

HOME GROUP LIMITED

Report to Copeland Borough Council Strategic Housing Panel Thursday, 14 January 2010

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM THE PANEL

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1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide responses to the questions raised at the Strategic Housing Panel meeting held on 11 November 2009.

2.0 PROPERTIES ELIGIBLE FOR SALE

- 2.1 We still have a large number of customers who are eligible for the Right to Buy or who have a Preserved Right to Buy following stock transfer. There is no limit on the number of properties which can be sold through RTB in any year. To date during 2009/10, 7 properties have been sold through Right to Buy in the Copeland area.
- 2.2 Customers living in properties transferred from Copeland Borough Council also have the Right to Acquire. Again, there is no limit on the number of properties that can be sold in any year, however, we have not sold any properties through this route during 2009/10.
- 2.3 We also have approval to sell a further 3 properties through Voluntary Sale and the addresses are detailed below. Approval to sell these properties was granted by Copeland Borough Council in 2006:
- 41 Calder Avenue, Corkickle
 - 10 Milton Road, Orgill
 - 7 Peregrine Close, Moresby Parks
- 2.4 In addition to the three properties detailed above which are currently under offer, we have also sold 4 other properties through voluntary sale during 2009/10. We continuously review the sales activity in the region and amend our approach as and when necessary.
- 2.5 Any future voluntary sale applications will be presented to the Strategic Housing Panel for approval, however, we have not included any in our business plan for 2010/11.

3.0 LONG TERM VOIDS

- 3.1 We currently have 194 long term voids in Copeland which are held for demolition as part of the regeneration programme; are currently being appraised as part of a regeneration programme; or are held for sale as

detailed above. The list of current long term voids is attached for information as **APPENDIX 1**.

- 3.2 A number of these voids will be demolished during this financial year and details of these are included in the Regeneration Programme Progress Report being presented at the meeting.

4.0 151 & 153 MEADOW ROAD, MIREHOUSE

- 4.1 These properties along with 209 Meadow Road and 23 Lorton Close suffered from significant flooding in 2005 and have been void since then.
- 4.2 We commissioned Tweddell & Slater in October 2009 to undertake flood monitoring in the gardens of these vacant properties. The monitoring commenced in December 2009 and will continue until end of February 2010.
- 4.3 We have experienced some significant rainfall during December and as yet there have not been any significant issues of flooding at these properties. The monitoring will continue and if there are no flood risks then we will undertake to repair these properties and bring them back into use as rented accommodation.

5.0 REDEVELOPMENT AT CLEATOR MOOR

- 5.1 The regeneration proposals for Wath Brow, Cleator Moor include the demolition of 48 properties. When the proposals were developed, there was insufficient evidence to support the development of new properties in the area. However, we will reconsider this when Copeland BC have completed their Housing Market Assessment for Cleator Moor and if there is proven demand and this becomes a priority project then we will develop proposals which would be subject to funding availability.

6.0 RENT INCREASE CALCULATIONS

- 6.1 Secure Tenancies have their rents assessed by the Fair Rent Officer every 2 years who notify us of the new rent levels which we then charge our customers. These rent increases are re-assessed on the anniversary of the tenancy start date.
- 6.2 Assured Tenancies are working towards the governments Target Rents and the following formula is used to calculate the annual rent increases which are applied from the 1st Monday in April each year:
- September RPI + 0.5% + up to £2.00

6.3 RPI at September 2009 was -1.4%, therefore, after applying the formula detailed above, the rent increases for April 2010 will be fairly low.

7.0 REGENERATION SITE VISIT

7.1 As members diaries are quite tight, it would be appreciated if you could inform us of the date you wish to view the regeneration areas and we will make the necessary arrangements.

8.0 ACTION

8.1 The Strategic Housing Panel are asked to **NOTE** this report.