 'requiring a different approach' (PRADA)*
- ❖ *Identification of resources to address unforeseen structural works*
- ❖ *Identification of resources to undertake environmental improvement programmes to assist in delivery of sustainable communities/estates*
- ❖ *Maintaining stock in line with future investment need minimum £300.01m shortfall*
- ❖ *Achieving 'more for less'*
- ❖ *'Bridging the longer term overall 30 year funding gap' of £300.01m*

5.3 Programme Development and Prioritisation

WH's major investment priority until December 2012 is the completion of the Decent Homes Programme. Using accurate stock condition information to drive investment need is clearly essential and a significant shift from previously developed programmes. The approach adopted will ensure that each property will be improved and maintained to funds available.

Work's programming is being carried out by applying the following parameters:

- ❖ Cost smoothing: to ensure an affordable spend profile reducing spend peaks and troughs
- ❖ Grouping of properties (by property or archetype): to achieve logical economies of scale that are efficient to manage in terms of actual works delivery, tenant consultation and client management (quality control)
- ❖ Decent Homes Programme: Ensuring that all the Councils *sustainable* stock meets the decent homes standard by December 2012. This may involve deferring any additional external works (beyond the decent homes standard) beyond this date.
- ❖ Energy Efficiency: Improvements and the provision of affordable warmth for our tenants remains a key priority. To bring added value to the Decent Homes Programme, all available energy grant funding i.e. CERT, CESP, DECC, HCA and that partnerships with the fuel utilities/providers are maximised wherever possible.

In determining priorities for programming the following rules are being applied in all cases:

1. Prioritisation of properties using a weighting basis.

1 st level	Legislative and Mandatory requirements
2 nd level	Decent Homes - Standard Failure,
3 rd level	'Other' component failures (identified by response repairs data)
4 th level	Energy Efficiency requirements
2. Works impact/Elemental or whole house refurbishment i.e. Do all the works need to be done at once or should a programme of key elements be done?
3. Consultation – Tenants priorities are factored in prior to any investment decisions made.
4. Procurement – Programmes are being developed to maximise the most efficient procurement options available.

5.4 30 Year Business Projections

Predictions of medium to long-term costs for major repairs have been achieved by means of interrogating the 'Promaster' Asset Management Database. The life spans of major elements have been taken from BCM 2009, together with the present day costs of replacement attributed to each element. Using numbers of properties, age and updated 40% stock condition information has formed part of the overall calculation together with the 'real' growth rate, (the relationship between actual interest and the rate of inflation using the BCIS 'building cost index for cost inflation and CPI for consumer price index for income inflation). The 'PRADA' stock was excluded from the calculation (Estimated Cost - £112.5m).

The model predicts the theoretical expenditure; together with the amount necessary to cover the cost of major repairs allowance work. To ensure that future elemental failures can be replaced consideration will be given to the creation of a 'sinking fund'. This is significant between April 2021 and March 2033. The model has been calculated using the cost of key building elements and life cycle replacement costs in future years see (*Appendix 6 'Life Cycle Costing for Key Building Elements'*).

5.5 Income and Expenditure

Capital Expenditure (Wolverhampton Homes) (*Appendix 7: Summary of Historic Investment Programmes- Capital Expenditure*) details the capital schemes that have been delivered by Wolverhampton Homes (WCC Landlord Services Department prior to the establishment of the ALMO in 2005). It provides the budget and actual out turn and financial performance levels year on year since 2003/04.

Decent Homes Programme (*Appendix 8: Summary of Historic and Projected Investment Needs : Decent Homes Expenditure*) provides the actual and provisional projected spend per annum for each of the Decent Homes

work activities (current as at April 2009). In addition (*Appendix 9: Projected Target Figures: Properties Meeting the Decent Homes Standard*) provides over the period 2005/06 – 2013/14 a range of information on properties becoming 'non-decent' over a given financial year, together with the number of properties being made decent over the same time period. Appendix 9 demonstrates the importance to appreciate and understand that during the Decent Homes Programme that a considerable number of properties will become 'non-decent'. This significantly affects the perceived year and year progress in terms of reporting the percentage of stock meeting the Decent Homes standard against the overall stock.

5.6 Innovative Solutions for Service Delivery

Wolverhampton Homes in common with many other Housing organisations constantly face changes and challenges in an ever competing environment; to address this we have reviewed our methods of delivery. With effect from July 2009, the new Northgate ICT System has been implemented. From autumn 2009 this will include the use of PDA's (mobile working solutions etc), allowing for more innovative and efficient methods of managing and delivering our service.

5.6.1 Inward Investment/New Business Opportunities

The future for Wolverhampton Homes is not just confined to maintaining, refurbishing and investing in our current stock, alternative solutions in terms of sustaining communities and estates through multi-agency and partnership working, attraction of additional inward investment are being sort.

New Business Opportunities: In view of reducing capital resources and the existing crisis within the housing market generally, a new challenge for the Company over the medium term is the attraction of new business. Any decisions regarding new business opportunities will be made within the context of a formal risk management framework.

- ❖ New Build: Cost benefit analysis and investment appraisals need to be undertaken to explore new build opportunities. In partnership with WCC we will develop a strategy, to enable WH to be selected as a preferred partner for future new build opportunities. These are unlikely to be large schemes but could involve building specialist energy efficient lifetime homes on small Council available land is one option. Alternatively, private sector housing purchase schemes if financially viable may be encouraged.
- ❖ Repairs & Maintenance Service – Discussions are ongoing with the City Council for WH to provide an 'In-House' repairs and maintenance service for Private Sector Landlords and for new tenants housed under the new Private Sector Leasing Scheme. We will also be working with leaseholders and 'RTB' owner occupiers to offer and develop a range of similar services
- ❖ Housing Associations/RSL's - The Company is investigating ways of becoming an approved Repairs & Maintenance Contractor for local RSL's
- ❖ Asbestos Management – A service already offered to other Local landlords, we are looking to expand this service to other organisations.
- ❖ Gas Servicing – A service already offered to our leaseholders

Section 6 ... Programme Delivery/Contract Management

6.1 Introduction

There are a number of key elements to the repairs, maintenance and improvement service:

- ❖ *Responsive Repairs*
- ❖ *Programmed/Zoned Repairs*
- ❖ *Health and Safety Works*
- ❖ *Voids (Capital and Revenue)*

Each section below sets out the overall aims and goals for each of these services. The key issues and objectives are then considered and linked to each aim and goal. While it is recognised that each service is, in many respects, a separate element of the overall service, it is also recognised that all elements are closely linked.

6.2 Repairs and Maintenance

6.2.1 Responsive Repairs

Strategic Objective: To provide a customer focused responsive repairs service, which achieves high levels of performance, customer satisfaction and good value for money

Priorities to Achieve Objective

- ❖ *Consulting with tenants and leaseholders about the way the repairs service should be delivered*
- ❖ *Ensuring reported repairs are diagnosed correctly by the Call Centre*
- ❖ *Providing a flexible appointment response repairs service which meets our customers needs*
- ❖ *Providing a fast and efficient service – from time a repair reported to completion*
- ❖ *Getting the job done right first time as completed as quickly as possible*
- ❖ *Carrying out as many repairs as possible in a pre-planned or programmed way – (using 60%/40% ratio split)*
- ❖ *Minimising the number of emergency repairs*
- ❖ *Undertaking property 'health checks' on maintenance hungry stock*
- ❖ *Re charging repairs to third parties who wilfully neglect or damage the asset*
- ❖ *Achieving high levels of customer satisfaction*

The Response Repairs Service covers the day-to-day maintenance of the Council's housing stock; it is a 24-hour service provided 365 days a year. In respect of overall service provision it is perceived by many tenants as being the most important service we provide, and therefore highly influential in shaping tenants views about the quality and satisfaction of service they receive. All repair requests are made via the 'Homes Direct' call centre. To support the operators; technical support is available to assist in interpreting any problematic or difficult repair requests.

As a direct result of customer feedback regarding concerns with the repairs service provided, the service has been subject of a complete modernisation/improvement programme, this commenced in August 2008.

The improvements to the repairs programme has ensured all response repairs work are undertaken via multi-skilled response repairs officers, with vehicles equipped with the tools/stock to provide a quick and effective response repair service. WH has also invested in ICT/Mobile phone technology aimed at improving the interface between the tenant and repairs operative. This method of 'mobile working' allows the operative to be more flexible and efficient.

The service is provided primarily through North/South Repair Teams and includes gas, electrical and routine repairs. A small team of multi-skilled operatives respond to emergency work outside normal working hours.

Through tenant consultation revised time-scales for completion of repairs - from 'reporting to completion' have been introduced. This also includes changes to the category for Programmed/Zoned Repairs.

Revised repair categories and time scales for completion

- ❖ *Emergency Repairs (Vulnerable Tenants)* Within 2 hours
- ❖ *Emergency Repairs (All Other Tenants)* Within 24 hours
- ❖ *Urgent Repairs* Within 7 calendar days
- ❖ *Routine Repairs* Within 20 calendar days
- ❖ *Programmed/Zoned Repairs* Within 90 calendar days

6.2.2 Programmed/Zoned Repairs

Through the increased programming of repairs, works in this category to be completed from report to completion in 90 days. Include:

- ❖ *Larger roof and guttering repairs, soffits and fascias*
- ❖ *Pointing of brickwork and relaying of slabbed or concrete paving*
- ❖ *Replacement of kitchen units, sinks, baths and wash hand basins*

6.3 Health & Safety Works

Strategic Objective: To ensure that all dwellings meet health & safety requirements so that our tenants and leaseholders are able to live in a safe environment

Priorities to Achieve Objectives:

- ❖ *To identify and manage risks including:*
 - ❖ *Housing Health and Safety Rating Defects*
 - ❖ *Gas Installations*
 - ❖ *Asbestos,*
 - ❖ *Electrical*
 - ❖ *Legionella*
 - ❖ *Fire Safety*
 - ❖ *Passenger Lift Refurbishment/DDA Works*

Introduction

Wolverhampton Homes has developed appropriate plans and programmes to meet the organisation's statutory obligations and best practice on housing health and safety. We are members of Constructionline and have also achieved CHAS accreditation.

6.3.1 Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS): The HHSRS replaced the Fitness Standard element of the Decent Homes Standard. The HHSRS assesses the health and safety risks inherent within a property. If a property fails the HHSRS it automatically fails the decent Homes Standard. All HHSRS failures are treated as urgent and addressed at the earliest opportunity. The identification of HHSRS works are being carried out as part of the ongoing stock condition survey. As the HHSRS is much more demanding than the Fitness Standard, all relevant staff have been trained to identify potential HHSRS failures.

To achieve our HHSRS Objective we will:

- ❖ Ensure staff and contractors identify failures during normal day-to-day activities
- ❖ Record failures on 'Promaster' Asset Management Database
- ❖ Carry out identified works as a matter of priority
- ❖ Continually review programme of HHSRS works to ensure Decent Homes works are achieved

6.3.2 'F.L.A.G' Monitoring Meetings: To monitor compliance and performance on Fire Safety, Legionella, Asbestos and Gas, WH has recently formed a group of senior managers and other relevant officers who meet on a 6 weekly cycle to discuss performance, statutory functions and risk management issues.

6.3.3 Gas Servicing and Installations: WH provides a robust Gas Servicing programme which has been delivered by an external contractor. Both policy and practice undergo close scrutiny and are audited annually, recognising the importance that the Company places on servicing and strong leadership of the gas servicing team. Installations and repairs have historically been delivered by a different contract. Following the expiry date on 31st March 2009 of the existing gas service term contract, WH has undertaken a fundamental service review.

Following completion of the review the following changes have been agreed:

- ❖ *Procurement of a single supply contract for Gas servicing*
- ❖ *Utilising the existing Decent Homes Partnership to undertake gas replacements*
- ❖ *Using the In-House Service to undertake one off ad-hoc replacements.*

The tendered contract is well advanced and due to be let from November 2009.

6.3.4 Asbestos Management: Following the re organisation of Asbestos Section a 3rd party 'health-check' is being undertaken (Due for completion November 2009). The objective being to ensure that asbestos related information is updated and integrated into the asset management database 'Pro-Master' to ensure compliance with section 4 of the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations. 'Pro-Master' will be used to manage asbestos information.

The 'health-check' review will result in WH Asbestos Policy and Management System being amended. In principle the strategy is for asbestos containing materials (ACM) to be removed, only where they are in poor condition and pose a risk to the health, safety and welfare of people who are likely to come into contact with ACM's. Wolverhampton Homes complies with its statutory requirements by holding survey data on asbestos containing materials within common areas of flats and workplaces.

The revised/updated asbestos policy will include:

- ❖ *An up to date register of information regarding asbestos in various archetypes*
- ❖ *Information accessible to other 3rd parties authorised to work on various archetypes*
- ❖ *Detailed policies and procedures*
- ❖ *Staff training & awareness, including annual mandatory training courses for relevant staff*
- ❖ *An open information policy with information on surveys and individual instances of 'Asbestos in the Homes' provided to tenants in the appropriate manner.*

WH ensures that all appropriate legislation and best practice is adhered to and appropriate findings of asbestos containing materials recorded across work disciplines. Implementation of the asbestos policy is reported annually to the Operations Committee and audited every two years.

6.3.5 Mechanical and Electrical: In accordance with agreed best practice, all domestic installations receive a safety check every 10 years, as a minimum. WH recognises the importance of electrical safety and has reviewed its policy in light of the high elemental replacement and upgrading works during the decent homes programme. Periodic testing is suspended during the life of the Decent Homes Programme, exceptions are, where tenants have refused decent homes work, a void property arises, or is classified as meeting the 'PRADA' criterion and therefore will not be in receipt of normal decent homes works. In these instances a periodic inspection is undertaken and entered on the 'Promaster' database. A full test and electrical inspection of these properties is completed when any improvement works are scheduled. Any planned programmes of works will also include any necessary electrical upgrades or rewires. In instances where tenants refuse access for necessary electrical works to be carried out, appropriate legal action will be taken. At the end of the programme a full test and inspection programme is reinstated.

6.3.6 Legionella: In recognition of its statutory obligations WH has introduced policies and procedures to enable the prevention, control and management of Legionella. The Company ensures compliance with three key pieces of legislation: - Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) and the Approved Code of Practice and Guidance L8 'The Control of Legionella Bacteria in Water Systems'.

Bi-annual, site-specific detailed risk assessments including schematic drawings are undertaken for the 76 sites identified and managed by Wolverhampton Homes. This informs a proactive inspection programme of control measures which categories the sites into high, medium and low risk. Log books, water sampling/ treatment, specialist technical condition surveys are undertaken by industry-recognised contractors. Review periods and frequency of action are dependent upon the individual sites being monitored and conditions identified.

6.3.7 Fire Safety: In accordance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, assessments to determine the risks involved with exposure to fire have been undertaken in all non-domestic buildings, sheltered accommodation and domestic communal areas managed by Wolverhampton Homes. The associated risks identified have been eliminated or reduced to the minimum/as is reasonably practicable. As a final precaution, the re-decorating of all communal landings and stairwells will be undertaken using a class 'O' product to prevent the surface spread of flame.

In 2008/09, WH completed a comprehensive City-wide 'fire stopping' programme to all 36 blocks of High-Rise flats. Necessary works were carried out to ensure that openings in compartment walls and floors are protected by 'in-tumescent sealing', ensuring that the fire resistance of the structure is neither impaired nor compromised. Any planned future individual refurbishment schemes will include fire stopping as an integral part of their specification/scope of works. A similar review of the communal areas to the 850 Low-Rise blocks located across the city will be completed during 2009/10 and any fire safety measures identified will be undertaken.

6.3.8 Passenger Lift Refurbishment/DDA works: WH manages 67 passenger lifts on behalf of WCC. 6 monthly statutory insurance inspections are undertaken on all passenger lifts. In addition, each lift under goes a predetermined monthly safety check and service in accordance with HSE guidelines.

The Company also operates a citywide maintenance contract, which reviews individual lift availability for tenants and residents through a central electronic monitoring system. Through this technology we are able to accurately determine patterns of lift breakdowns, automatically notify the lift repair contractor (via call centre) as well as proactively identifying component failures. Response times are managed through a range of KPI's:- for 2008 the average monthly lift availability figure was 98.95%.

In addition, there is also a city-wide lift refurbishment programme that incorporates new DDA requirements; this is undertaken on a hierarchy basis. A typical refurbishment scheme comprises; *lift car refurbishment, provision of auto diallers, dual coloured infra-red door safety activators, repositioned tactile car operating panels, rewiring of controls, landing push stations, communal lift door edge details, shaft lighting.*

6.4 Planned Improvement Programme (PIP)

Strategic Objective: To provide a customer focused planned improvement service. Achieving good value for money, by replacing components, in a planned/programmed way, resulting in significant financial savings for the Responsive Repairs Budget.

Priorities to Achieve Objective

- ❖ *To undertake as many repairs as possible using pre-planned methods*
- ❖ *To achieve an 60/40 split between planned and responsive work*
- ❖ *To provide an effective programmed/zoned repairs service that tenants and leaseholders require.*
- ❖ *To carry out works in a programmed way that provides best value and achieves high levels of customer satisfaction.*

The PIP primarily deals with cyclical replacement or large-scale repair of external elements such as chimneys, roofing, fascia's, gutters, doors, canopies, windows, render, painting and fencing. In the region of 7800 properties have already been in receipt of this cyclical work, namely roofline work. In addition, over 2000 properties have benefited from new, high quality rear garden fencing. It is the intention to continue with this work, which will prevent the deterioration in the condition of these elements and sustain the lives of our properties. The exterior of each dwelling will be assessed every 7 years where minor items of repairs such as broken roof tiles or damaged /uneven paving will be renewed or repaired. The 7 year overview ensures that the stock remains wind and watertight and in good overall external structural condition. The planned improvement programme will help to reduce the number of responsive repairs being received and increase tenant satisfaction. It will also assist to proactively manage health and safety issues.

It provides an additional opportunity to update stock condition survey data and to validate the Asset Management Database projections for future major planned renewal/ refurbishment works and contributes to increasing the planned vs. response repairs ratio.

This is seen to be an important programme for future development in terms of funding provision and is seen as a key initiative post the Decent Homes Programme. It is intended to continue with the PIP as a result of the impact it has already had, and will continue to have on the reduction of response repairs, whilst keeping the property in a sustainable condition.

6.5 Void's (capital and revenue)

Strategic Objective: To make void properties available for letting as quickly as possible and repair costs kept to a minimum, whilst ensuring the standard meets the reasonable expectation of any incoming tenant.

Priorities to Achieve Objective

- ❖ *To minimise void turnaround times to achieve a maximum of only 30 days*
- ❖ *To improve procurement for contracted elements of voids work, as to achieve improved efficiencies and value for money*
- ❖ *Re charge repairs to third parties who wilfully neglect or damage the asset*
- ❖ *To only carry out repairs necessary to re-let the property quickly*
- ❖ *Introduction of a 'Lettable Standard' that meets tenants' expectations*
- ❖ *To provide a clean, safe, secure home in reasonable repair for incoming tenants*
- ❖ *To provide DIY/energy efficiency workshops to enable tenants to undertake minor repairs*

The void property service deals with properties once tenants have vacated them. It is a service that individual tenants have little direct involvement with, until they are offered and accept an empty property. However, the service has a significant impact on around 1700 households per annum year due to the number of new voids arising.

Table 'A' - Analysis of Numbers of Voids/Re-lets arising

	2004/05		2005/06		2006/07		2007/08		2008/09	
	Voids	Re-Lets	Voids	Re-Lets	Voids	Re-Lets	Voids	Re-Lets	Voids	Re-Lets
April	160	139	141	118	127	120	166	135	112	112
May	163	181	197	180	174	181	104	124	155	141
June	147	144	107	111	136	122	106	125	152	166
July	161	161	139	130	169	166	153	157	133	144
August	175	171	191	147	139	136	140	115	127	108
September	158	133	131	125	101	128	117	123	154	138
October	141	145	152	164	166	173	154	147	136	132
November	202	251	147	147	128	144	150	123	123	135
December	133	208	146	119	132	148	157	127	145	182
January	156	171	159	121	136	158	105	98	124	102
February	165	197	168	143	119	135	153	109	154	141
March	131	109	149	164	143	124	171	125	198	178
Total	1892	2010	1827	1669	1670	1735	1687	1511	1713	1679

(Data Source – WH Northgate ICT System)

There are currently 6831 (Source: WH Northgate ICT System) applicants on the Housing Register, therefore a speedy and efficient void turnaround service is essential if the waiting list is to be reduced.

Continuous improvement in overall voids performance is a priority for WH. Currently, voids revenue expenditure costs in the region of £5.5m per annum, so this is a major spend area for the Company. A key priority identified within the WH Delivery plan 2009/10 has been a fundamental review of the voids policy, together with the introduction of a lettable standard.

Table 'B' – Analysis of current voids by type

Void Category	Type	No.	Comment
Minor Voids	Routine Repairs	136	
	Sheltered/Very Sheltered Schemes	73	
Major Voids	Adaptations	3	
	Major Repairs	51	
	Future Lettings Issue/Associated disrepair	27	Wodensfield Tower
Development Voids	Redevelopment	3	Haymarket Shopping Parade
	Structural	5	
	Disposal - Demolition	167	To be Taken out of Debit
	Disposal – For Sale	3	
	Long-Term	36	With WCC for decision
Decent Homes	Adaptations	1	Referred to Decent Homes Contractor

(Data Source – WH Northgate ICT System)

Following the commencement of the *Decent Homes Programme* the following the strategy for dealing with all new voids has been introduced using the following scenarios:

Scenario 1: Where void properties currently meet the Decent Homes standard, the current lettable standard is maintained wherever possible, replacing any necessary fixtures and fittings with the Decent Homes specification. Similarly where decent homes works have previously been refused, properties will be included in the programme at the earliest opportunity.

Scenario 2: Where void properties are scheduled for Decent Homes works within the next month and do not currently meet the Decent Homes standard, the property is not let and work is undertaken to bring the property to the Decent Homes standard within agreed timescales.

Scenario 3: Where void properties are scheduled for Decent Homes works within the next 2 - 18 months, properties are let and the prospective tenants advised that only health and safety works will be undertaken during the void process. (This will enable tenants to benefit from enhanced specifications and demonstrate efficiency and value for money, although the standard may fall short of the current lettable standard). This approach will also minimise the criticism of properties being empty longer than necessary and reducing the loss of rent.

Scenario 4: Where void properties are scheduled for Decent Homes work beyond 18 months, properties are let to the current lettable standard using Decent Homes' fixtures and fittings as soon as possible.

DIY/Energy Efficiency Workshops

A series of 'Build Your Skills' workshops will be launched in late 2009/10, to enable tenants wishing to carry out their own DIY, energy efficiency and minor repairs. The content of workshops will be agreed with prospective attendees, through use of Tenants Focus or Special Interest Groups.

'Our Lettable Standard'

The lettable standard introduced in July 2009, was developed and agreed following extensive consultation with tenants and prospective tenants. The lettable standard is included as part of the 'Welcome to your Home' sign up pack issued to new tenants. (Appendix 14 - attached 'Our lettable standard')

6.6 Meeting the Decent Homes Standard

Strategic Objective: To ensure that all the City Council's sustainable housing stock achieves the decent homes standard by 2012.

Priorities to Achieve the Objective

- ❖ To identify non-decent homes and their failures and the year they will become decent or non-decent.
- ❖ Continually review programmes of work to ensure all sustainable homes meet the decent homes standard
- ❖ To ensure all available funding is maximised and that value for money is obtained through procurement and delivery of the programme
- ❖ That type and standard of all works undertaken meet the needs and aspirations of tenants.
- ❖ To consult with tenants to prioritise the programme and nature of works to be undertaken and to sensitively manage their expectations in respect of programme delivery.

Introduction: Wolverhampton Homes, decent homes position at 1st April 2009 shows that 56% of the total housing stock numbers of 23,705 properties fail the Decent Homes Standard. (Appendix 9 demonstrates the stock no's/non-decency position for the period 2005/06 - 2012/13)



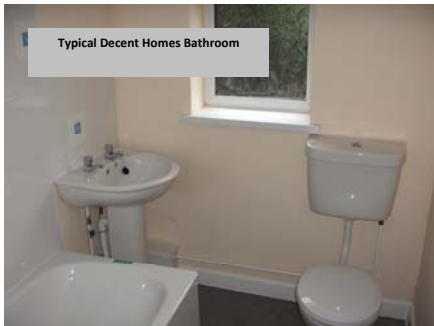
The delivery of the decent homes programme continues to be our main priority for investment until the completion of the programme, by December 2012. The programme is well underway and is taking advantage of the economic downturn through procurement and other opportunities that have arisen.

Prior to achieving 2* rating in November 2007 and gaining access to the Decent Homes funding in January 2008, a small pilot programme was set up with the three partner constructors. The pilot programme ran from June 2007 to December 2007, and approx 300 homes were brought up to the Decent Homes Standard, at a cost of £3m. Achievement of the 2* rating in 2008 gave access to funding of £288.2m over a five year period January 2008 to December 2012. For the entire sustainable housing stock to achieve decency at the end of the 5 year programme an approximate average of 4,500 homes need to be completed each year.

Elemental internal works necessary to meet the decency standard can be summarised as:

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	Total
Kitchens	3483	2456	3312	2407	12019
Bathrooms	4735	3026	4080	2966	14806
Wiring	5013	3204	4320	3140	15677
Boilers	1114	712	960	698	3484
Central Heating	3119	1994	2688	1954	9755
External Doors	2339	1495	2016	1465	7316

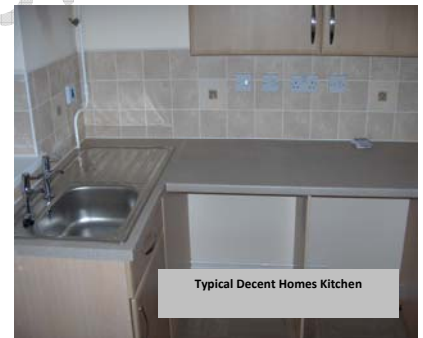
During 2008/09, the first full year of the programme, decent homes works were completed in 4380 homes. Essential health and safety works to three high-rise blocks at Heath Town were also completed. In addition, 60 homes on the Scotlands Estate were refurbished to Decent Homes + as part of a wider regeneration scheme.



In view of the identified 'funding gap' of £47.2m (detailed at Paragraph 5.1) in order to achieve the objective of 100% decency by December 2012, health & safety and internal works have been prioritised over the external works. This is reflected in the budget allocations for 2009/10 and beyond. (Appendix 8: Summary projected investment needs). Post December 2012 the MRA will be targeted at carrying out an external improvement programme.

In March 2009, external consultants were commissioned to undertake, a detailed value for money 'health check' of the programme, they were asked to report on the following areas: -

- ❖ *Demonstration that value for money is being achieved*
- ❖ *Management of Budget*
- ❖ *Costs and Performance*
- ❖ *Strategic Overview of Decent Homes Implementation (Including a review of Building Costs Model)*



In summary the report identified high levels of commitment and dedication from delivery teams and commented on the effectiveness of procurement and in particular 'Value for Money' achieved.

Our 3 Decent Homes partners have also been accredited with 'Considerate Constructor' Status.

6.7 Sustainable Communities

6.7.1 Addressing Worklessness/Training and Employment: In July 2008 the WH Decent Homes Partnership was accredited with National Skills Academy Status. One of the aims of the National Skills Academy is to encourage new people into the industry; we have been working with organisations who work within our priority wards to deliver these activities. Through the academy the partnership has arranged a number of activities such as work experience, site visits, careers events etc. to help address the current worklessness/unemployment issues in the City.

Close links have been established with local schools, training and learning providers, Jobcentre plus, Connexions etc. A number of events such as construction taster days, careers fairs and open days have also been arranged, the aim being to engage the local communities and support them into entering into the construction industry.

Currently the partnership employs 60 apprentices and 8 trainees, a further 9 apprentices/trainees are to be engaged over the coming weeks. We have also created close links with Wolverhampton University offering the students long term industrial placements and work experience placements.

6.7.2 Identified Neighbourhood Schemes: This forms part of the housing investment programme works, following the transfer of the Housing Capital Programme from WCC in April 2009. There is a commitment by WH to ensure these schemes continue until completion. Both the Scotlands and Lunt estates have been identified as estates at risk of failure with some localised sustainability, economic and fuel poverty issues. The amalgamation of these schemes into the DH programme provides better value for money and greater clarity for tenants.



6.7.3 Neighbourhood Focus and Sustainability: Since 1997 a City Wide Environmental/Target Hardening and Streetscaping Improvement Programme (funded through the Housing Capital Programme) has been primarily delivered by the City Council prior to April 2009. Neighbourhoods/Estates, which benefited were identified/prioritised through the City's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy and extensive consultation with relevant stakeholders and local people. The programme, which complemented the Decent Homes Programme, has been well received by tenants, making them feel safer in their homes and proud of the neighbourhood where they live. Addressing off street parking has proved to be popular with our customers.



Following the transfer of responsibility for delivery of the Housing Capital Programme to Wolverhampton Homes in April 2009, an evaluation/review of the Environmental/Target Hardening Programme has been undertaken. The evaluation (together with a mapping exercise showing estates completed) is due for completion in December 2009. This information will assist in assessing future investment needs.

A City Wide league table evidencing areas/estates for future investment will be produced allowing for

future resources to be allocated appropriately. In common with the Neighbourhood Profiling Assessment to assist in the prioritisation estates/neighbourhoods for future investment, a number of key indicators are being used to produce the base line data.



- ❖ *Future Decent Homes Programming.*
- ❖ *Incidence of Crime; Car theft, damage and vandalism, ASB.*
- ❖ *Tenant complaints received; Documented instances from tenants relating to concerns or issues about their environment.*
- ❖ *Public Transport / Emergency Services; access issues, reported accident hot spots, proposed new public transport routes etc.*
- ❖ *Existing Environment Design*
- ❖ *Programming of other planned service improvement by the City Council e.g. Highways and Street lighting.*

As the priority for investment during the life of this strategy is the delivery of the Decent Homes Programme, and because of the need to prioritise all resources towards achieving decency, in consultation with tenants a decision has been made, to defer any future phases of this programme, until either the completion of the Decent Homes Programme or additional resources become available. However, even though the main programme is on hold we will still carry out target hardening works for our vulnerable tenants/victims of crime etc where needed, and endeavour to carry out any remediation works necessary following decent homes works .

6.8 Disabled Adaptations and Lifetime Homes

Strategic Objectives: *To deliver a responsive aids and adaptations service which meets the needs of customers and provides good value for money and to ensure that the quality homes of provided meet the needs of tenants wishing to continue living independently in their own homes.*

Priorities to Achieve Objective:

- ❖ *Improve timescales for disabled adaptation completions*
- ❖ *Ensure the budget is spent effectively*
- ❖ *Work with tenants to ensure that homes provided adequately meet their requirements.*
- ❖ *Monitor customer satisfaction and learn from experience*

6.8.1 Disabled Adaptations: Wolverhampton Homes recognises its' social responsibility to provide adaptations and facilities for people with a disability and its responsibility to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

The profile of our tenants and the demographics of the City generally show that there is significant demand for disabled adaption works. The 2008 Status Survey showed that 7.3 % of tenants responding recorded that there was a wheel chair user within the household, and 51% have a disability or long term limiting illness. Currently 32% of households in Wolverhampton Homes' properties include someone aged 60 or over which will increase as a result of people living longer. Policy and practice on adaptations and the inclusion of lifetime homes within the stock are of critical importance to our services. Improving our service in this respect is a priority for Wolverhampton Homes.

Making best use of existing resources – both adapted and ground floor properties is vital. Fully and substantially adapted properties are allocated via a specialist Housing Adaptations Panel, comprising of colleagues from the City Council's Independent Living service and specialist officers from Wolverhampton Homes. Wolverhampton Homes employs its own Occupational Therapist (OT), who consults with tenants and assesses their specific need. The OT works in partnership with the Independent Living Service to maximise the use of limited resources.

Typically works undertaken ranges from provision of minor items such as hand rails, to level access showers, stair lifts and ground floor extensions.

The past 2/3 years has seen a dramatic increase in the demand for ground floor extensions, to address this issue a joint policy is being developed with the City Council with a view to encouraging more people to move to more suitable accommodation. Any adaptations where a property is substantially under-occupied or the costs of works will exceed £15,000 also need to be approved by the Housing Adaptation Panel prior to works being undertaken.

Increasing demand for adaptations not surprisingly is in excess of the work allowed for by the budget. To ensure completion of disabled works is driven by demand rather than budgets, consideration needs to be given to additional funding being identified for this purpose. Demand for adaptations is particularly high for stair lifts and level access showers.

Currently 45% of the available budget is spent on level access showers although this should be reduced as a result of investment via the Decent Homes Programme. On average Wolverhampton Homes receives 70 applications and referrals per month from the Council giving an average total of 840 per year.

The average cost of works through to completion for each application is approximately £4,250; there is need for additional funding of £150,000 bringing the total annual budget to £1,950,000 (excluding Decent Homes).



- ❖ Housing Capital Programme Expenditure for adaptations 2008/09 = £1,840,000
- ❖ Decent Homes Expenditure for Adaptations for 2008/09 = £ 754,300

Performance: Both the City Council and Wolverhampton Homes are acutely aware of the need to reduce current target times/and improve overall performance levels. However, it must be recognised that waiting times are affected by systems for managing applications, assessments and works to properties, as well as budgetary constraints.

Current targets and performance – Application to completion are:

- ❖ *Ground Floor Extensions:* Target - 550 days. *Actual Performance* - 730 days
- ❖ *Other Major Works:* Target – 365 days. *Actual Performance* - 450 days
- ❖ *Level Access Showers* - 30 days from referral to completion
- ❖ *Actual performance:- 65% completed within timescale*
- ❖ *Minor Works –(Hand/Grab rails etc)* Target - 9 days.
Actual performance:- 100% are completed within timescale

To improve the performance Wolverhampton Homes are:

- ❖ *Reviewing the budget for adaptations for 2009/10 and beyond*
- ❖ *Working with the City Council on ways to improve processes to achieve targets and improve efficiency*
- ❖ *Further developing and implementing policies which maximise accessibility and lifetime homes features in renewals*
- ❖ *Carrying out minor works during response repairs activities such as grab rails etc.*

6.8.2 Lifetime Homes: Wolverhampton Homes has started to make life time homes features standard in improvement, replacement and responsive work to improve the suitability of the stock for a number of tenants. Such features include:

Kitchens

- ❖ *Kitchen adaptations/alterations where feasible to accommodate widening /increasing the kitchen space for food preparation including adjustable kitchens.*
- ❖ *Numbers and location of electrical switches and sockets*
- ❖ *Installation of lever taps to sink units.*
- ❖ *Sure stop – flood defence for tenants who are frail/ vulnerable or live in flatted estates*
- ❖ *Provision of tenants' choice of colours, materials, fixtures and fittings*

Bathrooms

- ❖ *Level access showers,*
- ❖ *Grab rails.*
- ❖ *Baths fitted with handles/Lever taps to baths and wash hand basins.*
- ❖ *Dual flush- water saving WC cisterns*
- ❖ *Fitment of over bath showers during decent homes – water conservation*

External Doors

- ❖ *Secured by Design/Low lying thresholds*

Central Heating Systems

- ❖ *Affordable and efficient heating systems with T R V's/ adapted control knobs*
- ❖ *Accessible and user friendly controls*

General

- ❖ *Hard Wired Smoke Alarms*
- ❖ *External low energy Security Lighting*
- ❖ *Lifts designed for special needs*
- ❖ *All communal area's Disabled Discrimination Act compliant*

Section 7...Procurement & Value for Money

Strategic Objective: To ensure that Wolverhampton Homes and its tenants receive good value for money in all its service areas and contract works

Priorities to Achieve Objective:

- ❖ Carry out best value/value for money reviews
- ❖ Consider all types of contract procurement to achieve best value
- ❖ Ensure the Company's procurement policy and procedures are followed
- ❖ Ensure effective supply chain management
- ❖ Ensure expenditure reflects tenants' priorities and aspirations

7.1 Efficiency and Value for Money

WH is committed to providing excellent services for its customers, recognising the pivotal roles that both efficiency and value for money have to play. 'Value for Money' is about improving our ability to provide better services and increased choices, whilst ensuring that the needs and priorities of our tenants and leaseholders are met.

We have looked carefully at modern methods of procurement supplies and services whether 'In-House' or externally. Decisions now made are on the basis of 'Value for Money' (cost/quality/performance) including efficiencies, effectiveness and benefits.

To achieve our objectives, we have developed a robust 'Value for Money' procurement strategy, designed to provide high quality services and better more sustainable homes for tenants, whilst achieving optimum efficiencies.

WH Procurement Strategy Mission Statement

'Wolverhampton Homes wants to deliver consistent, high standard, cost effective, efficient and sustainable housing services to the residents of our City via a balance of 3rd party and in-house service providers. It wants to take account of the current and future needs of local people, recognising the diversity of its population and its economy.

Procurement is to be based upon and supported by accurate asset management stock investment data. It is to be innovative and challenging that actively includes customer involvement and choice'

7.2 Partnered Contracts

The Company has adopted a system of evaluating tender submissions based on quality and the use of benchmark/target costs. Moving away from awarding traditional contracts based on the lowest price but to modern procurement methods focusing on service delivery, quality and outputs. This method also acts as a catalyst for innovation, ensuring that suppliers and contractors are not stifled by fixed unit rates, allowing the opportunity to continually review and achieve efficiency savings (Value Engineering), sometimes referred to as Open Book Cost Management (OBCM). This is a key element in the development of 'tenant's choice' within the programmed, response repairs and voids maintenance service.

Although the overall repairs and maintenance service continues to be delivered by our 'In House' Local Repairs Teams, following a number of fundamental service reviews we have recently outsourced supply and materials management. Travis Perkins was appointed as our approved partner for this service. During the first year, the partnership achieved £600,000 of efficiency savings.

The Decent Homes programme is partnered with 3 major building constructors, who together with their nominated sub-contractors are responsible for supplying all elements required for the programme. During its first full year 8% efficiency savings were achieved, with a further 12% planned for 2010/11.

7.3 Benchmarking

WH is a member of the Housing Quality Network and National Federation of ALMO's group. Membership of these organisations has enabled us to learn from others in our strategy development and ensures continuous improvement.

Benchmarking is also carried out on a quarterly basis against Housemark data in relation to a whole range of services we provide. Using this method of performance measurement enables us to improve 'Value for Money' and overall service delivery.

Section 8... Tenant Consultation, Participation, Satisfaction

Strategic Objectives: Consulting and meeting tenants when shaping/planning and prioritising programmes of works, to ensure that priority needs and aspirations are met. To ensure that the repairs service provided, achieves the standard that tenants want and deserve.

Priorities to achieve the objectives:

- ❖ To increase methods of consultation/participation to give a wider range of individuals and tenants groups/representatives, the opportunity to take part in the decision making process.
- ❖ To ensure meaningful consultation with tenants and leaseholders to ensure the repairs service provided reflects priority needs and aspirations.
- ❖ To develop a range of methods to measure tenant satisfaction.

8.1 Consultation and Participation

Wolverhampton Homes recognises that customer involvement is central to the successful delivery of its services. We work hard to ensure that tenants are able to 'have their say' in how their homes are managed and the standard to which they are maintained. Everyone throughout the Company is committed to resident involvement, from Board level through to front line staff. A range of consultation mechanisms are used to actively obtain the views/opinions of tenants and leaseholders.

Participation/Consultation Methods used include: Local Area 'Get Togethers', Focus Groups, Special Interest Group (SIG's), Leaseholder Forums, Tenant's newsletters, Estate Walkabouts, Wolverhampton Federation of Tenants Associations (WFTA), Tenants & Residents Associations, All Cultures One Voice (ACOV)



Examples of recent consultation planned/to be undertaken:

- ❖ The Asset Management Strategy
- ❖ The procurement of the decent homes partnering contracts and continue to be involved with Core Group Meetings.
- ❖ Revised time-scales for completion of repairs - from 'reporting to completion'
- ❖ Changes/ improvements in the repairs appointment system including: - 2 hour appointment time slots and Flexible appointment times

8.2 Tenant Satisfaction

8.2.1 Response Repairs/Decent Homes Programme

Following the completion of any response repairs or Decent Homes improvements, tenants are invited to complete a questionnaire asking for comments on the quality of works carried out and satisfaction with the overall service received. The completed questionnaire is returned by the tenant concerned directly to the Customer Satisfaction team.

In relation to both the Response Repairs and Decent Homes Programme service, overall satisfaction is consistently high and always exceeds the 90% performance target. The call centre 'Homes Direct' also carry out telephone surveys in relation to the repairs service. Results again exceed the target of 90% customer satisfaction.

Satisfaction Methods used include: 'Before and After' Satisfaction Surveys, Questionnaires, Telephone Surveys, Mystery Shopping, Complaints and Compliments.

8.2.2 Annual Tenant Satisfaction Survey (STATUS)

In August 2008, Kwest Research was commissioned by to carry out an independent and confidential survey of all Wolverhampton Homes' tenants.

The main aims of the research were:

- ❖ *To obtain information on levels of satisfaction with key areas of service and to identify key areas for review and improvement*
- ❖ *To benchmark performance against that of other housing providers surveyed by Kwest*
- ❖ *To compare the views of groups within the tenant population (e.g. analysis by neighbourhood)*
- ❖ *To gather demographic information about the tenant population*

The survey findings confirm that the services provided by Wolverhampton Homes meet the needs of the majority of tenants.

Key areas of satisfaction were confirmed as: attached Results [Appendix 12: Survey Results and Key Findings](#).

- ❖ *Overall quality of the homes*
- ❖ *Area as a place to live,*
- ❖ *Overall landlord service*
- ❖ *Response repairs service.*

Tenants identified the Repairs and Maintenance Service as the most important service. Although the service was rated above average, an area for improvement identified was, tenants needing to be informed as to likely timescales for repairs. This issue is being addressed as part of the new tenant consultation process being introduced by the Community Participation Team in September/October 2009.

8.2.3 Mystery Shopping

As part of its commitment to continuous improvement in customer service Wolverhampton Homes operates a 'Mystery Shoppers Initiative'. Trained Mystery Shoppers are employed to observe experience and evaluate the customer service process. Acting as customers they undertake a series of exercises which monitor service delivery, reporting back objectively on their experiences. Using the feedback -the Company is identifying both its strengths and weakness in service provision. Recently the focus for the Mystery Shoppers has been the Decent Homes programme, this will continue throughout the remainder of the programme. Regular feedback is a standing agenda item at each meeting of the Decent Homes Core Group.

8.3 Equality & Diversity

WH aspires to ensure that its residents build strong communities, develop shared values and a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood.

- ❖ *We recognise that many groups and individuals may experience disadvantage because of race, religion, ethnic origin, gender, age or disability or sexual orientation and aim to treat all people fairly and with respect.*
- ❖ *We are fully committed to equality of opportunity for all our residents and aim to provide services which are fair and accessible.*
- ❖ *We value and welcome the diversity of the communities we serve.*
- ❖ *We fully support the principle of equality and diversity and firmly oppose all unlawful or unfair discrimination*

The Asset Management approach is being implemented in accordance with Wolverhampton policies and procedures in relation to equality and diversity and also ensures that all partners and other constructors are trained appropriately.

Although this strategy has a low likelihood of having any adverse impact diversity and equality implications, a full Equality Impact Assessment is being carried out to evidence this.

Section 9... Conclusion & Way Forward

Wolverhampton Homes and the City Council recognise that the Asset Management Strategy is a dynamic document, which as part of our commitment to continuous improvement will both evolve and develop over time. Implementation of programmes of work, changing needs, and the realisation of business objectives will require the strategy to be a 'live' and true working document.

It set's out our joint commitment to providing decent and affordable homes to tenants through effective investment and neighbourhood planning.

It will adapt to a number of changing influences, including:

- ❖ Changing need
- ❖ Changes in legislation
- ❖ Changes in aspirations
- ❖ Changes in Wolverhampton Homes or the City Council's Corporate Objectives and;
- ❖ Changes in funding regimes

It provides the necessary and strategic approach to the delivery of key objectives, both from a value for money and efficiency perspective. It will be formally updated, alongside each revision of the Business Plan.

Glossary of Terms

Affordable Housing	New housing provided, (with subsidy), for people who are unable to resolve their housing need in the local housing market because of the relationship between housing costs and incomes. Housing is normally available at less than minimum market price and can include a variety of home ownership options including renting.
Arm's Length Management Organisation (ALMO)	A company limited by guarantee wholly owned by a local authority. It is set up to run the housing services for local authority tenants and leaseholders and to carry out improvements to the stock. Tenants remain as Council tenants.
Audit Commission (Housing Inspectorate)	Responsible for inspecting how local authorities provide landlord services to communities; and the provision of high quality housing services and in conjunction with the Tenant Services Authority, have responsibility for the landlord services provided by ALMO's and other registered social landlords (RSL's).
Asset Management	Effectively balancing assets, resources and needs of tenants, whilst managing the needs of the housing stock
Building Cost Model (BCM)	A CLG model for the submission of information about works and resources required to bring properties up to Decent Homes Standards
Benchmarking	Comparing performance results with peer organisations, based on performance indicators. Allows comparisons nationally, regionally or locally, and on particular areas of the business
Best Value	A process used to review services provided and to improve service, quality and cost effectiveness. Based on the principles of the '4 C's' – Challenge, Compare, Consult and Compete.
Business Plan	A long term plan describing how the ALMO will provide its housing management service, keep the stock in good condition and make an assessment of the likely levels of income and expenditure needed.
Contractors Health & Safety Assessment Scheme (CHAS)	Qualification to show a contractor can adequately manage Health & Safety (www.chas.gov.uk). Linked with Constructionline.
Capital Receipts	Money raised by the sale of Council assets such as Council houses and land.
Communities & Local Government (CLG)	Central Government Department with a range of responsibilities including Housing and Local Government
Constructionline	One-Stop Shop for Public Sector Organisations to gain information about potential contractors (www.constructionline.gov.uk). Linked with CHAS
Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA)	Replaced the CPA in April 2009. External assessment to evidence how public services are performing and through working together improving the quality of life for local communities.
Focus Group	Targeted/Nominated representatives of tenants and residents groups from across the City who may form part of Wolverhampton's Tenant and Leaseholder Consultation Framework.
Homes and Community Agency (HCA)	Set up in 2008 replacing the Housing Corporation and English Partnerships. The HCA have responsibility for the day to day strategic delivery of the Decent Homes programme
Housing Needs Study	An assessment of housing need for the City, including the extent and pattern of need. In addition it examines both aspirations and demands for communities and households City-Wide. It covers all forms of tenure and considers the link between housing costs and income levels.
Housing Register	Computerised Register comprising details of all applicants requiring or needing social housing; including people who are homeless, currently live in social housing and want to transfer, or live in the private sector and wish to apply for Council Housing.
Housing Revenue Account (HRA)	Record of revenue income /expenditure relating to an authority's own housing stock. The HRA reflects the basis on resources used over the lifetime of authorities' housing assets rather than annual spend.

Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	An indicator set by the Government to measure the performance of Local Authorities and Social Landlords on a range of activities
Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE)	Detailed questions that help inspectors inform their inspection judgements. They are used by inspection teams, but they are also published to help audited and inspected bodies with their own assessments.
Local 'Get Togethers'	City- Wide Meetings held 'Face to Face' with tenants and stakeholders to discuss general housing and service delivery issues.
Major Repairs Allowance (MRA)	Part of a local authority's' overall housing resources, (together with other elements of housing subsidy and capital allocations) MRA resources can be used for any capital expenditure on HRA assets, but authorities are expected to use the MRA resources in line with the priorities set out in their HRA business plans and in a way consistent with the purposes for which the MRA is provided
Partnering	A method of clients, contractors and suppliers working together in true partnership. Enabling fair distribution of risk and profit. (Based on Egan Report 1998 - 'Rethinking Construction')
Planned Maintenance	A revolving programme of repair or replacement carried out at regular intervals usually within a defined geographical area.
Procurement	'Procurement' is viewed as covering every aspect of the purchasing process from determining the need for goods and services, to buying, delivering and storing them in order to help achieve an organisations key objectives and outputs.
Special Interest Groups (SIG's)	Interested tenants and residents from across the City brought together to discuss/consult on any suggested changes to policies, practices or procedures.
Registered Social Landlord (RSL)	A generic term covering Housing Associations, housing co-operatives and housing companies registered with the Tenant Services Authority.
Regeneration	The revitalisation of the local economy and environment to improve the overall quality of life.
Responsive Repairs	Day-to-day repairs.
Standard Assessment Procedure Rating (SAP)	A Government prescribed model used to measure thermal/energy efficiency in both residential and commercial buildings. Numerical rating (scale 1 - 100) - higher the number greater the thermal efficiency of a building.
Stakeholder(s)	Someone who derives an interest or benefit from a service.
Status Survey	A satisfaction survey of all the Council tenants that Central Government requires all Councils and Registered Social Landlords to undertake every 2 years.
Stock Condition Survey	Information relating to the condition of all Council owned housing, including flats, maisonettes and houses.
Tender(s)	A process by which Wolverhampton Homes asks companies to make a formal offer to supply defined goods or services.
Tenant Services Authority (TSA)	Set up by the Government in 2008 to monitor all Social Landlords. Some responsibilities from the Housing Corporation and Audit Commission are now under the control of the TSA.
Value For Money (VFM)	A good price for the amount paid, taking into account the benefits derived from the quality of a product, its expected life span and the cost of similar products available on the market.
Void(s)	Empty property/properties
Wolverhampton Strategic Partnership (WSP)	Public, private, voluntary and community sectors working together to provide a single overarching local framework within which action to improve the quality of life for local people is co-ordinated.

Appendices

Appendix Number	Title
1	Sustainability Appraisal and Neighbourhood Profiles
2(a) – 2 (b)	Asset Management Database - Stock Condition Surveys (Promaster)
3(a) – 3 (b)	Energy Efficiency Performance Data; SAP Rating
4	List of properties requiring a different approach (PRADA)
5	2009 Building Cost Model - 5- year summary
6	Life Cycle Costing of Key Building Elements - Renewal Cycles
7	Summary of Historic Investment Programmes Capital Expenditure (Wolverhampton Homes Schemes)
8	Summary of Historic and Projected Investment Needs - Decent Homes Expenditure
9(a) – 9 (c)	Decency Figures - Properties Meeting the Decent Homes Standard
10	Summary of Cost and Quality Assessment for Revenue Expenditure
11(a) – 11(b)	Repairs and Maintenance Customer Satisfaction - August 2008, Kwest Research 18(a) Summary of Survey Results
12	Management and Maintenance Allowance (MMA) Major Repairs Allowance (MRA) - Historical Funding 2005/06 – 2009/10 (5 year period)
13(a) – 13 (c)	Analysis of Historic and Projected Stock Reductions - Right to Buys – Demolitions – Open Market Sales etc
14	'Our Lettable Standard'