

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Councillor Clements
LEAD OFFICER: Fergus Mc Morrow
REPORT AUTHOR: Laurie Priebe

Summary & Recommendation:

The report, including Appendix 1, describes Home Housing Group's progress towards achieving the Decent Homes Standard for 507 dwellings for which they have been granted an extension to 2013. Your officers' comment is that, taken overall, progress is satisfactory. The Panel's views are invited.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 One of our strategic tasks is to work with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) to achieve the Decent Homes Standard (DHS) in the Borough's social rented stock.

2 History

- 2.1 The Home group, including Copeland Homes, is the only RSL in the Borough to be granted an extension to 2013 by the former Housing Corporation to achieve the DHS. The other RSLs are expected to achieve the standard by 2010.
- 2.2 An annual progress report to the local authority is one of the conditions of the extension. The Home Group must also report to the Tenant Services Authority (TSA), the new regulatory body for RSLs. The TSA will want to know whether the Council is satisfied with progress.
- 2.3 Your Strategic Housing Services Manager has received a letter from the Managing Director of Home North West, enclosing a comprehensive progress report. This is attached as Appendix 1.

3 Current Position

- 3.1 The Home Group would like in their progress report to the TSA to confirm the Council's satisfaction with progress made to date.
- 3.2 The appendix describes 507 dwellings in communities and local housing markets dispersed around the Borough-wide settlements of Whitehaven, Egremont, Frizington, Distington, Cleator Moor and Millom.

- 3.3 21% of the properties are sheltered stock of a type and size no longer in demand from recent generations of older people. The remainder are made up of a variety of dwelling types, ages, sizes and methods of construction.
- 3.4 Given the diversity of dwellings and their geographical distribution it would be unrealistic to expect a linear progression of this stock towards the DHS. That could never have happened. We find instead a progress that is uneven to date like a patchwork quilt, reflecting different stages of funding, programming, consultation and action.
- 3.5 The Council's role is not merely that of a critical observer delivering a periodic judgment of Home's efforts. We shall be judged by the Audit Commission on the extent to which we are supporting the achievement of the DHS. Our key role in enabling progress lies in planning, development control and supporting Home's capital funding bids to the Homes & Communities Agency. We and our communities also have a strategic interest in Home's Housing Market Renewal grant allocation in South Whitehaven.
- 3.6 The Tenant Services Authority want RSLs to be accountable to their residents, which is also the best way that RSLs can obtain the support of their customers. The Home Group, the Council and the TSA therefore all want substantial resident consultation and involvement in progression towards the DHS. This must also be monitored and reported.
- 3.7 Your officers' comment is that progress overall is satisfactory because there is no present reason to anticipate failure to reach the DHS by 2013. This view does not preclude members from qualifying their overall assessment by reservations about specific schemes. It would be surprising if concerns were not expressed over 507 dwellings dispersed around 6 settlements extending the length of the Borough. The Panel's views are invited.

4 Financial & Human Resource Implications (including sources of finance)

There are no implications for the Council's own financial resources because the capital funding will be provided from external sources.

5 Impact on the Corporate Plan

It is a corporate objective to work with RSLs to achieve the Decent Homes Standard in the social housing stock in the Borough.

**List of Appendices: Appendix 1 – Home North West Decent Homes
Extension Annual Report**

Is this a key decision: no.

Home North West Decent Homes Extension Annual Report

Progress on Projects in Copeland Borough Council

Home North West has been granted a waiver to the decent homes standard to 2013 in respect of 507 properties in the Copeland Borough Council area. These are made up of the Copeland Homes sheltered stock of 106 properties granted a waiver in 2007 and the regeneration areas consisting of 401 properties granted a waiver in 2008. This waiver is subject to satisfactory progress being made on our regeneration proposals described in our submission to the Housing Corporation in May 2008. As part of those conditions we are required to provide an annual report of progress to the Local Authority. This report has been prepared to satisfy that condition.

In summary the homes in Copeland included in the Decent Homes Waiver are:-

Powbeck Court, Mirehouse, Whitehaven	26
Walkmill Court, Red Lonning, Whitehaven	22
Ehen Court, Egremont	24
Greenvale Court, Frizington	34
Woodhouse, Whitehaven	145
Lapstone House, Millom	10
Barf's Road, Distington	74
Wath Brow, Cleator Moor	112
Grammerscroft, Millom	60
Total	507

In summary the status of these projects is: -

- **Powbeck Court** - Decommissioned and demolished.
- **Walkmill Court** - Construction of 20 new build flats on site to allow clearance of existing sheltered scheme and construction of 11 new build bungalows.
- **Ehen Court** - Decanting of tenants underway to allow decommissioning of scheme.
- **Greenvale Court** - Tenant consultation to commence in 2011.
- **Lapstone House, Millom** - Tenants consulted. Disposal due on completion of Rottington Road bungalows, Millom in November 2009.
- **Woodhouse** - Phase 1 and 2 clearance complete, Phase 3 decanting underway. Detailed planning for Phase 1 new build obtained. HCA bid to be made in July 2009.
- **Barfs Road, Distington** - Revised proposals prepared following consultation. Second stage consultation to be held summer 2009.
- **Wath Brow, Cleator Moor** - Revised proposals prepared following consultation. Second stage consultation to be held summer 2009. Decanting of tenants and acquisition of owner occupiers commenced.
- **Grammerscroft, Millom** - Consultation taken place. Scheme being prepared for planning application in the autumn. Second stage consultation summer 2009. Bid to HCA in autumn 2009.

The section below gives the proposed programme, highlights any changes over the original proposal and gives a more detailed progress report.

Detailed Progress Report

Powbeck Court

	Demolition
2007 Proposal	26
Current Position	26

Total Clearance: 26

Description

This scheme has been decommissioned and demolished. The site is available for redevelopment.

Walkmill Court

	Demolition	New Build
2007 proposal	22	Not specified
Current proposal	25	31

Activity	Start Date	End Date
Consultation	March 08	Dec 08
Decant	Nov 10	Dec 10
Demolition	Dec 09	Jan 10
New Build Phase 1	Dec 08	Jan 10
New Build Phase 2	Jan 10	Nov 11

Total Clearance: 25
Vacant: 3

Description

The difference between the waiver demolition numbers and the current proposal is that the submission omitted two bedsits and the wardens flat.

Walkmill Court is an obsolete bed sit sheltered housing scheme. Following detailed tenant and stakeholder consultation the scheme is to be replaced with 20 two bed flats for the over 55s with provision for extra care and 11 two bed bungalows. The 20 flats are on site on adjacent land with a completion date of January 2010. This will allow the tenants to be moved from the existing scheme and for this to be cleared to provide the site for the 11

bungalows, the whole scheme to be complete by November 2011 although there will be no properties remaining which don't meet the decent homes standard by May 2010.

Ehen Court, Cleator Moor

	Demolition	New Build
2007 Proposal	24	None specified
Current Proposal	25	Redevelopment option being considered

Activity	Start Date	End Date
Consultation	Aug 08	Dec 08
Decant	Jan 09	Feb 10
Demolition	Mar 10	Jun 10

Total Clearance: 25
Currently vacant: 12

Description

The current demolition proposal differs from the original proposal because the warden's accommodation was omitted in the submission.

Ehen Court is an obsolete sheltered scheme in Egremont. Consultation has taken place with residents and members of Copeland Borough Council. The decision was taken to decommission the scheme. We are managing the relocation of tenants sensitively and have already found homes for some of the tenants. We are anticipating that if the current progress is maintained we will be able to clear the building according to the timetable and will have no properties which fail to meet the decent homes standard by 2010. We are currently looking at options to develop the resulting site but clearance of the scheme is not dependent on this.

Greenvale Court, Frizington

	Demolition
2007 Proposal	34
Current Position	35

Activity	Start Date	End Date
Consultation	Apr 11	May 11
Decant	May 11	May 12
Demolition	Apr 13	Jun 13

Total Clearance: 35
Number vacant: 11

Description

The current demolition proposal differs from the original proposal because the warden's accommodation was omitted in the submission.

Following consultation with residents and local stakeholders it was decided to hold in abeyance the decommissioning of this scheme. This is also sensible in that we are also decommissioning Ehen Court also neighbouring the Whitehaven area. The plans are still to decommission the scheme. In view of the time gap we will undertake further detailed consultation in 2011.

Lapstone House

	Disposal
2007 Proposal	10
Current Position	10

Activity	Start Date	End Date
Consultation	Mar 09	Apr 09
Decant	Nov 09	Nov 09
Disposal	Nov 09	Nov 09

Total disposal: 10

Currently vacant: 2

Description

Lapstone House consists of 10 bedsits within the same building as a Cumbria County council residential care home. Our tenants have been consulted and will be offered a new bungalow at our Rottington Road development also in Millom which is due to complete in November. The site on which these are situated is being considered for the provision of the Millom Community Ventures new hospital and community facilities and we will dispose of the building to facilitate that project. No non decent properties will remain by the end of 2009.

Woodhouse

	Demolition	Buy back	Refurbishment	Decent Homes	New build rent	New build sale	Total in extension
May 08 Proposal							145
Current proposal	65	15	120		41	20	145

Activity	Start Date	End Date
Decant Phase 3	Apr 09	Sept 10
Demolition Phase 3	Oct 10	Mar 11
Buy Back Phase 3	Apr 09	Mar 10
Refurbishment	Mar 10	Mar 12
New Build 1	Oct 09	Oct 10
New Build 2 and 3	Mar 11	Mar 12
Demolition 2	Oct 10	Mar 11
Decent Homes	Apr 2009	Mar 2011

Total clearance: 62
Number vacant: 31

Description

The decent homes extension submission did not specify the treatment of each property in the extension but rather identified those properties which would not be decent by 2010. The number of properties to be demolished or refurbished is currently 185. However, 29 of these are already vacated and a further 21 will be vacated before the end of March 2010 so the extension is still required for only 145. This project is progressing well. The first two phases of demolition are complete. We have detailed planning consent for the first phase of 37 new build homes. We are preparing a bid to HCA with a view to starting on site in the summer of 2009. The main activity this year is decanting tenants and acquiring three owner occupied properties to assemble the properties for the next phase of demolition. We have taken up the available Housing Market Renewal grant for 2008/2009 and have plans in place to take up our confirmed allocation for 2009/10. The project is progressing according to programme.

Barfs Road, Distington

	Demolition	Buy back	Refurbishment	Decent Homes	New build rent	New build sale	Total in extension
May 08 Proposal	29	1	45				74
Current proposal	13	1	37	24			74

Activity	Start Date	End Date
Consultation	Jan 09	Apr 09
Decant Phase 1	May 09	Feb 11
Demolition Phase 1	Mar 10	Jun 10
Demolition Phase 2	Mar 11	Jun 11
Decent Homes	Apr 2011	2013
Refurbishment	Mar 2010	Jun 2011

Total clearance: 13
Number vacant: 9

Description

In the consultation with residents and Copeland Borough Council concerns were expressed about the impact on the community of the scale of demolition which was proposed. We have subsequently modified our proposals to reduce the number of demolitions and increase the number of homes which will receive decent homes investment. There is also a small reduction in the number of homes which will receive complete refurbishment based on their existing condition. We are due to consult on our revised proposals and will then proceed with decanting and acquisitions.

Wath Brow, Cleator Moor

	Demolition	Buy back	Refurbishment	Decent Homes	New build rent	New build sale	Total in extension
May 08 Proposal	64	4	48		8		112
Current proposal	46	4	7	59	0		112

Activity	Start Date	End Date
Consultation	Oct 08	Feb 09
Decant	Oct 08	Oct 10
Buy Back	Oct 08	Oct 09
Demolition	Oct 10	Dec 10
Decent Homes	Apr 2011	Mar 2013
Refurbishment	Oct 10	Feb 11

Total clearance: 46
Number vacant: 29

Description

The proposal is still to do partial clearance and partial investment. There was not the support from either Copeland Borough Council or the community for the level of demolitions originally proposed. Therefore the proposed number of demolitions has been reduced. It is still the case that this property type does not have a long term future. Therefore more properties will be brought up to decent homes standard in the short term with proposals for this area being revisited in three to five years time. Reflecting the current demand there are no proposals to build new homes but this will be kept under review.

Grammerscroft, Millom

	Demolition	Buy back	Refurbishment	Decent Homes	New build rent	New build sale	Total in extension
May 08 Proposal	36			24	40		60
Current proposal	36		24		43		60

Activity	Start Date	End Date
Consultation	Feb 09	Sep 09
Decant	June 09	Apr 12
Demolition Phase 1	Jul 10	Sep 10
Demolition Phase 2	May 12	Aug 12
New Build Phase 1	Oct 10	Oct 11
New Build Phase 2	Sep 12	Feb 13
Refurbishment	Sep 09	Mar 11

Total clearance: 36
Number vacant: 9

Description

The Grammerscroft estate properties are in very poor condition. At the consultation there was widespread support for demolition and new build replacement. The amount of demolition is constrained by the number of right to buy properties and the Home properties adjacent to owner-occupiers will be completely refurbished. We are working on the

detailed planning application and will make a pipeline bid to the HCA in the coming months.

Conclusion

We trust that this report demonstrates satisfactory progress on our regeneration strategies for the homes which have received the decent homes waiver in Copeland.

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