

PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING RENEWAL

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Cllr G Clements
LEAD OFFICER: Mike Tichford
REPORT AUTHOR: Brian Kirkbride

Summary: To present to members an update on the current Private Sector Grants Programme and Trusteel House Renovation programme options for implementation.

Recommendation: That members agree:

1. To note the progress on the Private Sector Housing Renewal Programme.
2. To note progress of the Trusteel House Renovation programme.
3. To consider options for progressing the Trusteel programme.

Impact on delivering the Corporate Plan: The Private Sector Housing Renewal Programme will directly assist the Council support the Cumbria Housing Strategy specifically in regard to achieving the 70% target of Decent Homes Standard by 2010 through investment in the Private Sector Housing stock.

Impact on other statutory objectives (e.g. crime & disorder, LA21): Through investing in private housing the council is assisting in reaching energy efficiency standards which link directly to LA21 and supports Housing Market provision as part of the strategic role of remodelling the Housing Market in Copeland..

Financial and human resource implications: Within agreed budget Housing Investment Programme.

Project & Risk Management: None

Key Decision Status

- **Financial:** N/A
- **Ward:** N/A

Other Ward Implications: None

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Reports were presented to the Executive on the 4th July and 15th August 2006 which detailed the Housing Investment Programme for 2006/07 in regard to the grants budget and Trusteel allocations. This report presents an update on current expenditure commitments against the Private Sector Housing Grants budget and detail on the progress of the Trusteel Renovation programme.

2. PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING GRANTS

- 2.1 Commitments against the Grants budget in regard to Renovation Grants, Disabled Facilities Grants and Home Improvement Assistance up to 31st October 2006 are detailed in Appendix A. Overall the commitments against the grants budget are on programme although due to the changes in personnel it is envisaged that the programme may slip in the short term.
- 2.2 The current performance of the Grants Programme is as follows:

RENOVATION GRANTS

The Renovation Grants budget is 63% committed against the total allocation, which equates to 42 new grants approved this financial year.

DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS

The Disabled Facilities Grants budget is 55% committed against the total allocation, which equates to 21 new grants approved this financial year.

HOME REPAIRS ASSISTANCE

The Home Repair Assistance budget is 54% committed against the total budget allocation, which equates to 14 new grants approved this financial year.

This does not take into account projects approved in 2005/06 that are already committed into 2006/07.

- 2.3 Staff changes within the Community Renewal Team and the Private Sector Housing Grants unit will have an impact on future allocation and management of Grants, interim management and support structures are being considered to support the services in the short term until staff posts are filled. Members should note that these staff changes may have an impact on the grant allocation and budget spend in the short term and will impact on progress of the Trusteel contract detailed below.

3. TRUSTEEL RENOVATION PROGRAMME

- 3.1 Following appointment of Atkins as consultant for the development of the Trusteel contract a number of local public meetings have been held with the occupiers of the Trusteel properties to keep them informed of the progress of the contract. In addition a number of letters have been sent to occupiers to seek confirmation on how they would wish to fund any costs over and above the base grant of £4,000 (or 50% of eligible costs which ever is the lower). The most recent letter requesting this information was sent on the 15th October 2006 with a deadline of the 15th November 2006.
- 3.2 Following receipt of responses from the occupiers the summary is as follows:
- Residents indicating that they no longer wish to proceed with the offer of assistance (14 properties)
 - Residents indicating that they would like to proceed with the Council contract (30 properties)
 - Residents not responding (29 properties)
 - Residents wishing to receive £4,000 grant but appoint own contractor (10 properties) **This was not an option but has been presented for consideration**

- 3.3 The additional option presented by residents above is due to their belief that they can obtain the works at a lesser contract value than currently estimated by Atkins (Atkins current estimate is based on worst case scenario and is subject to market testing).
- 3.4 The implications of this request is that the cost benefits that the Council expected to provide following letting of a single contract for the whole of the Trusteel properties would not be realised if individual property owners withdrew from taking part in a single contract.
- 3.5 The Council have already committed to a contract with Atkins for undertaking the development of a single contract for the works (phase 1) and to oversee implementation (Phase 2).
- 3.6 A number of residents have expressed a view to continue with the single contract overseen by the Council whilst an additional request has now been presented in regard to occupiers wishing to employ their own contractor for the works as they believe they can obtain better value. On this basis it is recommended that the Executive agree which option to progress, the officer recommendation is to continue with Option 1 the single contract as contractual commitment have already been made with consultants.

OPTIONS

1. To allow interested occupiers to continue with the Single Contract process as previously agreed by Member working Group and Executive (Details of actual costs to the Council can only be determined once the tenders have been received and occupiers entering into legal agreements).
2. For the Member working Group to be re established to assess the additional resident option mentioned in 3.2 alongside previously agreed proposals.

4 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The report presents an update on current Housing Investment Programme allocations and identifies potential implications to the services due to the changing staff within the Community Renewal team, which will have a direct impact upon the Hip spend and commitments in the short term.

List of Appendices

Appendix A Grants budget allocation

List of Background Documents: Executive report 4th July and 15th August

List of Consultees: Cllr M Woodburn, Cllr C Giel, John Hughes, Debbie Cochrane