

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development

**Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee:
7 September 2011**

Subject: Housing Inspection Improvement Plan Progress Report

1. Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to inform members of the department's progress towards the achievement of the outcomes of the Housing Inspection Improvement Plan which was agreed with the Scottish Housing Regulator in June 2010.

2. Background






- 2.1** The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) carried out an inspection of the Council's housing management service during November/December 2009. Following the inspection, the Regulator published its Re-Inspection report in April 2010 and awarded the Council a 'C' (Fair) grade for its Housing Management Service. This was a positive outcome and reflected the tremendous efforts that have been made by staff at all levels within the organisation and the support given by elected members and tenant representatives.
- 2.2** As a result of the 'C' (Fair) award the Council was required to submit a Housing Inspection Improvement Plan (HIIP) to the Scottish Housing Regulator within 8 weeks of the publication date of the re-inspection report. The HIIP was approved at the Full Council of 27th May 2010 and the SHR advised us in writing on 10th June 2010 of their satisfaction with the HIIP which signalled the conclusion of the Re-Inspection. There is an additional requirement that we submit a progress update to the Scottish Housing Regulator no later than June 2012. This update should include relevant evidence to support the continued improvement the service has made.
- 2.3** The appendix captures the impressive progress achieved by West Dunbartonshire Council's housing service since the Re-Inspection in 2009. The Improvement Plan has also been a catalyst to introduce many new and innovative approaches to delivering services to our tenants and there has already been many improvements delivered.

3. Main Issues


3.1 Progress against actions contained within the Housing Inspection Improvement plan has been good. Implementation of the HIIP has also contributed to improved performance in 2010/11 including:-


- Reduction in the average time to relet not low demand houses from 41 days to 29 days
- Reduction in the % of rent loss due to voids from 3% to 1.7%
- Increase in tenancy sustainment levels from 80% to 87%.

3.2 A full progress report on the implementation of the HIIP is detailed in Appendix 1 of this report. The following table summarises progress against all actions contained within the HIIP as of 30th June 2011.

Action Status (39)		
	28	Completed
	2	Overdue
	1	Check Progress/Milestone missed
	7	In Progress
	1	Cancelled

3.3 Those actions contained within the HIIP which have not met their specific agreed timescales are highlighted in the table below.

Status	Action	Action Due date	Missed Milestone	Due Date	Last comment	Responsible Officer
	Implement our new allocations policy as planned	31 Dec 2011 (Original Due Date 30 April 2011)	Review outcomes to ensure the new allocation policy is effectively addressing housing need	30 April 2011	The new application policy was implemented within schedule. However, the review date has been amended to December 2011 from April 2011 to allow for meaningful engagement with service users	Janice Lockhart

	In partnership with all social landlords operating in West Dunbartonshire we will develop a tenancy sustainment strategy to maximise successful tenancy sustainment in West Dunbartonshire	31 Dec 2011 (original date 31 March 2011)	We will deliver a joint tenancy sustainment strategy for all social landlords in West Dunbartonshire	31 Oct 2010	Date amended as tenancy sustainment strategy will be developed in partnership with all social landlords operating in West Dunbartonshire. A joint working group has been established and tenancy sustainment rates in WDC increased to 87% in 10/11 from 80% the previous year.	No
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3.4 West Dunbartonshire Council's Housing and Community Safety service remains committed to delivering an excellent housing service and the Housing Inspection Improvement Plan forms part of a robust quality framework to ensure a drive for continuous improvement. A wider management review of progress will be undertaken by the directorate management team and key staff in September 2011 to inform further improvement activity.

4. People Implications

4.1 There are no people implications in relation to this report.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 There are no direct financial implications.

6. Risk Analysis

6.1 Failure to implement the Housing Inspection Improvement Plan appropriately would attract an adverse reaction from the Scottish Housing Regulator and may have wider consequences for the Council in the context of Best Value.

7. Equalities Impact, Health & Human Rights Impact Assessment

- 7.1** An equalities impact assessment is not appropriate as this report is a performance review of the Housing, Environmental and Economic Development Housing Inspection Improvement Plan. However, it is recognised that in developing the Plan, individual contributors considered the impact of their action plans on equalities groups.

8. Strategic Assessment

- 8.1** The implementation of the Housing Inspection Improvement Plan is consistent with aims of our Local housing strategy. This approach places regeneration at the heart of local outcomes contributing greatly to social regeneration within the communities of West Dunbartonshire
- 8.2** The Scottish Housing Regulator has at the forefront a commitment that all social housing landlords should ensure that their customers receive good value for rent and other charges they pay, and honest and accurate reporting of how money is spent and the value that it is achieving for them.
- 8.3** The successful implementation of the proposed outcomes in the Housing Inspection Improvement Plan will assist in improving the Councils housing stock and will allow staff to operate in a better designed environment with fit for purpose resources to deliver an excellent service to our customers. Our progress in delivering the outcomes contained within the HIIP will define an approach to meeting customer's expectations and aspirations

9. Conclusions and Recommendations

- 9.1** The Housing Inspection Improvement Plan is achieving satisfactory outcomes and will continue to be monitored to ensure performance is on track. Regular 6 monthly updates will be brought to the Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee for scrutiny.
- 9.2** The Committee is invited to consider and note the progress made in implementing the Housing Inspection Improvement Plan.

Elaine Melrose

Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development



Date: 12 August 2011






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Appendix 1: Housing Inspection Improvement Plan Progress Report



Background Papers: West Dunbartonshire Re-Inspection Report, SHR 4/10



Wards Affected: All




Icon	Name							
	Tenant Satisfaction							
Status	Action	Due Date	Comments	Milestone	Due Date	Note	Completed	Assigned To
	We will collect and report on tenant satisfaction levels on our housing management services bi annually	31 Oct 2010	In addition to this action in response to the Regulator comments we intend to develop a Customer Satisfaction strategy in 2011/12.	Carry out a comprehensive tenant satisfaction survey.	30 Jun 2010	TSS Completed November 2010	Yes	John Kerr
				Examine levels of satisfaction rates among all minority groups.	31 Oct 2010	Action will be incorporated within HCS Equalities Monitoring Framework	Yes	
				Publish results of survey extensively and use results to act as a baseline to gauge future performance in all aspects of the housing service.	31 Oct 2010	To be completed by December 2010 and progress reported to December HPIB	Yes	







Icon	Name							
	C - Is West Dunbartonshire Council managed for improvement?							
Icon	Name							
	Customer Focus and Influence							
Status	Action	Due Date	Comments	Milestone	Due Date	Note	Completed	Assigned To
	We will develop in partnership with stakeholders a series of service standards across all housing service areas to improve service delivery.	1 April 2012	This action has been postponed due to the development of the Scottish Social Housing Charter which will come into effect on 1 April 2012. the Charter will include a series of service standards all landlords must achieve our approach will reflect the charter	Investigate participation in quality assurance schemes e.g.; Customer Service Excellence	31 Dec 2011	Housing and Community to undertake PSIF in 2011	No	John Kerr
				We will develop a series of service standards covering all aspects of the housing services which will lead to improved service delivery	30 Apr 2011	Best Practice examples being gathered but action postponed due to the introduction of Scottish Social Housing Charter	No	
				We will implement a robust performance monitoring and reporting framework for the series of service standards	30 Apr 2011	See above	No	
	We have asked the West Dunbartonshire Tenants & Residents Organisation how it would like to receive financial information during the rent setting consultation.	30 Jun 2010	Developed as part of the consultation and implementation of the tenant communication strategy.	We will incorporate preferences for information and good practice for producing financial information into our tenant communication strategy	30 Jun 2010		Yes	John Kerr
	We will ensure all housing staff are trained on tenant participation issues to raise awareness of TP as part of their PDPs.	31 Dec 2011	All relevant staff have received TP training; this will continue for all new staff members to reflect our ongoing commitment to effective tenant participation.	Complete the programme to ensure that all relevant housing staff receive tenant participation training	31 Dec 2011		No	John Kerr

Icon	Name							
	We will produce a tenant communication strategy which will address information provided to our tenants.	30 Sep 2010	Tenants' Communication Strategy and incorporated service pledges approved by HEED committee meeting of 6th October 2010	Develop a service charter for engagement and consultation	30 Sep 2010	Charter is incorporated in communication strategy	Yes	John Kerr
				We will develop a tenant communication strategy that will address the following issues highlighted by tenants;	30 Jun 2010		Yes	

Icon	Name							
	Efficiency and Value for Money							
Status	Action	Due Date	Comments	Milestone	Due Date	Note	Completed	Assigned To
	We will continue to utilise the Asset Management Planning model to underpin the business plan.	31 Dec 2011	A rigorous option appraisal conducted as part of the exercise to establish the four approved transfer areas. Stock Condition survey complete, awaiting final structural information.	We have produced a new stock transfer strategy including identification of key risks and scenarios.	31 May 2010		Yes	Fin McElhinney
				We will conduct additional scenario planning following consultation with tenants and RSLs on stock transfer packages.	31 Aug 2010		Yes	
				We will update stock condition data and the content of the Asset Management Plan.	30 Nov 2011		No	Jack Stevenson

Icon	Name							
	Equalities and Diversity							
Status	Action	Due Date	Comments	Milestone	Due Date	Note	Completed	Assigned To
	We are currently developing a comprehensive range of systems to ensure that full information on ethnicity is collated for all our services and analysed to inform the needs of BME communities:	30 Sept 2011	Draft Equalities Framework approved to be implemented within the next few months.	Develop robust monitoring and reporting procedures.	30 Sept 2011	New Performance and Continuous Improvement Officer will action this	No	John Kerr
				Undertake an analysis of current information, Identifying gaps in information	31 Oct 2010	Report to be submitted to HCS SMT in November 2010	Yes	

Icon	Name							
	Leadership and Strategic Planning							
Status	Action	Due Date	Comments	Milestone	Due Date	Note	Completed	Assigned To
	We will continue to improve our approach to partnership working through new and existing routes.	31 Aug 2010	Homelessness and Housing Access Forum and Regenerating, Investment and Affordable Housing Group now report directly to Housing Thematic Group.	We will carry out a review of the West Dunbartonshire Community Planning Partnerships Housing Thematic Group to improve partnership working.	31 Aug 2010		Yes	Elaine Melrose
	We will continue to utilise the Asset Management Planning model to underpin the business plan.	30 Nov 2010	A rigorous option appraisal was conducted as part of the exercise to establish the now approved four transfer areas.	We have produced a new stock transfer strategy including identification of key risks and scenarios. We will conduct additional scenario planning following consultation with tenants and RSLs on stock transfer packages.	31 May 2010 31 Aug 2010		Yes Yes	Fin McElhinney

Icon	Name							
	Performance management, planning and reporting							
Status	Action	Due Date	Comments	Milestone	Due Date	Note	Completed	Assigned To
	We will ensure that the roll out of Personal Development Plans (PDPs) is complete	31 May 2010	PDPs rolled out effectively to all housing staff.	Implement plan to deliver PDP framework throughout department	31 May 2010		Yes	Anne Marie Cosh
	We will develop a planned approach to communicating performance information to all members of housing staff	31 Dec 2011	The development of a specific housing strategy and quality will lead on this and it is an area where we will continue to develop.	We will implement a plan for ensuring effective communication on all performance information to staff	31 Dec 2011		No	John Kerr
				We will review present performance communications	31 Aug 2011		Yes	
	We will identify key staff who assist in collating performance information and roll out the use of the covalent performance management system.	31 Mar 2011	Training is ongoing for all relevant members of staff within Housing and Community safety.	Identify relevant staff	31 Jul 2010		Yes	Jan McKinley
				Implement training plan	31 Oct 2010		Yes	
				Prepare training plan	06 Aug 2010		Yes	
	In partnership with key stakeholders we will carry out a review to improve our approach public performance reporting taking into account feedback from tenant assessors and RTOs.	31 Dec 2010	Performance information is now reported regularly to tenants. However this is an area we are committed to develop and actions within the Housing and Community safety operational plan reflect this.	Develop and implement plan which will lead to improved PPR with housing services	31 Dec 2010		Yes	John Kerr
				Undertake an analysis of our current PPR activity	31 Dec 2010		Yes	
	In partnership with key stakeholders including our RTOS we will carry out a review to improve our approach to public performance reporting.	31 Dec 2010	Action will continue to be developed as we ensure PPR leads to service improvements	Develop and implement plan which will lead to improved PPR with housing services	31 Dec 2010		Yes	John Kerr
				Undertake an analysis of our current PPR activity	31 Dec 2010		Yes	

