

DRAFT 2 (JANUARY 2005)

STEVENAGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

INTERIM 2 YEAR BUSINESS PLAN

2004 – 2006

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Foreword by Councillor Ann Webb

This interim 2 year business plan has been produced to ensure that the programmes we are currently putting in place address the strategic housing needs of the people of the town. The need for an interim business plan has arisen because of our determination to ensure that the information upon which we base our decisions on the future management of the housing stock is as robust and up to date as possible.

We have commissioned a stock condition survey which will report in April 2005 at which time we will update the business plan to reflect the outcome of that report and inform the options appraisal process.

The Council is proud of the part it has played over the last 50 years in developing the town by providing affordable homes and employment opportunities in a secure and pleasant environment for the benefit of all our community. With this in mind this Business Plan sets out the strategic framework within which the Council has to provide its housing service and make decisions about its future. It identifies the many competing demands upon the Council and the resources it has available for housing over the two years to deal with them. It sets clear 2 year targets for achieving these priorities which have been agreed with our tenants.

I am certain that with the strong links we have with our tenants and communities that together we will make the right decisions for the future management and maintenance of the Councils housing stock for the benefit of our current residents and the generations to come.

Councillor Ann Webb
Executive Councillor Housing

Executive Summary

Stevenage is Britain's first post-war new town located in the largely rural area of Northern Hertfordshire. It covers an area of six square miles of which 85% has been developed and about 8% of the town remains metropolitan green belt. It has a population of 80,000 of which 5.4% are from black and minority ethnic groups. This 2 year Business Plan has been produced to ensure that the Council's key objectives are met whilst the stock condition survey is completed, when an updated Business Plan will be formulated. The stock condition survey will also enable the Council to complete the Options Appraisal on the future management of its housing stock.

The Business Plan sets out the key aims and objectives for the Council's housing service to meet the strategic objectives set in the Council's Community Plan formulated by the Stevenage Partnership, as well as the National and Regional agendas.

The Council through the Stevenage Partnership has identified the following strategic priority;

To create a vibrant town centre and thriving neighbourhoods and aims to achieve this by creating:

- A prosperous town,
- A learning town that invests in young people
- A healthy and caring town
- A safe town
- A creative town
- A town with strong communities to live in, with affordable housing, sustainable environment and excellent transport.

To address these Corporate priorities the Council has set itself six key housing priorities:

- Priority 1 Providing affordable homes
- Priority 2 Tackling Homelessness
- Priority 3 Supporting Independence: Special Needs
- Priority 4 Delivering quality and choice
- Priority 5 Enabling decent homes
- Priority 6 Sustainable communities

The analysis of the supply and demand highlights that affordability is a significant factor in the local housing market not only for rented properties but also first time buyers.

At the end of March 2004 there were 2,220 households on the Council's waiting list with a further 262 homeless households in temporary accommodation awaiting rehousing. There is also a demand for accommodation from key workers, particularly those in the public sector. As the Council vacancies provide the major supply of accommodation the demand for Council housing remains high in all areas and all types of properties. There are a few difficult to let properties on the Stoneyhall estate and some sheltered bedsits. A small scale voluntary transfer to a local RSL has been voted for by the local tenants of the Stoneyhall estate and a Best Value Review of elderly services is looking at options to address the sheltered scheme bed-sitters.

At the end of March 2004 the Council's stock reduced to 8726 representing about 32% of the town's stock with around 21,700 properties in owner occupation. Right to Buy sales have been the main reason for this with sales running at around 250 a year.

A stock condition survey was undertaken during 2003-4 . in line with best practice the Council is having the results independently validated. The Business Plan also sets out the staffing, IT and resources the Council is making available to manipulate the stock condition data and to keep it updated to inform the decent homes programmes and 30 year maintenance strategy.

The Council has met its first two years targets for decent homes and is moving to an incremental approach for future programmes to meet the wishes of its tenants. The 2005/6 programme will be based on the current data held, the experience of the first two years programmes and the local knowledge of the stock. Once the stock condition data has been validated these programmes will be refined to address the outcome of the stock condition survey.

The Business Plan sets out the Capital resources available to the Council for all its services over the 2 years it covers. The Council has prioritised its allocation of resources to meet the priorities set out in its Community Plan This allocation is based upon reinvesting receipts from RTB sales back into the housing stock.

The Business Plan sets out the identified funding streams for both Capital and Revenue to underpin the aims and objectives the Council has set itself. It also recognises that in the medium and longer term the situation is uncertain and that this needs to be addressed in the revised Business Plan once the Stock Condition Survey has been verified and the Options Appraisal completed.

The Business Plan sets out any significant variations against budget and the reasons for these. It also highlights the adverse effect that the Governments proposals for Rent Restructuring could have on the Housing Revenue Account and also highlighting the adverse effect that the reductions in supporting people grant has on the Housing Revenue Account.

Following the restructuring of its housing services the Council has seen a general improvement in its service delivery. In particular it has seen improvements in rent collection, re-letting of voids and carrying out of repairs. The Council is also carrying out a Best Value Review of its Elderly Services which will determine the shape of the sheltered housing services for the future.

The Council in consultation with its tenants and partners have set its housing priorities as:

Community Strategy Priority:

- First class customer services and good quality from the Council &
- A fair and inclusive community.
-

Priority 1 Housing Service targets to address these priorities:

- Carry out options appraisal
- Maximise the delivery of affordable homes
- Improve the supply of vacant council homes by improving turnaround times
- Carry out Best Value Review of elderly services to tackle hard to let dwellings in sheltered schemes
- To extend the range of homes available to those in housing need
- To increase the rate of delivery of affordable homes.

- First Class customer Service and good quality from the Council &
- A Fair and inclusive Community

Priority 2 Housing Services Strategic Targets to address this priority

To:

- Reduce levels of homelessness by better prevention and improved access
- Provide an effective and efficient homelessness service
- Carry out the options appraisal
- Increase the supply of quality temporary accommodation

Community Strategy Priority:

- First Class customer Service and good quality from the Council
- A Fair and inclusive Community

Priority 3 Housing Services Strategic Targets to address this priority:

- Ensure there is sufficient supported housing to meet the needs of all main groups;
- Ensure all supported housing is *Supporting People* compliant;
- Extend joint working protocols to all main groups
- To carry out the options appraisal

Community Strategy Priority:

- First Class customer Service and good quality from the Council &
- A Fair and inclusive Community

Priority 4 Housing Services Strategic Targets to address this priority:

- To: Maximise choice for all applicants on the Housing and Transfer Register;
- Ensure high standards of housing management.
- To carry out the options appraisal
- To consider the voluntary transfer of Stonyhall estate to a RSL for refurbishment or redevelopment

To meet the Community Plan Priorities:

- First class customer services and good quality from the council
- Regeneration of Stevenage
-

Priority 5 Housing Services Strategic Targets to address this priority:

- Complete The Options Appraisal by 2005
- Ensure that all local social housing meets the *Decent Homes* standard by 2010 and that during 2005/6 a programme has been devised and implemented to achieve full compliance by 2010

To meet the Community Plan Priorities:

- A fair and inclusive community
- Regeneration of Stevenage

Priority 6 Housing Services Strategic Targets to address this priority:

- Ensure the housing needs and aspirations of the black and ethnic minority community are met;
- Work to enable housing services to contribute to a Safer Stevenage;
- Enable neighbourhood regeneration and health improvement to take place.

The Business Plan sets out the Action Plan to achieve these priorities and how the Council and its tenants will monitor and review its progress. There are also a series of appendices which give the supporting information to underpin the Business Plan. Appendix 2 gives contact details for anybody wishing to obtain additional information on any aspect of the Business Plan. Appendix 3 gives a glossary of technical terms for people unfamiliar with the terms used in this document.

1 Business Plan Strategic Context

1.1 Stevenage

Stevenage is Britain's first post-war new town located in the largely rural area of Northern Hertfordshire. It covers an area of six square miles of which 85% has been developed and about 8% of the town remains metropolitan green belt. The town has good road and rail links with London, the South East, the Midlands and the North.

It has a population of 80,000 of which 5.4% are from black and minority ethnic (BME) groups which corresponds closely to the regional and national average, and is a 50% increase on the 1991 census.

Levels of social disadvantage are higher in Stevenage than in the country as a whole and the unemployment rate is about 3%. This is lower than the national average but higher than the rest of Hertfordshire.

The Stevenage population of about 80,000 represents a growth of 12.3% in the last decade and compares with Hertfordshire's average growth of 4.5%. Source ; Herts Observatory)

The town has a relatively young population, which distinguishes it from many of its neighbours in Hertfordshire which have more elderly populations. The town has a density of 30.7 persons per hectare. This is higher than the national average for England and Wales and the fifth highest in the region.

1.2 The National Strategic Agenda

In February 2002 The Deputy Prime Minister launched the Community Plan, Sustainable Communities : Building for the future. Resulting from this Stevenage along with neighbouring North Herts were designated part of the London-Stanstead-Cambridge growth area where new housing would be concentrated.

1.3 Regional Issues : The East of England

The East of England Regional Housing Forum published its *Regional Housing Strategy in 2003* to 'integrate with the Sustainable Communities Plan'. Its vision, 'the sustainability of our communities and the environment they live in', is to be achieved by:

- making sure that everyone can live in a decent home at an affordable price;
- contributing effectively to social inclusion;
- enabling housing to contribute fully to good health and promote health equality;
- ensuring housing investment contributes to a sustainable environment;
- contributing to sustainability in the environment

Because the key housing issues in Stevenage reflect many of those found in the regional agenda, delivering the council's own priorities will contribute to wider regional goals.

1.4 The Sub-Regional Agenda

The East of England Regional Strategy supports the development of a sub-regional agenda which the Council supports and is actively involved in a movement towards sub-regional initiatives . (See the Housing Strategy report available from for more details)

The council is working in partnership with North Herts. District Council to provide affordable homes in North-East Stevenage.

1.5 Local Priorities

1.5.1 Stevenage Community Strategy

Since the establishment of the Local Strategic Partnership in January 2003 as the "Stevenage Partnership", the council has been working with a range of agencies and organisations to develop the Partnership's first Community Strategy (2003-2015). The Partnership includes representatives from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors.

The Community Strategy aims to create **:a vibrant town centre and thriving neighbourhoods.**

To achieve this, the council aims to create:

- a prosperous town;
- a learning town that invests in young people;
- a healthy and caring town;
- a safe town;
- a creative town;
- a town with strong communities and with opportunities for all;
- a town that's good to live in, with affordable housing, sustainable environment and excellent transport.

Partnership working

The Council works with a number of partner organisations ranging from large statutory bodies such as the County Council to small specialist voluntary bodies. These arrangements engender a process of continual consultation. A full list of partnerships is at Appendix 9

A full version of the Community Strategy and Action Plans can be seen on the web site at www.stevenage.gov.uk

1.5.2 Changing Gear

The Community Strategy is the strategic vision for Stevenage. The Council's Business Strategy, called "Changing Gear", complements this, but focuses on the specific priorities and ambitions of the Council.

The Council refreshes its ambitions annually against performance, feedback and the delivery of its Community Strategy and has set its ambitions for 2004/5, the second year of the programme as follows:

- Community leadership
- Regeneration of Stevenage
- First class customer services and good quality from the council; and
- A fair and inclusive community

The Council recognises the importance of housing in underpinning these ambitions and in fulfilling its vision for the town and through its housing strategy sets out how it aims to achieve this..

1.5.3 The Housing Strategy

The Housing Strategy set out six key priorities for improving housing in the town which underpin the Council's Corporate Ambitions.

The six key areas are

- Priority 1 Providing Affordable Homes
- Priority 2 Tackling Homelessness
- Priority 3 Supporting Independence; Special Needs
- Priority 4 Delivering Quality and Choice
- Priority 5 Enabling Decent Homes
- Priority 6 Sustainable Communities

The Council's strategic approach recognises that these issues cross boundaries of tenure and may have an impact on all local households. Having 8,800 properties in management, the Council's performance as a landlord will be felt far more widely than any other single influence in the town. Therefore the Council's role is given prominence within the strategy, but issues related to it are considered alongside those relating to private sector and RSL landlords. The next chapter of the business plan deals in more depth with the contribution the housing services and the housing stock can make to achieving those strategic objectives.

1.6 Consultation

1.6.1 Tenants and Leaseholders

It is the Council's aim to stimulate local democracy by encouraging participation in the development of housing policies and strategies and by expanding the Council's community leadership role to meet the social, economic and housing needs of Stevenage.

To achieve this aim

- the views of tenants and leaseholders are considered integral to the design and development of a quality housing service responsive to the needs of its customers;
- the Council is committed to developing and strengthening tenant participation through the Tenants Compact
- a range of consultation methods are used to increase the feedback on the housing service and inform the decision making process

1.6.2 "Have a Say Day"

The Council hosts an annual housing conference called "Have a Say Day" to which we invite all tenants and leaseholders as well as all key partners from the statutory and voluntary sectors. "Have a Say Day" is a listening exercise in which diverse groups of stakeholders are invited to contribute to the debate on local housing issues. This annual event has now become central to the development of the Housing Strategy.

In our last strategy anti-social behaviour was ranked as the main area of concern with homelessness second and special needs issues third.

In 2004 providing new affordable housing was the highest priority with the housing needs of younger people also featuring as a strong concern. Anti-social behaviour, homelessness and the environment (more use of brownfield sites) all featured alongside the need to provide better housing standards for disabled people.

The Action Plan set out in Appendix 6 reflects these findings with all of these issues prioritised accordingly. However, it is noteworthy that the need to maintain the stock of existing homes, which is our highest priority measured by level of resourcing, was not raised as a concern.

Consulting with our tenants and leaseholders is integral to what we do. The Council is committed to developing and strengthening tenant participation through the Tenant Compact, a formal agreement between the Council and tenants.

There are 7 Tenant representative groups covering most areas of the town, a leaseholders group representing the 1208 leaseholders (as at 1 April 2004) of the Council, and a forum specifically looking at repairs issues.

In 2001 the Council introduced a housing newsletter *Housing for You* which is published 3 times a year. A newsletter for housing applicants, *Rehousing News* is published twice a year.

FOSTA, The Federation of Stevenage Tenants Associations is an umbrella group representing the individual groups. FOSTA plays a significant role in policy development and is represented on both the Council Housing and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel, as well as having a key role on the Options Appraisal Working Party.

1.7 The Options Appraisal: Decent Homes

The government requires the council to undertake an *Options Appraisal* to make sure that the homes it owns and manages will meet the *Decent Homes Standard* (DHS) by 2010. The *Decent Homes* standard requires that properties are in a reasonable state of repair, have reasonably modern facilities and provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.

The key purpose of the Appraisal is to consider the best ways to improve the stock and the quality of services to tenants and to consider the broader housing context. In particular there will be a focus on:

- The delivery of the *DHS* target
- The aspirations of tenants and leaseholders
- The legal obligations of the Council (e.g. to the homeless)
- The wider housing market and the need for affordable homes.
- The need for neighbourhood renewal and regeneration

To achieve this the Council has:

- Set out a clear timetable with the Government Office (Eastern Region) to ensure completion of the process by July 2005.
- Set aside a budget of £100 000 to complete the process
- Commissioned a Stock Condition Survey which is currently being finalised and validated (as at August 2004) and Housing Needs Survey to inform decisions in relation to Decent Homes and the future need for affordable housing
- Appointed a lead consultant to oversee the project, an Independent Tenants Advisor and a Communications consultant.
- Set up a joint Councillor/Tenant Strategy Group which also includes staff and leaseholder representatives to oversee the project.

The options being considered are:

- **Stock Retention** where the council continues to manage its stock directly;
- bringing in the private sector to manage the stock through the government's **Private Finance Initiative**;
- setting up an **Arms Length Management Company (ALMO)**, which is separate from the council; under this arrangement a board made up of tenants, councillors and volunteers will oversee the direction and performance of the company;
- transferring the stock to a **Registered Social Landlord** who will then manage it; this proposal will only go forward following a ballot of tenants.

As the council currently holds a large but diminishing stock of 8,800 homes, any change to stock management arrangements will have a significant impact on the Housing Strategy and Business Plan. It also means that a large number of people would be affected. There could also be significant financial implications as all of the above options, bar stock retention could open up new investment opportunities, and provide additional money for stock investment and/or new affordable homes.

It is a government requirement of the Options Appraisal that the council retains an open mind on all its options until the end of the process. Therefore, whilst the Business Plan identifies the possible impact of the Options Appraisal across all of the Councils priorities, at this stage no decision has been reached.

2. Housing Services' Contribution to the Community Plan

The four Community Plan key objectives are supported by the housing strategy as set out in section 1.5.3 above. They are looked at in greater detail in this section, reviewing the current position and our action plans to address those priorities for the future.

2.1 Housing Strategy Priority 1: Providing Affordable Homes

Strategic Aim: *To enable the provision of affordable housing that meets the need of the local community.*

2.1.1 The Local Housing Market : Current Position and Context

The Housing Needs Survey which reported in the Spring of 2004 indicates that the demand for affordable housing far outstrips supply. Moreover, in the period to 2011 the survey suggests that there will be an annual shortfall of 536 affordable units each year. This is a 5-fold increase since the last Housing Needs Survey

In 2003 the average cost of a dwelling in Stevenage was £149,070. This compares with the County average of £233,563 (Source: Land Registry)

Average incomes in Stevenage in 2003 were £29,188 (male) and £19,000 (female). However, the Housing Needs Survey indicated that households in housing need were much more likely to have an income significantly below this, and that their ability to access the housing market was accordingly limited:

There is therefore clear evidence that the increase in need for affordable homes is linked to an increase in the cost of buying a home locally, because incomes have not kept pace with prices. (See housing strategy available from for more detailed information)

In the 1980's 70% of the town's households were tenants of the local authority. The remaining 30% were mainly owner occupiers. This situation has all but reversed and the town now has about 68% owner occupied and 32% living in social housing.

2.1.2 Affordable Homes for Rent

This trend has increased the demand for homes to rent in the town. There are currently 2,220 households on the Council's waiting lists with a further 262 homeless households in temporary accommodation awaiting rehousing. The survey indicates around 3,000 existing households and 3,300 new households will be forming or moving in the next 5 years

90% of new forming households are unable to afford to buy locally, and 81% of the group have an income below £20,000. The survey suggests that these groups are not at the margin of owner occupation and require rented housing.

2.1.3 The Key Workers

The survey defined key workers as those working in the public sector including Health Services, Education, other Local Authority Services, Police and Fire services within the Borough. Based upon the income thresholds to access the market set out above, the proportion who could not afford to owner occupy in Stevenage were:

- 65% of Local Authority staff
- 59% of Health staff
- 54% of Police
- 48% of Fire staff
- 40% of education staff

The most popular tenure was council rent (53%) with owner occupation second (31%) There is some evidence of key workers leaving the Borough to set up home elsewhere, and of these around 1/3rd cited affordability as the main reason.

This suggests very strong and continuing demand for affordable homes for rent, and it is extremely unlikely that the Council will be able to meet this demand. Indeed as the summary below indicates the net shortfall in any one year could actually exceed the entire supply for that year.

2.1.4 Summary of need

Total Annual Need	1065	
Existing stock: projected re-lets	529	
Net New Units	536	
(Of Which: New rental		348 65%
Shared Ownership/Equity		188 35%
Total	1065	100%

2.1.5 Type of accommodation required

The breakdown of dwelling size required is set out below, and compares the findings with those of the previous housing needs survey.

Property Size	2003 Survey Findings	1997 Survey Findings
1 -bed	20%	20%
2-bed	28%	25%
3-bed	36%	45%
4-bed+	16%	10%

This suggests a small change shift in the balance of household size of those in housing need, but not a significant one.

2.1.6 Priorities For Improvement

The Options Appraisal and Providing Affordable Homes

Making sure that its housing stock meets the *Decent Homes* standard by the government's target date of 2010 is currently a high priority for the council, and it has committed a very significant proportion of capital investment for this purpose. This will have an impact on the resources available for developing additional social-rented housing.

However in response to feedback from our consultation exercises the Council has for the first time made provision of £250,000 in the Capital programme for affordable housing.

The Options Appraisal will consider the stock-holding arrangements for the council's housing. Changes to the present arrangement could draw down additional resources for stock maintenance by releasing additional capital resources. This is because the borrowing rules under such arrangements as ALMO and LSVT are much more flexible than for Councils retaining their stock.

This would then also mean that the current stream of capital accrued from right to buy sales could then be re-invested in programmes other than stock maintenance

Change to the stock arrangements therefore, could increase the resources available to invest in other housing priorities including the development of new homes. The Options Appraisal will consider the future funding options for the development of affordable homes in conjunction with tenants and other stakeholders.

Current Proposals

- carrying out the Options Appraisal;
- pursuing redevelopment of the town centre;
- adopting the District Plan;
- reviewing garage/small land sites for possible development;
- planning regeneration of the neighbourhood centres;
- funding affordable housing development through its own capital receipts;
- pursuing cash-incentive and under-occupation schemes.

2.1.7 Action Plan

Community Strategy Priority:

- **First Class customer Service and good quality from the Council &**
- **A Fair and inclusive Community**

Housing Services targets to address these priorities;

- **Carry out options appraisal**
- **Maximise the delivery of affordable homes**
- **Improve supply of vacant council housing by improving turnaround times**

- Carry out Best Value Review of elderly services to tackle hard to let dwellings in sheltered schemes.
- To extend the range of homes available to those in housing need
- To increase the rate of delivery of affordable homes

(These actions and all others at the end of each section are incorporated in the Business Plan Action Plan at Appendix 6)

2.2 Housing Strategy Priority 2: Tackling Homelessness

Strategic Aims: *to prevent homelessness wherever possible, and to provide a free and comprehensive housing advice service;*

to provide a high quality Homelessness Service that places emphasis on support to people in temporary accommodation.

2.2.1 The Current Position And Context

Homelessness Review – Key findings

The council published its Homelessness Strategy in July 2003. The strategy draws upon the results of a comprehensive review of local homelessness conducted in 2002/03. The Homeless Strategy is available at www.stevenage.gov.uk.

The number of households accepted by the council under the homelessness legislation has increased by 60% in the last five years. During the same period, the number of households in temporary accommodation rose from about 100, to over 200.

Who is Becoming Homeless?

The following table shows the composition of those homeless households towards whom the council has exercised a statutory duty. (These households are described as being ‘in priority need’)

Household Composition	2003/04	2002/03	2001/02
Dependent Children 1	57	67	72
Dependent Children 2	15	19	21
Dependent Children 3	10	15	15
Dependent Children: All	82	101	108
Pregnancy	48	34	33
Vulnerable: OAP	5	2	7
Vulnerable: Disabled	4	3	9
Vulnerable: Mental Health	5	4	10
Vulnerable: Young people	6	3	2
Other	8	1	2
Total		148	171

Two facts stand out from these figures. First, families with or expecting children are the largest group of households in priority need within Stevenage. By contrast, single vulnerable people make up only a relative small number of cases each year.

Second, parental evictions are the single largest cause of homelessness (only moderately smaller than all other causes combined). These two facts, together, indicate that young parenthood, leading to family breakdown, is the key underlying cause of homelessness in Stevenage. This is reflected in national studies which place Stevenage in the highest quartile for teenage pregnancy (while the rest of Hertfordshire is in the lowest).

The council's Homelessness Strategy identifies the need to tackle issues relating to this group as its highest priority.

Homelessness in the Black and Minority Ethnic Communities

Ethnic Group	Census: Stevenage	Census: England and Wales	Homelessness Applications: Ethnic Origin	Housing Advice Clients: Ethnic Origin
	%	%	%	%
White	94.6	90.9	90	94
African/Caribbean	1.2	2.3	1	2
Asian	2.1	4.6	2.5	2
Other	0.7	0.9	3.5	2
Not given	N/a	N/a	3	N/a

The figures appear to broadly match the overall population, although the 3% "not given" could be significant when viewed against the town's relatively small Black and Minority Ethnic population.

Single Homelessness

Beside those homeless households covered by statute (see above), there are others who are not considered to be 'in priority need'. These consist mainly of single people without children.

As there is little evidence of rough sleeping in the town, the council decided not to conduct a rough sleeper head count this year.

The Homelessness Strategy

The council's Homelessness Strategy has four key objectives:

- better prevention;
- an effective safety net;
- minimizing homelessness;
- a joined-up approach.

2.2.2 Tackling Homelessness: Progress and Delivery

Better Prevention

Progress has been made on the central aim of preventing homelessness:

- the council's Housing Advice Service is now *Quality Mark* accredited in the 'general help' category;
- Some £12,600 in back dated benefits were clawed back directly as a result of Housing Advice intervention
- A total of 41 evictions were averted following intervention from Housing Advice.
- the council introduced a family mediation scheme in partnership with RELATE to prevent homelessness in the event of family breakdown.

Improving the safety net

It is not possible to prevent homelessness in every case, therefore quality appropriate services are required to meet the needs of homeless households.

The Council aims to achieve this by ensuring a sufficient supply of affordable homes (see previous section) are available backed up by suitable temporary accommodation of a high quality.

Temporary Accommodation

In April 2004 there were over 200 households in temporary accommodation, the great majority of whom (95%) live in accommodation that is self-contained. Currently only one longer-term hostel remains in management and this is subject to a refurbishment bid to the Housing Corporation to convert it for use by homeless young people.

The council provides 24-hour, on-site support for up to 30 young parents (including under-18s) at Wellfield Court, and at its Reception Centre at 12 North Road. A floating support service is provided to vulnerable households living in other temporary accommodation.

The council has also committed £30,000 to introduce a Private Sector Leasing Scheme which will create a further seven self-contained units. It has also set aside £100 000 to enable refurbishment of 12 North Road.

The council continues to meet its obligations under homelessness legislation without the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for the tenth consecutive year.

Minimizing Homelessness

The Council has adopted a strategic approach to minimising homelessness which has three key elements managing performance and resources, working in partnership with key partners in the Health, Voluntary, Social Services and Probation Services and assessing needs, gaps and priorities to ensure that current needs are met and future eventualities planned for.

Partnership Working-A joined up approach

Details on partnership working and how it has been effective in meeting the needs of people with special needs can be found in the next Section. However, a protocol on the assessment of need under the Children Act for homeless 16/17 year olds has been agreed with Herts. CC Social Services, and will be rolled out in 2004.

2.2.3 Priorities for Improvement

The Options Appraisal and Tackling Homelessness

The council's ability to tackle homelessness is linked to the availability of affordable homes. The impact of the Options Appraisal on this issue is considered in the previous section, *Providing Affordable Homes*. Any changes to the way in which the council's stock is owned, managed and maintained could, in the long term, affect the way homes are allocated, and this includes the existing stock of temporary homeless accommodation. The Options Appraisal will consider the impact on homelessness and, in particular, the delivery of the *Homelessness Strategy*

Current proposals

Twice a year we hold a Homelessness Strategy Forum with key stakeholders to assess the continuing relevance of our homelessness priorities and to evaluate our progress in meeting them. The first Forum highlighted two areas of concern and these have therefore been given priority in our action plans.

- Firstly in relation to people who are not homeless but who are vulnerable and at risk of losing their home. Consideration is being given to funding a Tenancy Maintenance Strategy encompassing a joint bid for *Supporting People* with North Herts. DC and Herts. Young Homeless Group to provide additional support to younger people in tenancies.
- Secondly the need to increase the supply of affordable housing.

Other areas being considered are:

- A rough sleeper head count reflecting increased concern about levels of single homelessness
- Increasing the availability of supported housing to those who need it
- Revising the allocations policy to give more choice to homeless households in selecting a permanent home
- Further expansion of the PSL scheme to increase the supply of temporary accommodation.

Areas we have considered but decided not to pursue are:

- A complete refurbishment of our Reception Centre. This was rejected, as it would do nothing to reduce the level of shared facilities, and make only a marginal improvement to services.
- Outsourcing Housing Advice, but we concluded this would not improve the service.

2.2.4 Action Plan (see also Appendix 6)

Community Strategy Priority:

- **First Class customer Service and good quality from the Council &**
- **A Fair and inclusive Community**

Housing Services Strategic Targets to address this priority

To:

- **Reduce levels of homelessness by better prevention and improved access**
- **Provide an effective and efficient homelessness service**
- **To carry out the options appraisal**
- **To increase the supply of quality temporary accommodation**

2.3 Housing Strategy Priority 3: Supporting Independence: Special Needs.

Strategic Aim: *to be a fully integrated partner in, and provider of, Care in the Community and Supporting People in Stevenage.*

2.3.1 The Current Position And Context

Special Needs in Stevenage

It has been a council priority for many years to ensure that accommodation is available for people in special need. More recently, it has worked closely with Hertfordshire County Council and the Hertfordshire District Councils to implement *Supporting People*, on a countywide and strategic level.

The 2003 Housing Needs Survey looked at the prevalence of Special Needs within the borough and found that 21.5% of all households contain a person with special needs. This compares with the 1997 survey where 16% of households contained a person with special needs.

The actual number of households with a special need is estimated at 7827. However, a proportion of respondents reported multiple needs. About 60% of households containing a person with special needs are council or RSL tenants.

Special Needs: Countywide

The county Supporting People Team has carried out a mapping exercise of existing special needs provision across Hertfordshire. The main service-user group consists of older persons with support needs (23,790 households - equivalent to 64% of the total). Other significant groupings are:

- Homeless families with support needs: 792 (2.1%);
- people with learning disability: 1,422 (3.8%);
- people with mental health problems: 1,184 (3.2%);
- single homeless people with support needs: 1,111 (3%);
- young people at risk: 279 (0.8%).

It should be noted that whereas local data is based upon an analysis of need (needs mapping), the county survey evaluates existing provision. The council's 2003 Homelessness Review identified a shortage of provision for:

- young people at risk;
- ex-offenders;
- substance misusers;
- people with mental health problems.

2.3.2 Supporting People With Special Needs: Progress And Delivery

Supported Housing for Older People

The Council provides a network of sheltered housing schemes with on-site warden support. It also provides an extra care service at Silkin Court and a Careline community care service in partnership with North Herts District Council.

The service has four key objectives

- To provide sheltered housing support services responsive to the needs of older people
- To develop the range of extra care provision in partnership with health and adult care services
- To provide and develop the Careline (community alarm) service responsive to the needs of older people
- To provide support assistance with removals for people moving into sheltered housing

The Council is currently undertaking a Best Value Review of services to older people and this will include:

- Using the sheltered housing stock as a strategic resource for the community
- Co-ordinating its development with the Health, Social Services and Supporting People Agenda
- Achieving Decent Homes Standard
- Bringing up to modern standards eg Disability Discrimination Act requirements and life time living
- The role of its sheltered wardens
- Difficult to let properties

Currently the Council has over 20 void flats in schemes for which no demand has been identified. The Council is keen that housing of this type meets the needs of older people in the 21st century and is Supporting People compliant. In some cases, the existing assets might be put to better use on other supporting people provision. The review will be completed in 2005

The Supporting People Programme

Stevenage has supported the development of the Hertfordshire *Supporting People* Strategy

In total 12 providers of supported housing now receive *Supporting People* funding, encompassing 455 individual dwellings. The Council owns and manages a further 1000 sheltered dwellings. The impact has been to engender the sector with greater certainty around funding and to provide a quality framework to evaluate the contribution of individual programmes.

Multi Agency Working

The Council has been a pioneer in respect of multi agency working, and was instrumental in setting up a Special Needs Housing Panel in conjunction with Social Services "Adult Care Services". This, combined with provision of supported housing has proved extremely successful in minimising homelessness amongst vulnerable people and in managing repeat homelessness where arrangements subsequently breakdown due to inadequate support.

In 2003 this framework was extended through a formal protocol with Social Services and North Herts. District Council. North Herts. DC and Stevenage Borough Council form a single "Quadrant" (Administrative Area) within the Herts CC organisational structure, so the protocol will now enable us to consider multi-agency commissioning and bidding in addition to our joint operational work.

The Council has also recently agreed a protocol with Herts. County Council “Children Schools and Families” for the needs assessment of homeless U18’s as part of a process of improving services to that group

The Homelessness Review has highlighted a significant gap in our provision so in addition to the above we have :

- Bid for ADP monies to extend the provision of Supported Housing
- Used ODPM Homelessness grant monies to fund a “crashpad” scheme in conjunction with District Council partners across the County
- Agreed to make a joint bid with North Herts. DC to bid for Supporting People monies to provide floating support for young people taking on tenancies for the first time.

Summary of Progress

The council has made progress in supporting people with special needs through:

- a multi-agency approach, a dedicated special needs housing officer and comprehensive specialist provision to minimize homelessness and housing need among vulnerable groups;
- a revised protocol for mental health and learning disability with Hertfordshire County Council and North Herts. District Council;
- a negotiated, countywide joint protocol for the assessment of homeless young people;
- the refurbishment of a new hostel for Stevenage Haven in a town-centre location;
- work with Stevenage Haven to secure *Supporting People* pipeline funding to allow all day opening;
- an open *Supporting People* Forum, established jointly with North Herts District Council;
- the refurbishment of its homelessness reception centre at North Road which provides 24 hour support to vulnerable households;
- the redevelopment of Ross Court, a low-demand traditional sheltered scheme to provide 13, two-bedroom bungalows for older persons.

2.3.3 Priorities for Improvement

Options Appraisal: Supporting Independence

The outcome of the Options Appraisal could have an impact on the use of capital receipts and, for that reason, has the potential to affect capital investment in supported housing. The Council has decided to place the Countywide *Supporting People* Strategy at the centre of it’s overall approach, so the Options Appraisal will need to consider the impact of any changes to the stock holding arrangements in this context. Moreover, any possible change to the stock holding arrangements will also need to consider the impact on the existing stock of supported homes such as for older people (nearly 1000 units) and provision for the homeless such as Wellfield Court.

Meeting Needs: Existing Proposals

Plans to improve support to vulnerable people are strongly affected by the priorities and resources of the county *Supporting People* programme. The council has secured *Supporting People* pipeline funding for Stevenage Haven in this first year of the programme.

However, because future funding for other schemes cannot be guaranteed, and the overall Supporting People pot is likely to decrease rather than increase. The Council will therefore seek to encourage new schemes that meet identified gaps in provision, and in particular those set out in the Homelessness Strategy.

Future plans are to:

- remodel the council's homelessness warden service to ensure compliance with the *Supporting People* quality standard;
- review the council's allocations policy, including its special quota arrangements (5% of all lettings) for people with special needs and access procedures for sheltered housing.
- support Approved Housing Programme (AHP) bids for new special needs provision at Peartree Way (five units for young people at risk) and Oxleys Road (20 units for people with mental health problems);
- Ensure that the Council's sheltered housing stock meets the needs of older people in the 21st century and is compliant with *Supporting People*
- Prioritise housing adapted for disabled persons when negotiating special needs elements in S106 negotiations
- work with partners within the *Supporting People* programme to review the quality of local services across all support providers;
- enter into multi-agency protocols to cover all vulnerable groups

The council considers that developing services within the *Supporting People* programme is the best use of resources, and has no plans to develop outside it.

2.3.4 Action Plan (see also Appendix 6)

Community Strategy Priority:

- **First Class customer Service and good quality from the Council**
- **A Fair and inclusive Community**

Housing Services Strategic Targets to address this priority:

- **Ensure there is sufficient supported housing to meet the needs of all main groups;**
- **Ensure all supported housing is *Supporting People* compliant;**
- **Extend joint working protocols to all main groups**
- **To carry out the options appraisal**

2.4 Housing Strategy Priority 4: Delivering Quality And Choice

STRATEGIC AIM: TO EXTEND CHOICE AND IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF HOUSING AVAILABLE TO LOCAL

2.4.1 The Current Position and Context

The Importance of Quality and Choice

It is the council's belief that people should have the opportunity, wherever possible, to make positive, informed choices about where they live. The council believes that the best way it can make this a reality is by:

- improving the quality of its performance as a housing provider;
- enabling and encouraging better standards across all tenure types.

The Council as Landlord

The Council has undertaken a series of Best Value Reviews looking at the Caretaking Service, Housing Needs, the Repairs Service and a comprehensive review of the whole housing service, called 'Better Homes for Stevenage'.

As result a major reorganisation of the Housing Service took place during 2003/4 to ensure that the organisation is in place with the right skill base to respond to the new priorities and working methods needed to deliver the housing strategy, business plan and target of a three star housing service by 2007.

The Councils Landlord Services has two main priorities for 2004/5;

- to complete the change programme in the Repairs Service
- to continue the improvement of the housing service.

To monitor progress on performance Stevenage has introduced a Performance Management Framework driven by the Changing Gear programme. Targets are set in the service plans and cascaded through the performance and development meeting process to all staff.

Performance reports for housing management are produced for the Housing Well-Being Scrutiny and Review Panel. These focus on rents, voids and repairs

Benchmarking and comparisons of performance are achieved through;

- Being a member of the Housing Quality Network (See Glossary)
- Being a founder member of an arrears benchmarking club for Herts Housing Authorities.
- Use of Audit Commission Comparative Performance Indicators
- Reporting and monitoring by Priorities, Plans & Improvements members group.

Information on performance, satisfaction levels and customer feedback is presented to the Federation of Stevenage Tenants Associations (FOSTA). Performance information is examined quarterly by the Chief Officers Board and reported to Executive Committee.

Tenancy Services

Appendices 7 and 8 show the tenancy services section has sustained the progress made in the previous two years and is improving in all key areas. In particular the Council; has improved performance in rent collection, re letting of void properties and carrying out of repairs. It also achieved ---% of the Tenancy Services action plan for 2003/4 (See appendix 8)

The Tenancy Services Section has two key aims for 2004/5 to;

- Provide quality housing management
- Provide quality service delivery

The current emphasis is on the quality of Housing Management, as our tenants have told us that creating an efficient service is the first and biggest step towards creating the high quality service they wish to see.

For 2004/5 the Tenancy Services section will therefore concentrate on four areas of work to achieve its key aims:

- Rent Arrears
- Participation
- Anti-social behaviour
- Caretaking

The Tenancy Service Action Plan, (see appendix 8) sets out the specific targets in each of these areas.

Repairs and Maintenance Service

Significant progress has been made during 2003/4 in implementing the improvement Plan from the Best Value Review of the Repairs Service .

The Council has set up a Housing Technical Services Working Group comprising Members and Officers to oversee the change and improvement process in this area.

An integrated repairs service has been implemented with a repairs Control Centre taking repairs requests.

There has been a consolidation of the DLU and Maintenance Officer functions . The working practices of the DLU have been reviewed, as have the financial and performance review processes.

Work has begun on reviewing the way void properties are dealt with to move us to the upper quartile of performance over the next two years.

For 2004/5 the Council has set the priorities to:

- provide a good quality repairs service to the tenants of Stevenage
- modernise working practices
- demonstrate value for money

Housing Register – Choice Based Lettings

In March 2003, the council introduced choice based lettings as a six-month pilot scheme.

The initial findings are positive and encouraging. The council receives an average of 50 bids for each available property. All indications are that prospective tenants feel more empowered by making informed choices about their housing options.

We have therefore implemented an allocations review, and are evaluating ways of extending Choice Based Lettings across the board.

2.4.2 Quality And Choice: Progress And Delivery

Improving Quality

Progress in delivering quality and choice has been driven by the council's Best Value Review, *Better Homes for Stevenage*. The following improvements have been made:

- the transferring of cash collection from five locally run council offices to Post Office counters (there are 12 counters in Stevenage, and payments can be made anywhere in the UK);
- the opening of a One-Stop-Shop housing service in the dedicated Customer Service Centre;
- the appointment of a dedicated Tenancy Enforcement Officer to deal with anti-social behaviour;
- the drawing up of a new tenancy contract in consultation with tenants;
- the introduction of a linked caretaking/environmental service to combat refuse and fly tipping on estates;
- the introduction of a dedicated leaseholder service and the establishment of a leaseholder forum;
- revision of the tenants' home decorations scheme following tenant consultation;
- the introduction of an improved tenants' newsletter.
- the introduction of Introductory Tenancies
- Repairs & Sheltered Housing Focus Groups
- Repairs control centre

Extending Choice

Progress to date on the implementation of the council's *Best Value Review of Housing Needs*, concluded in 2000, includes:

- transference of the functions of Housing Transfer and the Housing Register sections to a single dedicated team;
- the introduction of a Choice Based Lettings pilot for one-bedroom flats and bedsits (10% of all lettings);
- extensive use of the internet: all available properties are posted on the council's website, and over 50% of enquires now come this way;
- the introduction of a One-Stop Housing service within the Customer Service Centre;
- the introduction of continual improvement to the homelessness service; this involved a Beacon Bid (under the theme *Tackling Homelessness*) that made the national final shortlist of 10;
- amending the council's allocation criteria for low-demand sheltered housing to allow applications from any older person in housing need who otherwise meets the criteria for the scheme; this includes applicants from outside the town;

- increasing the level of information on lettings, point levels and the availability of properties through improved tenant and applicant newsletters.

2.4.3 Priorities For Improvement

The Options Appraisal and Quality and Choice

The Options Appraisal has the potential to affect the stock holding arrangement of the authority, and could therefore profoundly affect the way in which services are delivered to tenants and applicants. The council wants to ensure that any change to the current arrangements will increase choice and improve, or at least maintain, the quality of service. Survey data indicates that over 90% of tenants are satisfied with the service provided. The council wishes to see these levels of satisfaction maintained whatever the selected option.

Increasing Choice

Choice based lettings is central to the council's strategy to increase choice across all lettings in 2004. Other future options include:

- introducing a single assessment process which covers applicants on the Housing and Transfer Registers and the statutory homeless;
- extending access to programmes such as mediation and the Tenancy Deposit Scheme to all applicants in housing need not just the statutory homeless
- introducing a new allocations policy with choice based lettings at its centre;
- extending electronic access to housing opportunities to cover mutual exchanges
- re-introducing an under-occupation incentive programme;
- re-introducing a grant to vacate scheme for council properties;
- increasing and improving the range of supported housing to those who need it (covered in detail above)
- developing more intermediate tenure housing, in the light of the findings of *Housing Needs Survey*

Improving Quality

The council remains committed to the principles of continual improvement, and has plans for a number of initiatives. These are:

- a more co-ordinated approach to anti-social behaviour led by a dedicated Tenancy Enforcement Officer;
- the use of Introductory Tenancies from 2004;
- the introduction of a new Tenants' Handbook, developed in consultation with tenants;
- the introduction of "Super Caretakers" for larger blocks;
- the introduction of improvements in rent collection through an estate-based debt counselling/welfare rights service;
- In consultation with tenants and leaseholders, a small scale voluntary transfer for the Stonyhall Estate to a partner RSL. This will enable improvements to be made to the estate. Options include refurbishment, and demolition and re-provision.

2.4.4 Action Plan (see also Appendix 6)

Community Strategy Priority:

- **First Class customer Service and good quality from the Council &**
- **A Fair and inclusive Community**

Housing Services Strategic Targets to address this priority:

- **To: Maximise choice for all applicants on the Housing and Transfer Register;**
- **Ensure high standards of housing management.**
- **To carry out the options appraisal**
- **To consider the voluntary transfer of Stonyhall estate to a RSL for refurbishment or redevelopment**

2.5 Housing Strategy Priority5;Enabling Decent Homes

2.5.1 Current Position and Context

The Council met its first years target on meeting the decent homes standard and is on target to achieve its 2004/5 target (see 2.5.6) . In 2004/5 as a result of consultation with our tenants, reviewing the two years programmes and our void performance indicators it was agreed that a new approach was needed. However through the need to verify the stock condition data it has not been possible to progress the new programmes as speedily as we would have wished. Never the less the Council in consultation with its tenants has shaped the Capital and Revenue budgets to ensure that the elements they address each play their part in achieving decent homes standard compliance Once the stock condition data has been received programmes will be refined to address the priorities identified for Decent Homes compliance.

2.5.2 The Housing Stock in Stevenage

At the end of the financial year, 2002/03 there were 33,699 dwellings in the town. Ownership of these properties breaks down as follows:

Owner Occupation	Housing Association	Private Rented	Local Authority
21,780	1,371	1,200	8,950

Stock Condition: the Evidence Base

The current condition of the housing stock in Stevenage has been determined by:

- a Private Sector House Condition and Energy Efficiency Survey, 2001 conducted by Cambridge Housing and Environmental Consultants;
- a Local Authority Stock Condition Survey, 2001 undertaken by Hunter and Partners;
- A local authority *Stock Condition Survey 2003/04*.

The local authority survey was carried out in 2000 and was based upon a 10% stock sample across 822 property types. As the survey was commissioned prior to the publication of the *Decent Homes* criteria, work projections were based on the date that components were installed, and not on the overall fitness standards of properties.

2.5.3 The Condition of the Private Sector Stock

Stevenage homes were mostly built after 1945. About 95% of the private sector stock is post-war, and the majority of these dwellings are former local authority homes transferred under the government's *Right to Buy* scheme.

The 2001 *Stock Condition Survey* and the council's analysis of information derived from customer queries and requests have highlighted a number of issues:

- a total of 2.7% homes within the borough are considered unfit compared with a national average of 7.5%; in the private rented sector 14% are unfit as compared with a national average of 19%;
- the cost of immediate repairs to bring these properties up to the minimum fitness standard is £6.4m; to bring all dwellings up to a reasonable standard would cost £34m;
- nearly a quarter (150) of unfit dwellings are occupied by elderly households on low incomes, and there is a disproportionate number of older people occupying properties in substantial disrepair;
- a total of 1.4% dwellings are empty;
- The average SAP (energy efficiency) rating for the private sector is 53.7; this is higher than the UK average of 44;
- a total of 5.9% households contain at least one disabled person; to meet the needs of this group it is estimated that a Disabled Facilities Grant of £3.5m is required;
- in April 2004, 169 Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) were identified in the town; of these, 12 were found to be unfit.

The Private Sector Stock Condition Survey also highlighted some unfitness in the Registered Social Landlord sector, although the sample was insufficient to allow any detailed conclusions to be drawn. This lack of information on a large and growing sector is a cause of concern. No further independent data on the sector as a whole is available at this time, although it is known that the stock is relatively new.

2.5.4 Council Housing Stock

The Council had a stock of 8,726 properties in management and 1,208 leasehold properties (as at 1 April 2004). There are no non-residential properties such as shops or garages in the Housing Revenue Account.

At April 2004, the local authority stock profile stood as follows:

	Number of properties constructed				Total
	Pre 1945	1945-64	1965-74	1974-date	
Flats	9		3064		3073
Bungalows	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	445
Houses	166	4403	97	542	5208
					8726

As the table shows, the bulk of construction was carried out in Stevenage during a comparatively short period

The Council Manages around 1,000 -sheltered housing properties. The average sheltered scheme consists of 50 properties, the exception being a large scheme of 104 properties, which provides additional care to a percentage of its tenants.

Right To Buy

Sales under right to buy legislation have averaged about 250 a year

How to meet the Decent Homes Standard is the fundamental question of the Options Appraisal due to be completed later in 2005. This is therefore covered in detail in sections 3 and 4.

2.5.5 The Condition of the Council Stock :Decent Homes Standards

In 2001 the Government introduced a requirement for all public sector landlords to bring their properties up to the Decent Homes Standard (DHS) .

There were two targets:

- the first being that one third of non-complying properties must be brought up to standard by 31 March 2004 and
- secondly that all properties must be compliant by 31 March 2010

2.5.6 Decent Homes : Progress and Delivery

The Current Approach

2003/4 to 2004/5

The Council is currently using a two-pronged approach to addressing non-decency amongst its housing stock. The two approaches are:

- Decent Homes Phases

The Council has completed phase one of its programme and has started phase two. It was found that in phase 1 unit costs per property was very high as works were completed to a higher standard than the minimum set by the government guidelines. In addition a result of feedback from its tenants phase two has been changed from a full scale refurbishment programme to an elemental approach. In addition As a result there was a change of emphasis with the standard being reduced to ensure that the Council achieved the DHS as required by the government, and within budget allocations.

This change of emphasis has resulted in a higher level of tenant refusal to the works as many do not want to go through the upheaval of major heating and electrical works whilst only being offered either a replacement kitchen or bathroom. This situation is being closely monitored and discussed with our tenants to formulate an elemental approach where decent homes works are targeted in conjunction with good asset management practices, the council's maintenance strategies, and the aspirations of our tenants.

- Void Properties

The opportunity is taken whilst the property is void to carry out works to make the property decent. This has however adversely impacted on void turn around times.

- Regeneration at Stonyhall

The Stonyhall Estate has been identified as being suitable for regeneration. Despite the intense demand for affordable housing and the absence of 'hard-to-let' properties in the town, this estate remains unpopular. A combination of anti-social behaviour, outdated heating systems and hard-to-manage communal space is largely responsible for this.

The estate also contains a high proportion of flats housing families, a situation which is untypical of a new town. Currently, the council is unable to fund the work needed to bring the estate up to the *Decent Homes* standard. Given the pressing need to improve the quality of life for residents, the council has decided to move forward with proposals for regeneration before the Options Appraisal has reached its conclusion.

In a ballot in November 2004 92% of the residents voted in favour of a voluntary transfer of the estate to the William Sutton Housing Association who will carry out a £15 million regeneration scheme demolishing six existing blocks of flats and replacing them with new homes. The regeneration scheme will take five years to complete and create one hundred and forty new affordable homes. The transfer is scheduled to take place on 31 March 2005.

Performance

The Council's performance to date against the targets it has set itself are given in the table below from which, it can be seen that it is on target to meet its DHS programme for 2004/5. It is recognised however that increases in output will be needed to achieve the 2005/6 programme and subsequent years. This is addressed in the performance table overleaf.

Phase	Target	Achieved
Phase1 2003/4	575	575
Phase 2 2004/5	341	
Phase3 2005/6	760	

In the first 6 months of 2004/5 166 units have been made decent and the output is projected to achieve the target of 341.

The Council has learned many lessons during its first 2 phases of decent home programming. The first phase experienced high cost per unit, whilst the second phase has experienced a high level of tenant refusal due to the reduction in level of works being completed during the programme. (phase 1 ave cost between £10,980 - £14,951 per property and phase 2 ave. cost estimated at £7,000 – contract not yet completed).

The most recent stock condition figures set out a capital commitment of approximately £13.4m to bring the stock in line with the decent homes standard. This equates to a unit cost of £3235 per property. However this standard, as indicated under government guidelines, is a minimum standard and does not necessarily meet our tenant's aspirations and asset management practices the Council wishes to adopt.

The programme continues on the minimal level of works to meet Decent Homes, whilst officers and Members are consulting with tenants groups to establish a clear ' Stevenage Decent Homes Standard' for improvement works to the Council's properties. It is anticipated that this standard will be finalised by March 2005.

At the same time the council has decided to continue to survey further properties to supplement the information it already holds and to ensure that its decent homes figures and costs are robust. This supplementary information will be available by the end of March 2005.

Once the Stevenage Standard and supplementary survey information is finalised the Council will in consultation with its tenants refine its decent homes programme and update this business plan accordingly.

Table B Performance Data – Decent Homes Targets*

	Target 2003/04	Actual 2003/04	Target 2004/05	Target 2005/06	Target 2006/07	Target 2007/08	Target 2008/09	Target 2009/10
BV184a	70%	66%	32%	30%	27%	19%	11%	2%
BV184b	13%	52%	6%	10%	30%	42%	82%	1%

Underlying figures for table:

YEAR	Non – decent (i)	Non-decency % (ii)	Years non-decent (iii)	Sub total (iv)	Less projected work (v)	Total (c/f)
April 2004	2875	32%	44	2919	341	2578
April 2005	2578	30%	113	2691	360	2331
April 2006	2331	27%	63	2394	700	1694
April 2007	1694	19%	190	1884	900	984
April 2008	984	11%	161	1145	1000	145
April 2009	145	2%	695	840	840	0
April 2010	0					

**These tables have been revised since the Council submitted it's HIP return to reflect the most current stock condition data.*

Notes

The underlying figures for the above calculations are BPG's Decent Homes Trend Summary whole stock – Cost & Lives Revision dated 12/06/2004.

It should be noted that any figures quoted are a 'snapshot' in time and will change according to further survey and/or works carried out.

- (i) Non-decent column figures are Right to Buy adjusted figures based upon April 2004 stock of 8727.
The figure given is the projected figure as at April of that year
- (ii) Non-decency % column is the projected level of non-decency within housing stock as at April for that year.
- (iii) Years non-decent column gives the adjusted non-decency figure for that year i.e. how many properties will become non-decent. This is based upon BPG's Decent Homes projections.
- (iv) Sub total column is the total of properties that will become non-decent through the year.
- (v) Less projected work column gives the estimated number of properties to be completed in that year. This is based upon carrying out works under an elemental approach.

2.5.7 Priorities for Improvement

Future Plans

The Decent Homes Standard requires that the main elements of the structure must be in good repair, therefore the main programmes in the Capital and Revenue budgets have been geared to achieve this and particularly target heating, electrical, insulation, kitchens and bathrooms. Whilst awaiting the verification of the Stock Condition Survey data the Council has targeted programmes to areas where it is known that they will contribute towards the overall decency of the property.

The Council is working towards standardising material specifications are standardised across all our capital and revenue programmes, including responsive repairs and voids. This will help drive costs down, ensure continuity for our tenants and ensure that replacement parts can be obtained in the future.

The programme of capital and revenue work for 2004/5 and 2005/6 set out in appendix 6 has been formulated to address the information currently held through the stock condition survey results and local knowledge of the housing stock and funding has been identified to enable the 2005/6 programme to be delivered, (See section 4 Resources). In the formulation of the programmes of work we have consulted closely with our tenants and wherever possible built their priorities into the programmes.

As a result of turn around times on our void properties being unduly lengthened by the approach we had adopted on bringing all void property up to Decent Homes Standard we are, in consultation with our tenants, reviewing this approach for 2005/6 and it has been agreed that health and safety related issues such as heating and electrical works will continue to be completed whilst the property is void along with essential works to kitchens and bathrooms. Kitchen and bathroom renewals will now be included as part of an ongoing programme and not through the void process.

The voids standard is to be revised and agreed with tenant's representatives so that this methodology can be adopted in April 2005. Hard to let properties will have a separate strategy to ensure that our properties are let as quickly as possible. It is proposed that a Decent Homes survey will be completed for every void to supplement data on the PND and decency standard of the properties. The information will also be used to inform the planning process for the kitchen and bathroom programmes.

The Elemental approach

Appendix 7 is based upon the unverified stock condition data and sets out the key elements that need to be addressed over time to bring the Councils stock into decency. This has been used in conjunction with local knowledge to form the maintenance programme for 2004/5 and 2005/6.

Properties may fail to meet the Decent Homes standard for a number of reasons, or for only one of the element items. Therefore by adopting an elemental approach the use of contractors and resourcing can be streamlined to specific work types and thereby obtaining the most appropriate contractors at more competitive prices.

The key elements which form the basis of the Councils maintenance strategy over the next two years are as follows:-

Heating -2004/5 and 2005/6 programmes currently target priority boilers/systems that need to be replaced .All new boilers are gas condensing Band A boilers and include additional controls and TRV's.

The Council has been successful in obtaining grants totalling £77,484 from Sustain, N Power & Powergen to replace 764 boilers and 2,842 TRV's

Electrical –the programmes are targeted at properties where it has been identified that the installation is below current standards. The programme deals with both void and occupied properties and will be extended in 2005/6.

Kitchens/bathrooms Currently some replacements are carried out in void properties where necessary, on an ad hoc basis. It is planned from next year to start a major replacement programme informed by the stock condition survey data.

External elements

Windows as part of the Councils maintenance strategy all are being replaced by pvc and the current programme should be completed by 2007.

Doors – have been incorporated in current programmes, however early properties fitted with replacement windows did not have doors included, these will be revisited and it is anticipated that these works should be completed by 2010.

Roofing –roofing replacement has been increased during 2005/06 and will be revised via the stock condition data.

Insulation The Council already has a programme in place for loft/cavity wall insulation in conjunction with Powergen. During 2004-05 the programme has been predominantly targeted at loft top-up and new insulation works, rather than cavity walls. It is estimate that by the end of 2004-05 the Council will have completed the insulation works to 270 properties and received a grant towards the cost from Powergen of £4613

For 2005-06 we propose to increase our budget to £50,000 for the year and aim to complete 540 properties by targeting void properties, Decent homes properties and our sheltered units in addition to requests directly from tenants.

This procedure links with the Councils Affordable Warmth strategy which is currently being finalised. The current average SAP rating for our properties is 65, which is the 1st quartile for BVPI.

As an integral part of its maintenance strategy the 2004/5 planned maintenance programme is targeted at flat blocks which contain leaseholders. The programme is for pre-paint repairs and external decorations and will identify other external elements for repair such as, repointing/footpaths/fencing. This is part of a 6 year programme which

targets 1500 properties per annum. The programme will also help reduce the demand for responsive repairs to these elements.

Delivery Of the 2005/6 Decent Homes Standard programme

In recognition of the need to gear up its DHS programmes to achieve the 360 units in 2005/6 the Council has set itself a clear timetable to achieve a start on site in July 2005 (See appendix 6).

It is also recognised that having the staffing resources and expertise in place is essential to be able to deliver the programme and it is therefore proposed that wherever possible the council will recruit an in-house team to manage and oversee the improvement works. However due to the level of demand for professionals in this field it is proposed that whilst the in-house team will have a project management role, it may be necessary to out source the surveying aspects of the programmes and move towards a partnering led ethos.

Contractor resourcing.

It is proposed that contracts for each element will be let for a 3-year period with 2 one-year extensions subject to agreement and good performance, therefore potentially giving 5-year contracts. The stock condition data identifies 4141 properties as being non-decent by 2010 and Appendix 7 identifies the level and type of work required in these properties to achieve the DHS. Certain properties will require more than one element to be completed to achieve the DHS. Therefore it is recognised that each element will need sufficient contractors in place to deliver the 360 units in the first year with escalation of the programme in future years...The most appropriate way of achieving this including partnering and synergy between contractors will be considered.

Monitoring and recording

By moving to an elemental approach the need for good stock condition data and for it to be continually updated is essential. Part of the future plans for the council is to incorporate an Asset Manager role within it's existing structure. This will ensure that the asset management software system is kept up to date and that work programming targets appropriate properties to ensure achievement of the DHS.

The Options Appraisal

The Options Appraisal is critical to our strategy of ensuring all homes meet the Decent Homes target for 2010 as set out in 2.5.2 above. Indeed this issue is at the heart of the rationale for conducting an Options Appraisal.

In this regard the impact of the Options Appraisal differs in respect of this Priority (Ensuring Decent Homes) as against the other 5. This is because the Council is required to meet the Decent Homes target by 2010, and the purpose of the Options Appraisal is to determine which stock holding will best ensure that this will happen. Therefore, whilst the Council will consider the impact of future stock holding options on the other 5 priorities, such considerations cannot compromise the central aim of the Options Appraisal –achieving the Decent Homes across the stock by 2010.

This aim must therefore be viewed as the highest priority of the Housing Business Plan.

2.5.8 ACTION PLAN

To meet the Community Plan Priorities:

- First class customer services and good quality from the council
- Regeneration of Stevenage

Housing Services Strategic Targets to address this priority:

- Complete The Options Appraisal by 2005
- Ensure that all local social housing meets the *Decent Homes* standard by 2010 and that during 2005/6 a programme has been devised and implemented to achieve full compliance by 2010

2.6 Housing Strategy Priority 6: Sustainable Communities

Strategic Aim: *To tackle social exclusion, make sure there is equality of opportunity and encourage regeneration by providing quality housing services*

2.6.1 Current Position And Context

The Importance of a Joined-up Strategy

Meeting the housing needs and aspirations of residents can make an enormous contribution to individual and collective well being.

Making sure that communities are sustainable is a highly complex and multi-faceted task, and the issues set out below are not exhaustive. However, in order to achieve the strategic priority of the Council it is necessary to consider the wider community agenda, and in particular:

- Meeting the needs of a diverse multi-cultural community
- Tackling crime and anti social behaviour
- Regenerating the town
- Developing communities
- Improving health

The Housing Service is able to contribute to these aims in a number of ways.

2.6.2 The Diversity of Stevenage

The Black and Minority Ethnic Community

Black and minority ethnic residents of Stevenage currently account for 5.4% of the town's population. This is up from the 3.9% arising from the 1991 census. The increase is more marked in certain wards, including some of the more deprived wards, such as St. Nicholas.

2.6.3 Crime and Disorder

Anti-Social Behaviour

Anti-social behaviour was rated as the single highest area of concern among tenants, applicants and other housing stakeholders during the council's 2003 *Have a Say Day* consultation exercise in 2002..

The Stevenage Community Safety Strategy outlines how the council is tackling anti-social behaviour in a multi-agency, holistic way. As the housing agenda is linked with this high profile issue, anti-social behaviour also forms a key theme of the housing strategy.

Domestic Violence

The council gives priority to the issue of domestic violence, and has grant-funded Stevenage and North Herts Women's Aid for over 20 years. It also works with partners and stakeholders through the Stevenage and North Herts Domestic Violence Forum to co-ordinate activity and initiatives across the Borough and the neighbouring North Herts District Council area. Last year, the council accepted 9% of households as homeless as a result of violence or harassment.

Community Development – Tackling Social Exclusion

Community development programmes target disadvantaged groups to promote social inclusion and welfare. For Stevenage, which has some of the poorest wards in Hertfordshire, social exclusion remains an important issue, and ensures that it remains at the very heart of the housing strategy.

As part of its commitment to the *Supporting People* programme, the council will be developing Service User Involvement schemes within its supported accommodation that are designed to counter the lingering effects of social stigma and social exclusion. Where appropriate, these schemes will explore ways of encouraging service users to integrate more fully into the community.

Of particular priority are:

- tenant participation, which increases community participation and encourages inclusion;
- improving and maintaining the quality of homes;
- tackling crime and disorder, e.g. through pro-active housing management;
- anti-poverty initiatives provided through the Benefits and Money Advice services (run by the Housing Advice Service and developed through the Community Legal Services Partnership);
- education and information schemes, such as the schools-visit programme run by the council's Homelessness and Housing Advice Teams.

2.6.4 Health improvement

The main factors relating to health in a housing context are teenage pregnancy (which is a trigger factor leading to homelessness), care of the elderly (requiring specialist provision) and drug and alcohol abuse (particularly in the context of anti-social behaviour).

2.6.5 Progress And Delivery

Equality

The council has published details of a Race Equality Scheme The council has also:

- improved disabled access with the opening of its new Customer Service Centre;
- provided translation services through Language Line;
- published regular details of allocations by ethnic breakdown;
- achieved Level 1 of the Equality Standard For Local Government.
- Has put in place an action plan to achieve CRE compliance to meet Best Value PI 164

For its future priorities, the council aims: to achieve Levels 2 and above of the Equality Standard; to examine information on black and minority ethnic groups provided by the new Housing Needs Survey; and to give appropriate weight to this when reviewing its allocations policy.

Crime and Disorder

The council housing service has:

- appointed a dedicated tenancy enforcement officer to tackle anti-social behaviour among tenants;
- issued a new tenancy contract which identifies the tenant's responsibilities with regard to anti-social behaviour in much greater detail;
- Commenced the use of Introductory Tenancies from 2004

Future plans include:

- the publication of a corporate anti-social behaviour and harassment policy

Regeneration and Renewal

Progress on regeneration and renewal includes:

- working with tenants and leaseholders, Registered Social Landlords and the government to regenerate the Stonyhall Estate.

Community Development

Initiatives to develop the community include:

- the appointment of a dedicated Tenant Participation Officer; this has led to the formation of 7 new tenant representative groups
- work on debt and welfare rights; the Housing Advice Team's work with 754 tenants and applicants in 2002/03.

Health Improvement

To tackle teenage pregnancy the council has:

- set up 30 units of supported housing for homeless young parents; this service provides 24 hour support and offers guidance to enable resettlement in the community;
- worked with partners on the local Teenage Pregnancy Implementation Group; the group is developing a multi-agency approach to reducing local levels of teenage pregnancy and providing appropriate support and resettlement services.

To plan services for the elderly for the future the Council has carried out a best value review of its elderly services and is looking to use its sheltered housing services in a strategic way to help in partnership with other agencies to address the health, social services and supporting people agendas.

2.6.6, Priorities For Improvement

Equality and Diversity

The Council aims to develop an initial Equality and Diversity Action Plan which will be published in 2004

The Options Appraisal

For the Options Appraisal to be a meaningful, all-embracing and inclusive process, it must address the impact of its decision on the wider community at all levels. In particular, the council will consider the appraisal's impact upon, and its contribution to tackling:

- crime and disorder;
- equality issues, particularly equality of access to housing;
- the regeneration of the town;
- the health of the town in a housing context

2.6.7 ACTION PLAN

To meet the Community Plan Priorities

- **A fair and inclusive community**
- **Regeneration of Stevenage**

:

Housing Services Strategic Targets to address this priority:

- **Ensure the housing needs and aspirations of the black and ethnic minority community are met;**
- **Work to enable housing services to contribute to a Safer Stevenage;**
- **Enable neighbourhood regeneration and health improvement to take place.**

3 The Investment Needs of the Stock

3.1.1 Current Position and Context

Stock Condition Survey

A Stock Condition Survey was undertaken during 2003-2004. In line with best practice it was agreed to have the results validated independently. As a result of the validation process we decided to invest further to supplement our information. Additional work is being undertaken to give us robust data on the condition of properties of a non-traditional construction and to provide us with more comprehensive information on traditionally built homes.

It is targeted to have the results of the stock condition surveys for April 2005

It is intended that we continue to enhance our stock data over future years to build up all-inclusive records.

Once the data is available from the validation process this will be used to update the Business Plan and to feed into the Options Appraisal process. An updated 5 year Business Plan will then be formulated.

3.1.2 Progress and Delivery

Updating the Stock Condition Survey

The Council has invested in a asset management software system to enable the collected data to be manipulated for the formation of its maintenance programmes. It recognises the need to ensure that cloned information and completed repair work is kept up to date and key variable information such as element costs and component lives are kept under review and refined through experience and local knowledge.

The system will also provide the monitoring process for achieving the Decent Homes targets for 2010. The Council has therefore set up a post to oversee the data collection and updating process to ensure the reliability of the information to inform its financial and maintenance strategies.

3.1.3 Priorities for improvement

The Council has set a Housing Technical Services Working Group comprising Members and Officers to oversee the process.

The Council recognises the strategic importance of achieving the decent homes standard and its 30 year maintenance strategy. It has therefore considered the recommendations of its Best Value reviews and set up two new posts. Firstly a new head of service to oversee the entire housing technical services section who will have responsibility for achieving the DHS and formulating the 30 year maintenance strategy. Secondly a Capital Programme monitoring officer has been appointed to oversee the Housing Capital programme to ensure its delivery in a strategic and cost effective way. The officer will work closely with our tenants to ensure that their priorities are met and they are given real choices wherever possible within the programme.

The Council will continue to drive its planned and cyclical maintenance programmes to try to minimise the need for responsive repairs. It will also continue to work with its tenants to find imaginative solutions to structural elements that are identified as targets for frequent vandalism.

The Council will also explore the possibility of entering partnering agreements where clear service improvements and cost savings can be identified. It will also work towards producing standard work specifications for all types of maintenance and improvement work.

Work will also be prioritised to interface the asset management system and I-world IT systems so that improved monitoring of responsive repairs, DHS and all other maintenance and improvement works can be undertaken more effectively.

4; Resources

4.1 Financial context

Critical to the success of the delivery of the priorities set out in this business plan are the financial resources to underpin the programmes and activities. Clearly in the absence of the verified stock condition data it has not been possible to accurately forecast the full financial position facing the Council in the longer term both in terms of the need for Capital investment to meet the needs of the Decent Homes Standard and the 30 year housing maintenance strategy. Along side this is the requirement to identify the revenue funding needed to sustain the Housing Revenue Account landlord activities.

This two year business plan identifies the key strategic priorities needed to be achieved in 2004/5; 2005/6 and their financial implications. These have been taken mindful of the need to ensure that the foundation is being set in such a way that once the stock condition data is available and the options appraisal completed that this business plan compliment and facilitate progress in achieving their objectives in an efficient and cost effective way.

It should also be noted that where it has been identified that during the life time of this business plan that the financial position is viable but that in the longer term issues may adversely affect the position these have been flagged up for future action in the revised 5 year Business Plan to be drafted once the stock condition data is known.

4.1.2 HRA 2003/4 Actuals;2004/05 Estimates and 2005/6 Probables.

The Housing Revenue Account Financial forecast for the two years of this Business Plan are contained in the following sections

- HRA Revenue Forecast
- HRA Capital Programme & Resources Forecast
- Underlying Financial Assumptions to Forecasts

The table below gives the HRA forecast for the period of the Business Plan as at December 2004.

The Housing Repairs and Maintenance Budgets for the period of the forecast are attached as appendix 6.4.2 and the HRA Capital forecast and programme in Appendix 6.4.1

Housing Revenue Account: 2003/4 Actuals: 2004/5 Probables :2005/6 Estimate

<u>Description</u>	<u>2003/04 Actuals</u>	<u>2004/05 Estimate</u>	<u>2004/05 Probable</u>	<u>2005/06 Estimate</u>
<u>HRA SUMMARY</u>	£	£	-	£
SUPERVISION & MANAGEMENT				
- General	28,646,876	27,396,140	27,655,390	27,534,540
- Special	1,027,479	1,355,900	1,432,130	1,846,400
REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE	4,612,238	5,259,780	5,516,040	5,281,250
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	34,286,593	34,011,820	34,603,560	34,662,190

TOTAL INCOME	12,746,462	15,408,920	15,364,580	18,515,160
NET COST OF SERVICE	21,540,131	18,602,900	19,238,980	18,147,030
Total Below the Line Adjustments	(20,776,956)	(18,602,900)	(18,758,690)	(18,987,400)
NET (SURPLUS)/DEFICIT FOR YEAR	763,175	0	480,290	(840,370)
BALANCE B/FWD	(2,387,070)	(300,000)	(1,623,890)	(1,143,600)
USE OF/(CONTRIBUTION TO) BALANCES	763,175	0	480,290	(840,370)
BALANCE C/FWD	(1,623,895)	(300,000)	(1,143,600)	(1,983,970)
[Minimum Level of Balances Increased from £300k to £500k in 2004/05]				

The 2003/04 Outturn position on the HRA showed a net underspend on the account of some £1,324k. This included a number of carry forwards totalling £450k, the most notable of which was some £328k in respect of planned maintenance contracts that could not be completed during the financial year and have had to be carried forward into 2004/05. This arose as a result of the requirement to consult with leaseholders prior to the commencement of the work

The Council also decided to increase in the working balance to be retained on the HRA, from the previous level of £300k, to a prudent £500k for 2004/05 onwards.

The overall effect of the net underspends in 2003/04 was therefore, to provide an additional level of usable balances of some £674k, which is available as a cushion against spending pressures in the 2004/5 & future years.

In early forecasts of the HRA position for 2005/06 it was anticipated that, subject always to changes in the Subsidy Determinations, the HRA should not be under significant pressure during the two years of this business plan.

2004/05 was the last year in which the HRA was planned to make a Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay (RCCO). It is not considered that the underlying HRA can support an ongoing level of RCCO and they are not assumed in the current Capital Strategy. The 2004/05 RCCO of £647k therefore drops out of the HRA base budget in 2005/06 providing a further cushion against other spending pressures.

A recent consultation paper proposed changes to the current arrangements for the Government's policy on Rent Restructuring. The proposals in this consultation, initially due for implementation on 1st April 2005, could have had a significantly detrimental effect on Stevenage's HRA. However, the Draft HRA Subsidy Determinations 2005/06 were issued on 9th November 2004 and the proposals for changes to Rent Restructuring have been deferred for one year. The Draft determinations for 2005/06 are in overall terms positive for Stevenage, compared to the forecasts, reflecting a further significant increase in Maintenance Allowances for next financial year.

The combination of two years of favourable Subsidy Determinations, budget underspends from 2003/04 and the removal of RCCO from the base budget have put the HRA in an apparently "healthy" position for the two years of this Business Plan, however, the Council recognises that caution must be taken for the medium term forecast and must be mindful of that in setting its priorities and expenditure within this Business Plan.

The HRA will remain under continuing pressures, for the foreseeable future, from the impact of rent losses from Right to Buy sales. The HRA faces ongoing inflationary pressures from pay awards, pension costs, utilities budgets, repairs & maintenance costs etc. The effects of Rent Restructuring will continue to withdraw additional Housing Subsidy away from Stevenage and the negative impact of this is likely to be worse if changes to Rent Restructuring are introduced in April 2006. The HRA will be dependant on the extent to which Subsidy is redistributed in Management and Maintenance allowances, which is uncertain from year to year and provides no stability for forecasting. If no other action were taken it is likely that the current "healthy" level of HRA balances would be eroded over a relatively short period of time. Clearly this is an issue that will be addressed in the options appraisal process and 5 year business plan that will be devised once the stock condition data has been verified.

4.2 HRA Capital Programme

Resources / Programme 2003/4 –2005/6			
Capital Funding Resources	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6
Capital receipts & RCCO's			
Major Repairs Allowance Less Negative Transitional Subsidy			
Supporting People Funding to Decent Homes			
Total Estimated Capital Resources			
Required Capital programme			
Decent Homes			
Void works			
Other Planned Major Works			
Major Responsive Works			

Disabled Adaptations				
Total Estimated capital Programme				
Surplus/ (Deficit)				
Cumulative Surplus/ (Deficit)				

Pauline to insert figures or new table as she sees fit! And amend text as required!!

Need to set out how Capital allocated between HRA & general fund based around priorities of the Community Plan give details of overall figures and apportionment with reasons.

The HRA Capital forecast is very sensitive to the realisation of capital receipts. The Council believes that it has made reasonable and prudent assumptions with regard to the likely RTB sales . Current levels of RTB receipts remain fairly buoyant despite a national slowdown in house prices. Within this Business Plan the Council continues to reinvest them back into housing to achieve the Decent Homes standards. *Whilst funding has been identified to achieve the programmes set out in this business plan until the requirements of the verified stock condition survey and options appraisal is completed it is not possible with any degree of certainty to forecast the medium and longer term positions. These will be included in the 5 year business plan drawn up at that time.*

The Councils HRA Capital Programme 2004/5 &2005/6 has been shaped to meet the strategic priorities of the Council together with the expressed priorities of our tenants. An analysis of the available stock condition data, together with local knowledge has been used to inform the programmes. Priority has been given to funding the next phase of the decent homes standard based upon an elemental approach as set out in paragraph 2.5.6. The remainder of the programme has been targeted to meet essential health and safety issues together with the security and safety works raised by our tenants.

As the information from the stock condition survey becomes more robust the programme will again be shaped in consultation with our tenants to ensure resources are focused on meeting the key strategic targets.

4.3 HRA Financial Assumptions

The following assumptions have been made in the Housing Revenue Account two year Revenue and Capital Forecasts

Pauline to insert details below

Inflation

General
Pay
Rent
House prices

Management Costs

Repairs and Maintenance Costs

Major Repairs Allowance

Right to Buy assumptions

Rental Income

Subsidy

Sensitivity Analysis of management and Maintenance Allowances Supporting People

5 Priorities

In determining the key strategic housing priorities for the business plan the Council has taken into account;

- the views of its tenants and leaseholders.
- the Community Strategies four priorities
- national and regional policies
- how the Councils stock contributes to meeting the housing strategies six priorities
- the housing needs survey
- the stock condition survey
- The resources needed to fund the priorities set out below and the importance of the options appraisal in this respect.
- The outstanding issues from the 2002 –2007 Business Plan.

The Councils performance against the targets set in the 2002-2007 Business Plan can be seen at appendix 7

It is recognised that following the outcome of the options appraisal it will be necessary to revisit and amend the business plan and housing strategy in the light of the decisions taken

The business plan will be regularly reviewed through its life time to compare progress against the targets set and to respond to any political or legislative changes.

5.1 MONITORING DELIVERY

Fundamental to delivering the Business Plan is the Business Plan Action Plan found at appendix 6 Progress against this Action Plan will be monitored in a number of ways:

- Each individual target will be overseen by a responsible officer
- The Housing Strategy Group led by the Head of Housing will take overall responsibility for the Business Plan and Action Plan and publish an annual update.
- Tenants and leaseholders and their representatives as well as other stakeholders will be regularly kept abreast of progress through a number of routes. These include a number of inter-related forums including:
 - FOSTA
 - Individual tenants groups
 - The RSL Liaison forum
 - The Homelessness Forum
 - Leaseholder forum
 - Repairs Focus Group
 - Sheltered Housing Focus Group
- We will also publish updates in our tenants and housing applicants newsletters “Housing for You” and “Rehousing News”
- Council Members will implement the Housing Business Plan Action Plan through the Housing and Well being Scrutiny Panel and, where appropriate the Executive Committee.
- The Government Office of the East of England will assess this Business Plan to ensure it is “Fit for Purpose”.

5.1.2 Business Plan Key Strategic Priorities

Set out below are the **key strategic business plan priorities**;

Priority 1 ; Providing Affordable Housing

- **To maximise delivery of affordable housing** by working in partnership with RSL’s to make bids to the Housing Corporation through the Annual Development. Plan; ;the disposal of council owned land; working with English Partnerships; the use of planning agreements and the achieving of planning permission for Stevenage West

- **To extend the range of homes available to those in housing need** by identifying the demand for key workers ;placing covenants on disposal of council owned land and Housing Corporation ADP bids
- **To Increase the rate of delivery of affordable homes** by using modern construction methods in new developments ;identifying council owned sites for redevelopment; providing capital resources to lever in development funding; ensuring developers are aware of individual site requirements by writing design guides for each site
- **To carry out the options appraisal** whereby changes to the stock arrangements could increase the resources available to invest in other housing priorities including the development of new homes.
- **To increase the supply of council dwellings becoming available for re letting** by speeding up the void turn around times and the reletting process.
- **To review the sheltered housing stock to address the hard to let vacancies** and consider decommissioning or remodelling to provide affordable homes that meets the clients needs.

Priority 2; Tackling Homelessness

- **To reduce levels of homelessness by better prevention and improved access** by increasing the usage of the housing advice service in particular for minority groups; achieving Community Legal Service Quality Mark in the general help category; expanding the schools programme to all schools in local area; maintaining the rent deposit scheme ; introducing a tenancy maintenance strategy aimed at young people and introducing a family mediation scheme.
- **To ensure an effective and efficient homeless service is provided** by making speedy decisions on applications; extending choice based lettings to homeless applicants and the elimination of hostels except for emergencies.
- **To carry out the options appraisal** the impact of which is set out in priority 1 above and impacts on this priority as the councils ability to tackle homelessness is linked to the availability of affordable homes
- **To increase the supply of quality temporary accommodation** by expansion of the PSL scheme

Priority 3: Supporting Independence, Special Needs

- **To ensure sufficient supported housing to meet the needs of all main groups** by making new provision for young people, people with drug and alcohol related problems, people with mental health problems and for those with disabilities; to review the allocation policy including its special needs quota and eligibility criteria for sheltered schemes.

- **To ensure all supported housing is supporting people compliant** by introducing policies, procedures and practices that meet the Quality Assessment Framework and developing and publishing a service user involvement strategy
- **To extend joint working protocols to all main groups** by partnership working with agencies dealing with mental health, learning difficulties, elderly and physically disabled young people.
- **To carry out the options appraisal** as this could have an impact on the use of Capital Receipts and for that reason has the potential to free up resources for investment into supported housing.

Priority 4: Delivering Quality and Choice

- **To maximise choice for all applicants** by introducing choice based lettings ;introducing a single register for all applicants; introducing a single gateway model for all housing assessments; developing intermediate tenure housing and ensuring an equal range of choice to all applicants.
- **To ensure high standards of housing management** by achieving a three star housing service; a more co-ordinated approach to anti-social behaviour; reducing rent arrears; greater tenant participation; improving the caretaking service; complete the implementation of the repairs service improvement plan ;ensuring all RSL's sign up to the RSL Charter and to work with private sector landlords to raise service levels.
- **To carry out options appraisal** to consider the most appropriate form of management to achieve the Council and tenants strategic priorities.
- **To consider the voluntary transfer of Stonyhall estate** to an RSL to enable improvements to be made to the estate or its demolition and re-provision. and cost

Priority 5; Enabling Decent Homes

- **To ensure all social housing meets the decent homes standard by 2010** by completing and validating the stock condition survey; formulating a 30 year maintenance strategy; and formulating a decent homes programme to meet the 2010 decency target.
- **To carry out the options appraisal** to determine which stock holding will best ensure that the Decent Homes standard is met by 2010

Priority 6: Sustainable Communities

- **To ensure that the housing needs and aspirations of the black and ethnic minority community are met** by evaluating the findings of the Housing Needs Review on BEM issues and reappraise the affordable housing strategy accordingly. ;improve information on housing options to BEM groups.

- To ensure that housing contributes to a safer Stevenage by tackling anti-social behaviour; utilizing introductory tenancies and that affordable housing development complies with local planning guidance
- *'Secure by Design'*.
- **To work to enable neighbourhood regeneration and health improvement** by providing affordable housing provision as part of the town centre and neighbourhood renewal ;providing key worker housing; contributing to health improvement in the town through the provision of decent Housing standard

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APPENDIX 1

Management Structure

There are four main departments within the Council:
Chief Executives Department;

- Department of Environmental Services;
- Department of Community Services;
- Department of Resources.
-

The Housing Division is sited within the Department of Community Services and is led by the Head of Housing.

There are five Divisional Managers responsible for day-to-day monitoring of services and performance. They are:

The Housing Needs and Strategy Manager, responsible for:

- housing allocations;
- homelessness and housing advice;
- housing strategy and policy;
- RSL liaison and new development;

The Maintenance Manager, responsible for;

- In-house responsive repair team;

The Tenancy Services Manager, responsible for;

- tenancy and estate management;
- neighbourhood housing services;
- Tenant Participation
- Caretaking

The Housing Property Services Manager; responsible for;

- implementation of capital programme;
- responsive repairs service (inspection/ordering);

The Housing Customer Services Manager; responsible for Richard.Paterson@stevenage.gov.uk

- IT Co-ordination;
- Right to Buy and leaseholder services;
- tenant participation.

Each Divisional Manager is responsible for the performance of their division and works with targets agreed with the Head of Housing at the beginning of the year. Quarterly reporting of performance is also passed to the Scrutiny and Review Panel so that ongoing monitoring of performance can take place at all levels.

The Head of Housing and Divisional Managers are also responsible for the co-ordination of projects at divisional, departmental or corporate levels can take place. In addition, the Housing Division Management Team chaired by the Head of Housing meets weekly to co-ordinate and review activity.

APPENDIX 2 CONTACT DETAILS

If you have any queries about specific issues raised in this strategy, please contact the officers listed below:

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Appendix 3 Glossary

ADP	Approved Development Programme
Affordable Housing	A general term for housing made available to rent or buy at a cost below market rent. Such housing is generally provided by Registered Social Landlords or Local Authorities on a not-for-profit basis
Approved Development Programme (ADP)	A programme of investment in affordable housing . The housing is developed by Registered Social Landlords, and funded by the Housing Corporation.
Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO)	A private company set up by a local authority to manage landlord services to tenants and leaseholders.
Audit Commission	The organisation that monitors the performance of local authorities
Benchmarking	The process by which councils compare their services, and set targets to improve them
Best Value	A statutory review which ensures that council services are provided in the most efficient way possible and give value for money
Brownfield Site	Land previously used and recycled for new development
Capital	Income from, or the value of assets, e.g. Right to Buy sales
Capital Forecast	Forecast for a capital expenditure programme over a given number of years
Capital Investment Programme	Investment in capital assets, e.g. funding for the <i>Decent Homes programme</i>
Capital Receipts	Income generated from the sale of council assets, for example, from Right to Buy sales
Capital Receipt Pooling	A Government proposal to put capital receipts from all local authorities into one national "pot" and then redistribute the money, targeting those authorities in greatest need.
Challenge Funding	A government-funded scheme to enable Registered Social Landlords to deliver affordable housing
Changing Gear	The Council's corporate programme to deliver major and substantial improvements in all its services over the next 10 years.
Choice Based Lettings	A system of allocating affordable homes that provides greater individual applicant choice

Community Safety Partnership	A partnership which includes the Council, the Police, the health service, social services, neighbourhood watch groups, RSLs and other organisations working together to tackle crime and disorder.
Community Strategy	A council strategy to deliver the key priorities of the community
Crashpad Scheme	A scheme which makes short-term emergency lodgings available to homeless young people usually in a private homes
Cultural Strategy	The Council's strategy to make the town a better place to live, work and visit
Cyclical Maintenance	Maintenance work that is necessary as a matter of routine, e.g. annual servicing of gas appliances.
Decent Homes	A government programme which requires social housing to be brought up to the <i>Decent Homes</i> standard by 2010
Disability Discrimination Act	Legislation designed to prevent the unfair treatment of people with disabilities
Disabled Facilities Grant	A grant to enable specialist adaptations for disabled people
District Plan	The Council's 10 year plan for land and building development in the town
English Partnerships	The government's national regeneration agency
EP	See English Partnerships
Equalities Standard	A government framework which helps local authorities develop a comprehensive and systematic approach to dealing with equalities issues
FOSTA	Federation of Stevenage Tenants Associations – the umbrella group of the seven Stevenage tenants associations
Growth Areas	Areas of the country earmarked for higher levels of development
GADG	Growth Area Delivery Grant: a government scheme to fund affordable housing in Growth Areas (See Growth Areas)
Guideline Rent	The Government's suggested average rent level for a particular size and type of council dwelling.
Homelessness Strategy	The council's strategy on Homelessness which it is required to produced by the Homelessness Act (2002)
Housing Association	See Registered Social Landlord
Housing Corporation	The government agency that funds, regulates and monitors Registered Social Landlords
Housing Gateway	A way of prioritising people in need of housing. It includes all available housing options in a single assessment

Housing Investment Programme	A Government scheme through which local authorities can bid for approval to borrow money for social housing programmes, including building.
Housing Needs Survey	A survey carried out periodically by local authorities to assess the housing need in their area
Housing Register	A list of applicants wanting affordable housing
Housing Revenue Account (HRA)	The pool of money derived from council tenants rent payments.
HRA	See Housing Revenue Account
HRA Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay	The financing of capital expenditure direct from revenue
HRA Revenue Forecast	An estimate of the revenue which will go into the HRA over several years
HRA Subsidy	A government grant which is paid into a local authority's Housing Revenue Account. The grant subsidises councils whose housing income (mostly from rent) is insufficient to cover specific housing costs such as those for maintenance and management. Councils, whose housing income is greater than their costs (as identified by the Government) are known as <i>Negative Subsidy Authorities</i> and are required to pay the balance into their General Fund. With the introduction of the Major Repairs Allowance in 2001/02 a large number of local authorities, including Stevenage, ceased to be Negative Subsidy Authorities. The money formerly paid annually into the General Fund from the HRA will be replaced by an annual payment from the Major Repairs Allowance. This sum will gradually decrease to zero over the next 10 years. This arrangement is known as the <i>Transitional Negative Subsidy Transfer</i> .
Key workers	People employed in jobs which have a particular importance to the general community e.g. nurses, teachers
Limit Rent	The maximum rent the Government will allow local authorities to charge for a particular size or type of dwelling.
Local Authority Social Housing Grant (LASHG)	Grant paid by the council to an Registered Social Landlord to develop affordable homes
Local Plan	A local plan sets out a council's policies for guiding and controlling the way that buildings and land are used and developed
Local Strategic Partnership	A forum of organizations in the town which endorses and monitors the Community Strategy
Major Repairs Allowance	Funding available to local authorities to deliver the <i>Decent Homes Programme</i>

Management and Maintenance Allowance	An allowance per dwelling as specified by the Government
Negative Subsidy Authority	See HRA subsidy
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM)	The government department responsible for housing and planning policy (among other things)
Options Appraisal	The formal process undertaken by a local authority to study all the options for the future of its housing stock.
PIs (Performance Indicators)	The Audit Commission requires the Council to measure its Performance in various key areas of service delivery. These are called performance indicators
Performance Management	The means by which the Council monitors its performance against performance indicators and other performance targets.
Planning Gain	See Section 106 agreements (\$106)
PPG3	Government planning guidance
PSL (Private Sector Leasing)	Property leased to house homeless families
Private Finance Initiative (PFI)	A scheme by which private funds can be brought in to pay for public works, e.g. the building of new hospitals or the regeneration of small neighbourhoods
Quality Mark	An accreditation award for advice agencies
Receipt pooling	A system in which a proportion of a local authority's receipts from Right to Buy sales are paid over (pooled) to central government
Regeneration	An Action Plan for the improvement of an area or a situation. The plan usually targets resources at a specific aspect of the problem, for example, the economic situation (for example, by introducing job creation and adult retraining schemes, facilitating the setting up of credit unions) or neighbourhood regeneration (for example, by improving local shopping centres, installing CCTV cameras, making community safety improvements).
Regional Housing Strategy	A strategic housing framework that sets out the priorities for a region of the UK. Stevenage is part of the Eastern Region.
Registered Social Landlord (RSL)	Not-for-profit housing providers regulated by the Housing Corporation
Rent Convergence	Under rent convergence the rents of all social landlords in a given area will gradually equalise over a 10 year period to give tenants genuine choice.
Rent Rebates	Also known as Housing Benefit. A means-tested benefit available to tenants of all types of rented accommodation

Rent Restructuring	Under Rent Restructuring, the rents of all social housing properties will be based on a standard formula. This formula will include the size of the property, its value, the average local income and average local rent level. See also Rent Convergence
Retail Price Index (RPI)	A calculation used nationally to measure the level of inflation
Revenue	Income from charges or grants, e.g. from rents, or service charges
Right to Buy	The legislation that allows council tenants to purchase their homes at a discount
Risk Assessment	A method of estimating the chances of a project not being completed to deadline, and the problems failure would cause.
RSL	See Registered Social Landlord
SAP rating	A rating of the energy efficiency of a dwelling
Section 106 Agreement (S106)	An agreement between the council and developers pursuant to a planning application. S106 agreements often specify a proportion of affordable housing as a condition of planning permission
Shared ownership	A form of affordable housing where the applicant purchases a proportion of a home while the rest remains in the ownership of an Registered Social Landlord . This makes home ownership more affordable
Sheltered Accommodation	Housing for the elderly with warden support. It is usually offered for rent, but can sometimes be purchased on a leasehold basis.
Special Needs	A general term for groups of clients with specific housing needs e.g., people with mental illness needing support, young people needing support, those with a disability.
SRB5	The Single Regeneration Budget is the fifth round of funding for the regeneration of deprived areas. In Stevenage the Shephall and Bedwell areas received SRB money.
Stakeholders	Those who have an interest in the housing services the Council provides, for example tenants, leaseholders, RSLs, and Social Services.
Stock condition Survey	A technical survey of the condition of dwellings to determine defects and establish the level of maintenance investment required over the longer term
Stock Transfer	The sale of a local authority's housing stock to an RSL
Superannuation Fund	Local Government employees' pension fund

Supporting People

A means-tested government programme which provides subsidies to help people pay for their housing-related support (this covers support provided by hostels, sheltered schemes, learning disability accommodation, etc)

Tenant Compact

A mutual agreement between a landlord and tenants/leaseholders regarding their involvement in the management of their homes.

Tenant participation

A process whereby a landlord is advised of the views and priorities of tenants

See HRA Subsidy

Sites not specifically identified as available in the local plan or previously developed sites that become available unexpectedly

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APPENDIX 4: KEY PARTNERSHIPS

Name of Group	Membership	Purpose	Meets
Stakeholder Consultative Forum		Consultation and monitoring of delivery of the Housing Strategy	Annually
Local Strategic Partnership	Representatives of voluntary, community and statutory groups	Development and implementation of the Community Strategy	Quarterly
Herts Housing Officers	Senior Housing Officers from Hertfordshire's 10 borough and district authorities	To develop cross authority working	Quarterly
Stevenage Special Needs Panel	Stevenage Borough Council, Social Services	Partnership working to meet the housing needs of clients with special needs and those requiring supported housing	Monthly
Community Safety Partnership	Representatives of voluntary, community and statutory groups including police and social services	Development and implementation of the Community Safety Strategy	Monthly
<i>Supporting People</i> Commissioning Body & Core Strategy Development Group	Hertfordshire County Council and Hertfordshire's 10 borough and district authorities, plus Health and Probation	Implementation of the <i>Supporting People</i> regime and development of support services	Monthly
London Commuter Belt Sub-Region Partnership	The 15 borough and district authorities within the sub-region	Development of sub-regional working and the Sub-Regional Housing Strategy	Quarterly
Stevenage Homelessness Forum	Representatives of voluntary, community and statutory groups	To monitor and implement the Homelessness Strategy	Bi-annually
Community Legal Services Partnership	Representatives of voluntary, community and statutory groups	Ensuring that information and advice about their legal rights is available to those who need it	Quarterly

RSL Liaison Group	RSLs, The Housing Corporation	Sharing of good practice, consultation and liaison on management and development issues	Quarterly
Name of Group	Membership	Purpose	Meets
Hertfordshire Development Officers Group	Development Officers from the 10 borough and district authorities	Sharing of good practice	Quarterly
Domestic Violence Forum	Representatives of voluntary, community and statutory groups with a particular interest in this issue e.g. police, Crown Prosecution Service, Women's Aid, Relate, Social Services	Developing good practice, awareness raising	Every other month
Herts Homeless Officers Group	Homelessness Managers from the 10 Districts of Hertfordshire	Information sharing, development of Best practice on homelessness issues	Quarterly
Herts Young Homeless Group	Representatives of voluntary, community and statutory groups with a particular interest in this issue e.g. Shelter, Social Services, RSLs, supported housing providers, Herts Young Homeless Group	Development of services to young homeless people	Monthly
Private Sector Landlord Forum	Private landlords, council staff	Information sharing	Annually
Stevenage & North Herts Supporting People Forum	Representatives of voluntary, community and statutory groups with a particular interest in this issue	Information sharing	Quarterly
Health Improvement and Modernisation Plan Task Force	Representatives from Health, Social Services, the voluntary sector, NHDC, SBC	Sharing of good practice	Quarterly

Name of Group	Membership	Purpose	Meets
Stakeholder Consultative Forum		Consultation and monitoring of delivery of the Housing Strategy	Annually
Local Strategic Partnership	Representatives of voluntary, community and statutory groups	Development and implementation of the Community Strategy	Quarterly
Herts Housing Officers	Hertfordshire's 10 borough and district authorities	To develop cross authority working	Quarterly
Stevenage Special Needs Panel	Stevenage Borough Council Social Services	Partnership working to meet the housing needs of clients with special needs and those requiring supported housing	Monthly
Community Safety Partnership	Representatives of voluntary, community and statutory groups including police and social services	Development and implementation of the Community Safety Strategy	Monthly
Supporting People Commissioning Body & Strategic Development Group	Hertfordshire County Council Hertfordshire's 10 borough and district authorities	Implementation of the Supporting People regime and development of support services	Monthly
London Commuter Belt Sub-Region Partnership	The 15 borough and district authorities with the sub-region	Development of sub-regional working and the Sub-Regional Housing Strategy	Quarterly
Stevenage Homelessness Forum	Representatives of voluntary, community and statutory groups	To monitor and implement the Homelessness Strategy	Bi-annually
Community Legal Services Partnership	Representatives of voluntary, community and statutory groups	Ensuring that information and advice about their legal rights is available to those who need it	Quarterly
RSL Liaison Group	RSLs The Housing Corporation	Sharing of good practice, consultation and liaison on management and development issues	Quarterly
Hertfordshire Development Officers Group	Development Officers from the 10 borough and district authorities	Sharing of good practice	Quarterly
Domestic Violence Forum	Representatives of voluntary, community and statutory groups with a particular interest in this issue e.g. police, CPS, Women's Aid, Relate, Social Services	Developing good practice, awareness raising	Every other month

Herts Homeless Officers Group	Homelessness Managers from the 10 Districts of Hertfordshire	Information sharing, development of Best practice on homelessness issues	Quarterly
Herts Young Homeless Group	Representatives of voluntary, community and statutory groups with a particular interest in this issue e.g. Shelter, Social Services, RSL supported housing providers, Herts. Young Homeless Group	Development of services to young homeless people	Monthly
Private Sector Landlord Forum	Private landlords. Council staff	Information sharing	Annually
Stevenage & North Herts Supporting People Forum	Representatives of voluntary, community and statutory groups with a particular interest in this issue	Information sharing	Quarterly
Health Improvement and Modernisation Plan Task Force	Representatives from Health, Social Services, Voluntary Sector, NHDG, SBC		Quarterly

APPENDIX 5: SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Document	Organisation	Contact
Homelessness Strategy, 2003 – 2008	SBC	www.stevenage.gov.uk
Housing Needs Survey, 2004	SBC	www.stevenage.gov.uk
Hertfordshire Housing Study, 2002	SBC (plus the nine other Hertfordshire District authorities)	www.stevenage.gov.uk
Stock Condition Survey	SBC	www.stevenage.gov.uk
Private Sector Housing Stock Condition Survey, 2001	SBC	www.stevenage.gov.uk
Asset Management Plan	SBC	www.stevenage.gov.uk
Best Value Review: Housing Needs	SBC	www.stevenage.gov.uk
Best Value Review: <i>Better Homes for Stevenage</i>	SBC	www.stevenage.gov.uk
Best Value Review: Caretaking Service	SBC	www.stevenage.gov.uk
Sustainable Communities: <i>Building for the Future</i>	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM)	www.odpm.gov.uk
Quality and Choice: <i>A Decent Home for All</i>	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM)	www.odpm.gov.uk
London Commuter Belt Sub-Regional Strategy	SBC (plus the nine other Hertfordshire District authorities)	www.stevenage.gov.uk
Housing Corporation Investment Strategy	Housing Corporation	www.housingcorp.gov.uk
Hertfordshire <i>Supporting People</i> Strategy	Hertfordshire County Council	www.herts-direct.gov.uk
Stevenage Local District Plan	SBC	www.stevenage.gov.uk
Community Strategy	SBC and the Stevenage Partnership	www.stevenage.gov.uk
Community Safety Strategy	SBC	www.stevenage.gov.uk

Document	Organisation	Contact
Health Improvement Plan	North Herts and Stevenage Primary Care Trust	www.stevenage.gov.uk
Stevenage Housing Business Plan	SBC	www.stevenage.gov.uk
Private Sector renewal Strategy	SBC	www.stevenage.gov.uk
Tenants Compact	SBC	www.stevenage.gov.uk

Appendix 6

**Stevenage Business
Plan**

**2003-2005
Performance**

&

2003-2006 Action Plan

STATISTICAL APPENDIX

APPENDIX 6.1

HOUSING LOCAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

INDICATOR	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	IMPROVED?
Rent Arrears				
As a % of debit	3.1%	2.56%	2.37%	Yes
Number of tenants in arrears	Not collected	Not collected	31.5%	
% owing £250 or 13 weeks rent	Not collected	Not collected	4%	
Repairs				
% urgent repairs completed on time	74.63%	88%	90%	Yes
Average time to complete non-urgent repairs	22.25 days	19.16 days	18.4 days	Yes
Average re-let time general needs	41 days	33 days	30 days	Yes
Void garages as a % of stock	Not collected	Not collected	16.2%	

APPENDIX 6.2

HOUSING BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance indicator	Stevenage 00/01 actual	Stevenage 01/02 Actual	Stevenage 02/03 Actual	Improving?	National top quartile 2001/02 actual
BVPI 63: SAP rating	62.3	62.65	63.4	Yes	61
BVPI 66a: proportion of rent collected	97.3%	97.55%	97.71%	Yes	98.6%
BVPI 74: Tenant satisfaction with landlord	78%	No survey	No survey	N/a	86%
BVPI 75: Tenant satisfaction with participation	55%	No survey	No survey	N/a	69%
BVPI 183: a) % of properties non-decent b) % change in proportion	New indicator	New indicator	a) 72% b) 6%	N/a	New indicator
BVPI 185: % of repairs appointments made & kept	New indicator	New indicator	14.25%	N/a	New indicator

Appendix-6.3 Progress on 2002-2007 Business Plan

Action Plan Priority	Current Status	Lead Officer	Target Date
<p>Stock Condition & Decent Homes Standards To Commission new stock condition survey</p>	<p>Verification survey has been commissioned for the stock condition</p>	<p>Paul Smith</p>	<p>April survey 2005</p>
<p>To prepare accurate programme of work to achieve 100% compliance with Decent Homes Standards by 2010</p>	<p>This is still to be formulated from stock condition data once verified and iworld</p>	<p>Paul Smith / Asset Manager</p>	<p>May 05</p>
<p>To introduce a system to manage and control the data</p>	<p>(housing system) & asset management system is fully implemented</p>	<p>IT</p>	<p>March 2005</p>
<p>To meet tenants request for improved security</p>	<p>Window & door programmes are in place. New door entry installations and upgrading has commenced and will continue as part of a rolling programme of works</p>	<p>Paul Smith</p>	<p>Completed</p>
<p>To introduce a lift servicing contract & survey to identify repairs programme.</p>	<p>Kone Plc have been awarded lift servicing contract with effect from June 2002. All major repairs have been carried out.</p>	<p>Richard Patterson</p>	<p>Completed</p>
<p>To install and upgrade fire alarm and Careline systems</p>	<p>New fire alarm systems have been installed in both Brent & Harrow Courts and all sheltered schemes. Other blocks are to undergo fire risk assessments to prioritise. Careline Systems are being upgraded by community services as part of a planned regime</p>	<p>Principle M&E engineer</p>	<p>Completed</p>
		<p>Janet Hagger</p>	<p>Completed</p>

Action Plan Priority	Current Status	Lead Officer	Target Date
To tender for a survey and data base for an asbestos register	Survey work has been completed on communal areas and we now meet the requirements of CAWR 2002 and are finalising an asbestos management database.	Principle M&E Engineer	March 2005
Introduce service contracts gas central heating	Due for retender 2005	Principle M&E Engineer	01.09.05
Electrical installation servicing	Tendered October 2004 Contracts signed.	Dick Paterson	completed
Fire alarms, emergency lighting	New installation and upgrading has commenced and will continue as part of a rolling programme of works	Principle M&E Engineer	Completed
Lifts	In place 1 st June 2002 rolling programme to complete in 2007		To complete years programme to achieve 31 st May 2007 completion
Standing water and distribution system testing	A specialist consultant is being appointed to carry out risk assessments & provide reports. Once complete a maintenance regime will be implemented.	DES/Richard Paterson	31 st May 2007 completion
Door entry systems	New installation and upgrading has commenced and will continue as part of a rolling programme of works	Peter Gardiner	Dec 2004-
Rubbish chutes and associated plant	Preparatory work has started to identify areas of need. Once identified upgrade/maintenance programmes will be formulated.	Paul Smith	Completed
Laundry equipment	Maintenance contracts are in place. New	Richard Paterson	

Action Plan Priority	Current Status	Lead Officer	Target Date
<p>External and communal areas.</p> <p>To achieve target of planned to responsive repairs ratio of 70-30</p>	<p>installation and upgrading will be incorporated as part of a rolling programme of works</p> <p>6 'catch up' painting contracts have been tendered and are currently awaiting confirmation of start dates. Work is in the preliminary stages to expand cyclical/planned maintenance regimes.</p> <p>This forms part of the overall future maintenance strategy and is part of an on going planning process that incorporate both budgetary & staffing resource.</p>	<p>Richard Paterson</p> <p>Richard Paterson & Paul Smith</p> <p>Jo Barrett /Paul Smith</p>	<p>November 2004</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>March 2005</p>

Action Plan Priority	Current Status	Lead Officer	Target Date
<p>Providing for People with Special Needs</p> <p>To be fully integrated partner and provider of Care in the community and Supporting People in Stevenage</p> <p>To decommission unsuitable sheltered schemes and replace with new 2 bedroom bungalows in partnership with RSL.</p>	<p>The Council has adopted the Hertfordshire Supporting People Strategy and is an active member of the Herts. Supporting People Commissioning and Core Strategy Groups. Over £600k of Supporting People funding secured for SBC Schemes</p> <p>Ross Court Scheme providing 13 new 20bed bungalows due for completion Autumn 2004</p>	<p>Policy & Strategy Manager</p> <p>Policy & Strategy Manager</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p>
<p>Working in the community</p> <p>To tackle social exclusion and ensure equality of opportunity</p>	<p>Equalities Standard Level 1 achieved Level 2 by 2005</p>	<p>Head of Housing</p>	<p>2005</p>
<p>Energy and the Environment</p> <p>To provide sustainable developments</p> <p>To maximise energy efficiency in the town and achieve a 30% reduction in the energy consumption of dwellings by 2007</p>	<p>This is part of an overall strategy to promote energy efficiency and incorporate best practice standards within all council operations.</p>	<p>Energy Manager</p>	<p>To complete years programme to achieve March 2007 completion</p>
<p>Homelessness</p> <p>a) to conduct a homeless ness review</p> <p>b) to produce & publish its homelessness strategy</p>	<p>Homelessness Review undertaken 2002/03</p> <p>Homelessness Strategy published July 2003</p>		<p>Completed</p>

Action Plan Priority	Current Status	Lead Officer	Target Date
<p>Allocations and Choice</p> <p>To revise the allocation policy in 2002/3 by introducing choice based lettings</p>	<p>Choice Based Lettings Pilot introduced May 2003</p>	<p>Policy & Strategy Manager</p>	<p>Completed</p>
<p>Tenant involvement</p> <p>To widen tenant participation To improve the flow of information and feedback To develop real decision-making powers</p> <p>By</p> <p>An annual TP plan</p> <p>Specialist focus groups</p> <p>Tenants training programme</p> <p>Payment of expenses for tenants representatives</p> <p>Reconsider funding available for tenants groups</p> <p>Review FOSTA office arrangements, & Web site Develop a Good Practice Handbook</p>	<p>Visioning days June/July 2004 Tenants survey for aspirations Involvement in Housing Options and focus groups</p> <p>Annual production process in place with tenants & residents</p> <p>Sheltered & Repairs groups set up</p> <p>Annual programme in place to be jointly run with North Herts and Hounds cottage HA to reduce costs and avoid duplication.</p> <p>In place</p> <p>Has been rescheduled for March 2005 as a result of the pressure on the tenants group coming from the Options Appraisal Process</p> <p>Has been rescheduled for March 2005 as a result of the pressure on the tenants group coming from the Options Appraisal Process</p>	<p>M Herdman</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>March 2005</p> <p>March 2005</p>

Appendix6.4 Business Plan 2004-2007 Action Plan

Key Links to Community Plan Priorities.

1. **Community Leadership**
2. **Regeneration of Stevenage**
3. **First Class Customer Services and good quality from the Council**
4. **A fair and inclusive community**

This action plan is a summary of our key business plan priorities for Stevenage . The numbers in the key links column corresponds with the 4 community plan priorities set out above.

Priority 1: Providing Affordable Housing (NB targets are to achieve 2004/5 & 2005/6 programmes to achieve later completion dates where applicable.)

Priority	Who	Target	When	Resources	Key Links
To maximise the delivery of affordable housing	Head of Housing	Average of 100 homes per annum over next 5 years	2004 – 2008	Housing Corporation ADP Bids	2,3,4
	Head of Planning	100 additional affordable homes to be provided through S 106 planning agreements	2004-2008	Disposal of council-owned land & English Partnerships	2,3,4
	Head of Planning	Increase opportunities for cross boundary development	2004- 2008	Planning agreements	2,3,4
	Head of Planning	Achieve planning permission for Stevenage West to provide 1285 affordable homes	2004 – 2008		2,3,4
	Head of Planning	Begin redevelopment of the Town Centre to provide 250 affordable homes	2004-2008		2,3,4
To extend the range of homes available to those in housing need	Head of Housing	Provide 15% of affordable homes on Brittain Way for key workers	2004-2007	Disposal of Council owned land with covenants, Housing Corporation ADP bids	2,3,4.
	Head of Housing	Provide 5% of affordable homes for tenures other than social rented. Eg shared equity, below market rented	2004-2007	Disposal of Council owned land with covenants, Housing Corporation ADP bids	2,3,4

To increase the rate of delivery of affordable homes	Head of Housing	To identify council owned sites for redevelopment and to write design guides for each site encouraging the use of modern construction methods.	2004- 2008	Disposal of Council owned land , Housing Corporation ADP bids	2,3,4
Strengthen regeneration bids that include housing by the inclusion of play and other facilities to meet government guidelines	Heads of Housing & Planning	To agree a clear brief to design play & recreation provision within regeneration areas	March 2005	Within Existing Resources	2 & \$
	Director of Community Services	To carry out options appraisal and report to Council	Feb 2005	£100,000 in 2004/5 estimates	1,2,3,4
	Tenancy services Manager	To increase the supply of council dwellings becoming available for reletting to achieve upper quartile performance	2004-2005	Within existing resources	2,3,4
	Head of Community Services	To review the sheltered housing stock to address the hard to let vacancies and consider options for remodelling/reprovision	December 2004	Within existing resources	2,3,4

Priority : 2 Tackling Homelessness

Priority	Who	Target	When	Resources	Key Links
To reduce levels of homelessness by better prevention and improved access	Housing Needs and Strategy Manager				
	Housing Needs and Strategy Manager	To increase usage of Housing Advice Services by 10 % & to increase access for minority groups	2004- 2008	Within existing resources & 2 year S93 homeless grant	2,3,4
	Housing Needs and Strategy Manager	Introduce a family mediation scheme	2004—2006	Within existing resources & 2 year S93 homeless grant	1.2.3.4

	Housing Needs and Strategy Manager	Maintain rent deposit scheme at 20 placements per year	2004-2008	Within existing resources	2,3,4
To ensure an effective and efficient homeless service is provided	Housing Needs and Strategy Manager	To achieve 85% of decisions on presentations within 33 working days To achieve 90% presentations within 33 working days	2004 – 2005 2005-2006	Within existing resources	2,3,4
	Housing Needs and Strategy Manager	To extend the choice based lettings scheme to homeless applicants	2005	Within existing resources	2,3,4
To increase the supply of quality temporary accommodation	Housing Needs and Strategy Manager	Provide an additional 15 Private Sector Leased properties	2004-2005	Within existing resources	2.3.4
To complete the options appraisal	Director of Community services	To complete the options appraisal and report to Council	February 2005	£100,00 in 2004/5 estimates	1,2,3,4

Priority : 3 Supporting Independence, Special Needs

Priority	Who	Target	When	Resources	Key Links
To ensure sufficient supported housing to meet the needs of all main groups	Principal Strategy and Development Officer	6 additional units for young people 5 units drug & alcohol clients	2004-2008 2004-2008	Capital funding; ADP Revenue supporting People	2,3,4 2,3,4
		20 units for people with mental health Adapt 40 units per year Disability grants	2004-2008 2004- 2008	SBC capital assets Disability Facilities Grant Additional funding to be identified	2,3,4 2,3,4
To ensure all supported housing is supporting people compliant	Housing Needs & Strategy	To ensure that all supported housing meets the Quality Assessment Framework and	2004-2006	Within existing resources	2,3,4

	Manager	the development and publication of a service user involvement strategy	2004-2006	Within existing resources	2,3,4
To extend joint working protocols to all main groups	Housing Needs & Strategy Manager	Have signed working protocols covering mental health, learning difficulties , elderly and physically disabled young people	2005	Within existing resources	2,3,4
To carry out options appraisal	Director of Community services	To complete the options appraisal and report to Council	February 2005	£100,00 in 2004/5 estimates	1,2,3,4
To provide sheltered housing support services responsive to the needs of older people	Director of Community Services	Produce a Sheltered housing improvement plan as part of BV review. Produce a comprehensive appraisal of the sheltered housing stock Consider the future management of the sheltered housing stock as part of the options appraisal	September 2004	Within existing resources	2,3 & 4,
To develop the range of extra care provision in partnership with health and adult care	Director of Community Services	Review the direct provision of extra care at Silkin Court To determine and consider the need to reprovise existing sheltered housing for extra care schemes.	Oct 2004- October 2004	Within existing resources Within existing resources and Bids for Supporting people & Capital Funding PCT	2,3 & 4 2,3 & 4
To provide and develop the Careline Service for elderly people	Director of Community Services	Produce a careline improvement plan as Part of BV Review Undertake Careline users survey	September 2004 October 2004	Within existing resources Within existing resources	3 & 4 3 & 4
To provide support assistance with removals for people moving into sheltered housing	Director of Community Services	Review the tenant removal scheme	September 2004	Within existing resources	3 & 4

Priority 4; Delivering Quality and Choice

Priority	Who	Target	When	Resources	Key Links
To maximise choice for all applicants	Head of Housing	Introduce choice based lettings for all property types including nominations to RSL's	2005	Within existing resources	2,3,4
	Head of Housing	Develop a single register for all applicants	2005	Within existing resources	2,3,4
	Head of Housing	Introduce a single gateway model for all housing assessments	2005-2006	Within existing resources	1.2.3.4
	Head of Housing	Develop intermediate tenure housing	2004-2008	Within existing resources	2,3,4
Ensure high standards of housing Management	Housing Needs and Strategy Manager	Achieve a three star housing service	2006	Within existing resources	1,2,3,4
	Tenancy Services Manager	To achieve Tenancy Services Action Plan	2004 -2006	Within existing resources March 2005	2,3,4
	Head of Housing	To complete the implementation of the Housing Repairs improvement plan	2004-2005	Within existing resources	2,3,4
To carry out options appraisal	Director of Community services	To complete the options appraisal and report to Council	February 2005	£100,00 in 2004/5 estimates	1,2,3,4
To consider the voluntary transfer of Stonyhall Estate	Director of Community services	To carry out options appraisal and tenant ballot on transfer to RSL	2005	Within existing resources	1,2,3,4
To provide a sheltered housing service responsive to the needs of older people	Director of Community services	Achieve Centre for Sheltered Housing Studies accreditation for all sheltered housing	2005 - 2006	Within existing resource	3 &4
	Director of Community services	Develop and implement the Sheltered Housing Focus Group and establish a sheltered housing forum	September 2004	Within existing resource	2 & 3
		Develop an action plan to address issues arising from the Starfish tenants sheltered housing survey	March 2005	Within existing resource	2 & 3

Priority 5 Enabling Decent Homes

Priority	Who	Target	When	Resources	Key Links
To ensure all social housing meets the decent homes standard	Head of Housing Technical Services	Complete and evaluate the stock condition survey to formulate ; 30 year maintenance strategy	Oct 2004-April 2005	HRA	2,3
		Action plant to ensure all the stock meets the decent homes standard by 2010 Action plan to achieve DHS	Oct 2004 – April 2005	Options Appraisal	2,3,4
		Supplementary stock information	April 2005	Within Existing Resources	2&3
		DH standard (min/Stevenage std) Voids standard	March 2005	Within Existing Resources	2&3
		Stevenage Standard	March 2005	Resources	2&3
		Option Appraisal	June 2005	Within Existing Resources	2&3
		EU procurement – large programmes	Jan/Feb 05	Within Existing Resources	2&3
		Tender docs	Feb/Mar 05	Resources	2&3
		Tendering period	April/May 05	Within Existing Resources	2&3
		Let contracts	May/June 05	Resources	2&3
Start on site	June/July 05	Within Existing Resources	2&3		
		Staff Recruitment – advertise Interview In post	Jan/Feb05 Feb/Mar 05 April/May	Within Existing Resources	2&3 2&3 2&3
To carry out options appraisal	Director of Community services	To complete the options appraisal to determine which stock holding will best ensure delivery of the DHS and report to Council	February 2005	£100,00 in 2004/5 estimates	1,2,3,4

Priority 6 Sustainable Communities

Priority	Who	Target	When	Resources	Key Links
To ensure that the housing needs and aspirations of the black and ethnic minority communities are met.	Housing Needs and Strategy Manager	Reappraise the Housing Needs strategy in the light of the review on BEM groups and report to Executive	2005	Within existing resources	1,2,3,4
	Housing Needs and Strategy Manager	Improve information on housing options to BEM groups	2005-2006	Within existing resources	1,2,3,4
Ensure housing contributes to a safer Stevenage	Housing Needs and Strategy Manager & Tenancy Services Manager	Appoint a new Tenancy Enforcement Officer to tackle anti-social behaviour through increase use of anti-social behaviour orders and pro- active management.	2004-2008	HRA	2.3.4
	Tenancy Services Manager	Implement Introductory Tenancies	2004-2008	Within existing resources	2,3,4
	Head of Housing	Ensure affordable housing developments complies with local Planning Guidance, Secure by Design.	2004-8	ADP & S 106 guidance	1,2,3,4
Work to enable neighbourhood regeneration and health improvement	Head of Planning	Provide 250 affordable housing units as part of town centre redevelopment		S106, Garage sites, ADP & LA disposals.	1,2,3,4
		Provide affordable housing as part of the neighbourhood regeneration		S106, Garage sites, ADP & LA disposals	1,2,3,4
	Head of Housing Technical Services	Contribute to the health of the town through the provision of Decent Homes Standard	2004- 2006	Options appraisal	1,2,3,4

6.5 Capital Programme: Performance 2003/4 & 2004/5 (estimate) & Draft 2005/6 programme

Key Elements of 2003/4 Housing Capital Programme			
Item	Actual Expenditure £	Targets	Comments
Asbestos	180,000		Budget carried forward to 2004/05 as asbestos survey due to be completed as part of the stock condition transfer. This was not instigated and funding slipped to 04/05
Works to sheltered scheme	27,000	2 schemes	Completed Overspent by £20,440 upgrading of door entry security system and CCTV systems
Communal Safety	33,000	Oval door entry & pedestrian bridge blind spots	Oval Completed £14,744. carried forward for works to pedestrian bridge to reduce 'blind spots' over walling.
Lifts	150,000	25	Completed and £43,105 savings carried forward into 2004/5 programme
Subsidence	250,000	66 Properties received investigation, monitoring & repaired as part of an ongoing process.	Completed but earmarked £21,437 – structural investigation, monitoring and remedial works to various properties as identified. Based on average unit cost of £3,458
Fire Alarms	80,000	6	Completed savings of £6,661 carried forward to next years programme
Structural works	50,000	4 new staircases fitted.	Completed
Major works Boilers and H&S	1,700,000		Completed but reprioritised £75,676 – to do boiler replacements and rewires in void properties, including replace kitchen and bathrooms to achieve Decent Homes standards.
Window & door replacement	1,080,000	450 properties	Completed Saving of £108,534 carried forward to 2004/5.

Roofing	30,000	2 blocks	Completed Overspend £16,074 as a result of anomalies to original specification
Rewire	250,000	136	Completed but overspend £67,716 – rewires and emergency boiler replacements to occupied properties.
Decent Homes Phase 1&2	6,713,370	DH1 – 575 DH2 - 180	Completed DH1 but slippage £1,443,125 on DH2 as a result of reviewing approach for phase 2 in consultation with tenants.
Disabled Adaptations	500,000	2 extensions built 265 Homes having adaptation work.	Completed but overspend of £29,809 due to meeting high priority needs of clients from the waiting list

Capital Programme 2004/5

Key Elements of 2004/5 Housing Capital Programme			
Item	Budget £	Target	Comments
Asbestos	476,380	All common areas to be inspected and asbestos to be noted	Completed the asbestos surveys to communal areas to comply with the requirements of the CAWR2002. Savings have been generated which are being carried forward for the 2005/6 renewal programme.
Electrical works to sheltered scheme	92,000	4 schemes	Forecast to complete on time Upgrade all communal areas lighting and emergency lighting within some sheltered schemes
Communal Lighting	57,500	28 staircases	Forecast to complete on time – upgrading landlord lights to blocks of flats.
Lifts	126,610	7 upgrades	.Completed to comply with LG10 at a saving of £40k
Subsidence	308,940	77 Properties will receive investigation, monitoring & repair as part of an ongoing programme	Forecast to complete on time at an average unit cost of £3458
Fire Alarms	75,160	3 blocks	Completed

Key Elements of 2004/5 Housing Capital Programme			
Item	Budget £	Target	Comments
Structural works	53,370	Communal Areas Shephall Way, Glebe Way & The Oval Flats	Forecast to complete first phase on time structural works to communal areas and requests from response repairs that fall outside day to day budget to complete in 2005/6
Major works Boilers	104,780	116	Forecast to complete on time however it has been identified that as at October 04 , a budget overspend is anticipated so all new works to be carried out by prioritising for Decent Homes as these works relate to new installations as heating breakdown on day to day contract.
Window replacement	1,258,530	450 units	Forecast to complete on time with an estimated 500 units being completed within the budget figure
Roofing	40,930		Work reprioritised into 05/06 – emergency works only have been completed this year estimated £25k carried forward to 2005/6
Door entry systems	103,500	5	Completed with upgrade of existing systems to digital in the tower blocks. All schemes now apposed by Join Local Committee before go ahead. Programme to be established in consultation with tenants..
Major subsidence works	805,000	Cotney Croft Peartree Way Archer Road	Works commenced but will but will not be completed this year as a result of the complexity of identifying reasons and remedial work needed on the site to avoid further occurrence.. Likely spend £300k with £500k carried forward to 2005/6
Rewire	287,500	100 voids and 90 occupied properties	Works identified response repairs for rewires. Budget will be committed this year.
Decent Homes Phase 3	4,400,000		Programme delayed awaiting the outcome of the stock condition survey to establish the programme £390k vired, £250k for Brent and Harrow Court safety works and £50k for Non – traditional stock condition survey and £90 k for supplementary Stock Condition Survey
Communal floors & staircases	23,000		Programme held pending consultation exercise to determine priorities. Budget to be carried forward into 05/06

Key Elements of 2004/5 Housing Capital Programme			
Item	Budget £		Comments
Voids	2,875,000	220 electrical rewires 54 heating new installations, 164 new kitchens and 34 new bathrooms	Completed forms part of the decent homes programme
Decent Homes 2 (DES)	1,280,440	134	Forecast to complete on time

Key Elements of the Proposed 2005/6 Housing Capital Programme			
Item	Budget £	Target	Comments
Asbestos	340,000	Removal of Priority 4 boilers (where asbestos elements – cannot service) along with ongoing emergency removal works	Includes carry forward from 2004/5
Electrical works to sheltered scheme	50,000	3 schemes	Ongoing programme
Communal Lighting	50,000	28 blocks	Ongoing programme
Lifts	80,000		Ongoing programme
Subsidence	600,000		
Fire Alarms	72,000	2 blocks	Ongoing programme
Structural works	220,000	Continuation of : Shephall Way Glebe Way The Oval	Continuation of 2004/5 programme
Major works Boilers	320,000	116 – emergency cases	Based on needs assessment in 04/5
Window replacement	1,100,000	450	Continuation of programme
Roofing	150,000	40 properties	To commence a planned replacement programme
Door entry systems	53,500	3 schemes	Continuation of the programme

Rewire	400,000	150 properties	To establish a planned programme of rewiring in addition to the responsive requests.
Decent Homes Phase 3 (Kitchens and bathrooms)	2,750,000	518 properties (kitchens/bathrooms)	Continuation of the programme to complete DH in line with the Stevenage Standard and possible reprioritisation from the stock condition survey results.
Communal floors & staircases	23,000		Prioritised and identified by the Caretaking team.
Voids	1,500,00	150 rewires 50 new heating installations	Continuation of the programme works to be adjusted inline with agreed void standard.
CCTV	30,000	3 blocks	
Fire Safety Brent & Harrow	950,000	All flats in block	Essential Fire safety works
Boiler Replacement	787,000	260 systems	Based on the priority replacement programme
Disabled adaptations	600,000	2 extensions and 260 properties having adaptation works.	Ongoing programme based on referrals and includes large scale extensions
Tower block safety work	1,000,000	All flats in block	Essential Fire Safety works
Insulation programme	50,000	540 properties	Ongoing programme of insulation improvements

6.6. Revenue Repairs & Maintenance Programme and Outturn 2003/4

Key Elements of the 2003/4 HRA Housing Repairs & Maintenance Programmes			
Item	Budget £	Target	Comments
Internal redecoration	94,400		3 year programme for OAP's to have rooms decorated within their homes
Structural Finishes	45,000		
Domestic Services & appliances (inc Gas Servicing)	893,000	100% of heating appliances	Servicing and maintenance programme for domestic heating systems
External Works	150,000		
Ancillary Works	362,300		
Voids & responsive maintenance	2,198,020		
Planned Maintenance	328,000		Pre-paint repair and redecoration programme – targeting leasehold properties

Revenue Repairs & Maintenance Programme 2004/5

The total maintenance budgets for the Councils HRA stock for 2004/5 is estimated at £4,202,900 and the key elements of expenditure are set out in the table below.

Key Elements of the 2004/5 HRA Housing Repairs & Maintenance Programmes			
Item	Budget £	Target	Comments
Responsive Repairs	1,565,000		
Voids	595,000		
Communal Areas	35,000		Estimated to complete by 31 March 05
UPVC Windows	45,000		Estimated to complete by 31 March 05 Budget to be capitalised as all works are for replacement of timber windows/doors on a one off basis
Gas Servicing	955,000	100% (all properties with gas)	Additional expenditure required to cope with requirements of Part L
Emergency Call out	150,000		Anticipated spend is £180,000 to cope with the demand on emergency call out. The service is currently being provided by external contractors, this is to be reviewed. Additional £30k to be redirected from M & Plant budget (see below) cover cost of works.
M&E Plant Servicing	130,000		Completed currently under-spending – all maintenance and servicing completed. Reduce by £30k to cover emergency call out.
Internal redecoration	132,500		Budget is currently under-spending scheme is being reviewed in consultation with tenants.
Flats & Sheltered lifts & entry door	160,600	32 lifts, 18 sheltered	Programme on target to achieve 31 March 05 completion
Planned maintenance scheme	225,000	7 contracts to be let	6 contracts on site with a further 1 to be let. Anticipate slippage of £160,000 in to 05-06 due to delays in leaseholder consultation process.
Hostels	49,000		On target ongoing day to day responsive programme
Fire safety equipment	30,000		On target
Subsidence	60,000		On target for full year spend and is due to be capitalised next year.
Stair lift servicing	24,000		On target for full year spend
Laundry Equipment	20,000		On target for full year spend

Proposed 2005/06 Housing Repairs & Maintenance Programme

Item	Budget	£	Target	Comments
Responsive Repairs	1,565,000			
Voids	595,000			
Communal Areas	35,000			Ongoing programme
Gas Servicing	1,040,000			Increase to cover the management and servicing contract costs.
Emergency Call out	150,000			Ongoing provision of service
M& E Plant Servicing	150,000			Ongoing provision of service
Internal redecoration	132,500			Ongoing provision of service
Flats & Sheltered lifts & entry door	160,600			Continuation of the servicing and maintenance
Planned maintenance scheme	388,000			Plus slippage from 2004-05.
Hostels	49,000			Ongoing
Fire safety equipment	45,000			Ongoing – increased due to fire alarm maintenance being incorporated.
Stair lift servicing	24,000			Ongoing provision of service
Laundry Equipment	20,000			Ongoing provision of service
Emergency lighting testing	25,000			New budget to specifically deal with annual testing to respond to tenants feed back on security .
Refuse Chutes steam cleaning and repairs	35,000			New budget to cope with environmental requirements to respond to feedback & consultation

Appendix 7

Unverified Decent Homes Standard data from Initial stock Condition Survey
showing elements requiring repair

Element	Catchup	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	Totals	Unit costs
Kitchen	104354	226259	94561	105496	0	1784902	522886	2,838,458.00	3500 811
bathroom	0	500989	5190	77864	109027	74194	93071.4	860,335.40	1800 478
Re-wiring	18657	3399392	70198	61371	219409	157447	467654.8	4,394,128.80	1800 2441
Heating	0	0	107578	132182	164655	447598	1568546	2,420,559.20	2200 1100
Doors	4814	0	10319	8959		38632	46316.8	109,040.80	400 273
Windows	3155	168877	51250	92608	167409	289809	310872	1,083,980.00	2500 434
Roofing	0	47861	21166	42787	76992	235838	224475.2	649,119.20	3000 216
insulation		523975.5						523,975.50	5753
Floor finish	0	0	0	31051	0	6855	73978.6	111884.60	Include in Kit/bath programme
Cold water	1166	193445	2741	0	10689	0	3418.8	211459.80	Include in Heating programme
entrance doors	0	0	0	0	611	29328	31850.4	61,789.40	Include in door programme

Total **13,264,730.70**