

17 July 2013		ITEM 6
Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee		
UPDATE ON COMMUNITY INVESTMENT AND RESIDENT CONSULTATION FOR THE HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME		
Portfolio Holder: Councillor Val Morris Cook, Portfolio Holder for Housing		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: No	
Accountable Head of Service: Kathryn Adedeji, Head of Housing, Investment and Development		
Accountable Director: Barbara Brownlee, Director of Housing		
This report is public		
Purpose of Report: To outline the communications plan and local community benefits associated with Year 1 of the five year housing capital refurbishment programme.		

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The first year of the Thurrock Councils transforming homes capital investment programme is underway. The programme is designed to deliver a new improved quality for every Council home in Thurrock which goes beyond the previously achieved Decent Homes standard.

The transforming homes programme is designed to deliver key added value benefits for the local economy and community these range from, local employment opportunities, training, work placements – including specific allocation for NEETS and long term unemployed, apprenticeships in both technical and non-technical roles such as business administration, at least a 30% of work to local firms, and funding to invest in community projects.

This report provides an overview of the framework set up to ensure that alongside value, these key wider community benefits are achieved. The report outlines clearly articulated targets for jobs, apprenticeships, training, and the wider community benefits scheduled to be achieved from year one's 15m budget.

In addition the report also sets out resident consultation and engagement planned for the programme for discussion and approval. The consultation and engagement plan addresses both internal and external communications, both of which are critical for successful delivery. The plan will be subject to continued review and adjustment

throughout the programme allowing for improvements and refinements as each new cycle commences. This allows the Council to apply the learning from earlier stages and tailor the approach to best effect.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1.1 Approve the resident consultation and communication plan which includes localised drop-in events that ensures that all tenants and residents have an opportunity to discuss and receive information about the housing programme.**
- 1.2 Approve the steps that will be taken to ensure that tenants who are vulnerable and/or have support needs are well supported during the period of refurbishment.**
- 1.3 Approve the community investment outcomes for the first year of the capital refurbishment programme and the framework for ensuring more extensive community outcomes are achieved in the remaining four year period.**

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

Introduction and Context

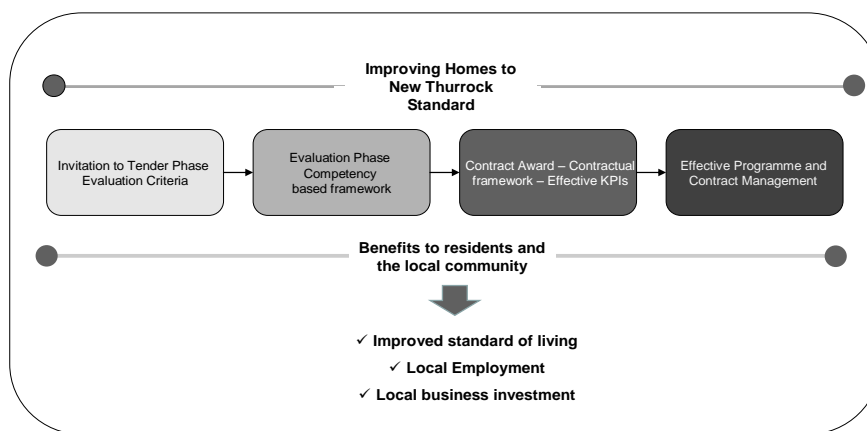
- 2.1 In February 2013 Cabinet approved a £68m refurbishment programme for the existing housing stock to improve council homes and bring them to a new Housing standard, “beyond decency”, which exceeded the previously achieved Decent Homes Standard’. The new standard aims to maximise energy efficiency of homes, minimise damp and mould, and use the triggers outlined below as the threshold at which replacement for key elements will take place:
 - Kitchens over 20 years
 - Bathrooms over 30 years
 - Boilers over 15 years
 - Electrics over 25 years
 - Windows over 30 years or single glazed
 - Roofs over 40 or 50 years as applicable
- 2.2 The first year of the five year programme is scheduled to deliver 15m worth of improvements; the contracts associated have been awarded to three companies: Wates, Lakehouse and Keepmoat. Having a number of different contractors reduces the risk to the Council of under delivery. It also creates a local market and competition between three well-regarded and experienced refurbishment contractors. This will create a healthy delivery environment for our planned investment.
- 2.3 At an earlier Cabinet meeting in January 2013 several key principles were agreed as a fundamental basis for investing in Council homes. Amongst them was the principle of ensuring “that Council priorities regarding local businesses and local labour are taken into account” and that the refurbishment would occur in line with and support the key regeneration growth areas of the borough. We have been careful to consider and, wherever possible, exploit synergies between the different investment programmes planned across the borough produce potentially greater financial efficiencies where possible.

Community Investment

- 2.4 This major investment programme provides the ideal impetus for the creation of local jobs, local training and apprenticeship opportunities and local sub-contracting and purchasing arrangements. All of which will provide major economic stimulus and direct opportunities for local people and businesses. The nature of the works (construction) provides the opportunity for maximising trade skills opportunities and training for local people and links to be made with our local training colleges and employers. In this way, agreements can be written and monitored with support given to contractors to source local materials, local labour and local trainees from our local Thurrock community.
- 2.5 This approach will ensure this programme contributes to wider Council targets around employment of 16-24 year old employment, reduction in NEETS. In this way, a joint approach in working across Council has the combined effect of stimulating the local economy and maximising the social value of the Council’s total financial investment.
- 2.6 Housing used the model outlined in diagram below to integrate local deliverables into the procurement and delivery process. The outputs achieved by use of this model are outlined in Table 1 this shows that key to ensuring ‘offers’ become tangible local benefits is the embedding of requirements at the start of the tender process. This allows for these aspirations to become translated into tangible measures, which in turn will need to be effectively managed during contract and programme delivery phase to achieve maximum results.
- 2.7 The following diagram illustrates the embedding of community investment deliverables from procurement through to delivery.

Strategy for Integrating Local Deliverables in the Procurement Process

Delivering localism objectives through Procurement and delivery.



- 2.8 The model is made up of a number of key parts as set out in the diagram above. In order to embed investment into the local economy the procurement

process should be seen as part of a wider investment strategy that covers three key areas:

- Evaluation criteria,
 - Competency based framework,
 - Effectively managed delivery model.
- **Evaluation criteria and competency based framework:**
The evaluation criteria used in this and other housing procurement process will ensure that TBC provides an effective means for the assessment of contractors' local deliverables. This is achieved by drawing on the key priorities for the council and ensuring that questions on these are contained within the qualitative assessment.
 - **Competency based framework:**
Further, in evaluating the responses it is imperative that a competency based framework is used as this provides the Council with an evidenced based means to assess the ability of the contractors to follow through with local deliverables commitments. This will include the requirement for contractors to provide evidence of previous instances where they have successfully delivered local outcomes in other contracts.
 - **Associated delivery model:**
The delivery model for the contracts incorporates a means by which TBC can ensure contractor performance meets requirements. KPIs and effective contract monitoring, within this performance framework integrates leverage mechanisms to ensure local benefits are delivered.

2.9 This strategy ensures all aspects of the local economy, local supply chain, and local residents benefit are taken into account and part the wider price/quality assessment in determining the most competitive bids. However it is important to recognise that any local deliverables needs to be balanced within overall delivery objectives of securing value and maximising the use of resources to effectively manage homes on behalf of residents. To achieve this the model ensures that these requirements sit within a broader framework that appropriate assesses the breadth of considerations needed to award the most competitive bid.

2.10 Using this model our procurement and delivery approach are used to maximum effect to secure economic and social benefits from Council contracts. Ensuring that the high level strategic objectives of investing into our community have been converted into tangible deliverables which will be monitored through the key performance indicators for the programme.

Table 1 – Local deliverables

CONTRACTOR	KEY DELIVERABLES/TARGETS REGARDING LOCAL JOBS, TRAINING AND APPRENTICESHIPS FROM APPOINTED CONTRACTORS
Lakehouse (targeted – Grays, West Thurrock & South Stifford) Keepmoat (targeted – Grays and Tilbury) Wates (targeted – Corringham, Fobbing, East Tilbury, Tilbury)	Labour <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30% local labour • 15 unemployed into work Apprenticeships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 Apprenticeships Work Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 work experience placements • 35 Work experience placement for students • 1 x 2 week work experience schools and colleges • 3x6 week work placements specifically for individuals defined as NEET. Training/Short Courses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 externally accredited trainings • 20 non-accredited trainings • 7 Pre-employment training/ – 7 workshops • 10 NEETS Training • 20 short training courses delivered • 10 - Short courses • 5 finding work sessions • 2 fun days • Job Clubs are required

2.11 The model as demonstrated in Table 1 illustrates that Year one contracts are scheduled to deliver benefits which extend far beyond the minimum contractual requirements. Hence demonstrating value for local people in the form of investment in the local economy, local employment opportunities, and in sub-contractors and suppliers defined as local.

2.12 This example demonstrates the volume of jobs, training and apprentices that can be gained from a single contract. Given that £15m represents 22% of the total investment by housing over the next five years it is reasonable to presume that the following KPIs can be multiplied to gain a similar benefit over the total £160m programme. If such an approach is applied across a strategic, corporate level then it is clear to see how the local community could benefit significantly from the investment of public resources.

2.13 In addition to the £68m investment programme, separate programmes to secure improvements in thermal efficiency, damp and mould, responsive repairs and planned maintenance are also in progress. This, together with the new build development programme for the delivery of 1,000 homes is likely to see Thurrock Housing Department alone placing contracts in excess of £160m

over the next five years. This presents an opportunity to ensure that significant local regeneration outcomes for our local communities are secured alongside this major programme of expenditure.

Resident Engagement and Communication

2.14 The key aims detailed resident engagement for the Housing refurbishment programme are as follows:

- To facilitate the smooth delivery of Year 1 of the programme.
- Create maximum awareness among all audiences about the housing capital refurbishment programme in Thurrock
- To maximise the use of e-communications as a 'nudge' towards the greater use of online communications for both tenants and internal staff as articulated in Housing's Transformation programme.
- To promote the wider benefits of the housing refurbishment programme and the integrated links with the borough's regeneration programme e.g. links to jobs, skills and improved wellbeing and health for all residents

3. ISSUES, OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS:

Ensuring Comprehensive and Effective Communications

- 3.1 One key challenge for the housing service is to ensure all tenants whose home will be refurbished receive sufficient, timely and accurate information about the plans for their home. Equally important is to ensure that tenants whose homes are not included in the Year one programme are not included in information which may create confusion and additional demands on the housing service. This could detract from the focussed attention needed on those tenants whose homes are included in not only the first year of the programme but the first quarter of the programme.
- 3.2 Table 2 outlines the roads included in the first year of the five year programme. Within that window of time, contractors are currently profiling the programme on a quarterly basis and tenants will be advised precisely when their home will be refurbished:

Table 2 – Year One roads

WATES	LAKEHOUSE	KEEPMOAT
ARKWRIGHT ROAD	ATLEE COURT	ALEXANDRA ROAD
ASHLEY CLOSE	BUTLER HOUSE	BEVAN HOUSE
BRACELET CLOSE	CROMWELL ROAD	CHRISTCHURCH ROAD
BRENNAN ROAD	DEXTER CLOSE	CRAMMAVILL STREET
CASWELL CLOSE	DOUG SIDDONS COURT	DUNLOP ROAD
CORONATION AVENUE	FREDERICK Andrews Court	JESMOND ROAD
COWPER AVENUE	HATHAWAY ROAD	KEIR HARDIE HOUSE
CRAWLEY CLOSE	HATHAWAY GARDENS	LAIRD AVENUE
CROWN COURT	HILLCREST AVENUE	LANSBURY GARDENS
DICKENS AVENUE	LENTHALL AVENUE	MANOR ROAD
ELGAR GARDENS	LIONEL OXLEY HOUSE	MORRISON HOUSE
FEENAN HIGHWAY	MOORE AVENUE	NEWTON ROAD
GAINSBOROUGH AVENUE	PARKER ROAD	OTTAWA ROAD
LANGLAND CLOSE	SEABROOKE RISE	PRINCE Philip AVE
LIMESLADE CLOSE		QUEBEC ROAD
PENDINE CLOSE		RUSSELL ROAD
MELBA GARDENS		SPRINGFIELD ROAD
MOORE AVENUE		ST CHADS ROAD
NEWTON CLOSE		
NORTON CLOSE		
NOTTAGE CLOSE		
OXWICH CLOSE		
PARKMILL CLOSE		
RAPHAEL AVENUE		
SEVERN		
STEPHENSON AVENUE		
TASMAN CLOSE		
TENNYSON WALK		

3.3 In order to ensure that tenants are advised and well supported during this period of refurbishment it is important that a comprehensive consultation and communication which is multi-faceted and wide-ranging is in place. The network of communications therefore includes all local housing office staff, corporate communications staff and senior managers within the Council. This is supported by an internal, bespoke website which provides current and up-to-date information on the Housing Programme. It is necessary to ensure accurate and comprehensive internal information is in place to provide a sound foundation for information that is then shared publicly to our residents.

- 3.4 The website address detailing the Year 1 programme is as follows: <https://inform.thurrock.gov.uk/housing/transformation/>. This web-site link has been sent to all internal staff who will rely on this information to communicate with the public. This will ensure a consistent information base and a consistency in the information and messages shared with residents.

Communications with Members

- 3.5 Councillors have also been sent this link together with information regarding the launch of the programme and an invitation to view a completed home on the Seabrooke Rise Estate. This communications process will be repeated on a monthly basis with Members having access to key points of contact to pass on any concerns that have been reported to them. The above web-link will provide updates on the progress of the refurbishment scheme and will detail any last minute changes or amendments to the programme.

External and Public Communications

- 3.6 At the same time the public will have access to a website which has been created on Thurrock's home page which allows them to read about all aspects of the housing programme.

:<http://www.thurrock.gov.uk/housing/transforming/>

The strong web-presence will be complemented with hard-copy written information which will be available to those residents who are more reliant on traditional modes of communication

- 3.7 Letters from the Council have now been sent to all tenants introducing the contractor who will be working in their area. This will shortly be followed up by letters from the contractor introducing themselves, identifying their site office and named resident liaison staff and outlining what will happen in the coming weeks as the programme prepares to commence.
- 3.8 All communications from the contractors will be produced in a pre-agreed, standardised format. Aspects such as all letters carrying the Thurrock logo, named key points of contact, Freephone numbers for queries, drop-in sessions have been agreed across all contractors to ensure fair and equitable access to information across all areas. **Each contractor is obliged to hold three drop-in sessions per area.** The sessions will take place in the mornings, afternoons and evenings to maximise access for all residents. The location of these sessions have been agreed with local housing staff and ensure that all tenants in the year one programme are able to attend at least one session that is local to them. In addition to these local sessions, contractors have been invited to attend key community events over the summer to profile their work. Their presence is therefore likely to be seen at the Council's Tfest, Big Lunch and Tilbury Sports Day.
- 3.9 There will be a variety of methods to engage with tenants in order to communicate with them about the programme of capital works. These methods will be broad in range and will encompass the following:

- home visits;

- drop-in sessions/surgeries;
- phone calls;
- leaflets;
- documents; and
- Web-materials.

The aim is to be multi-faceted and varied in approach to embrace the widest range of people and to extend across tenants with a range of vulnerabilities and support needs.

Web materials e.g. 'Housing Handbook', will include very specific details on the programme itself, offering pictures and an illustration of the new fittings. It will also include details on the length of works and arrangements for vulnerable tenants.

Vulnerable tenants who have support needs

- 3.10 Prior to works commencing, Thurrock Housing Department will ensure that all tenants have the opportunity to complete a mobility and support needs survey. This survey gives prior notification of any tenant with mobility or other support needs. This information will inform Housing's general information on tenants as well as provide valuable information for the contractors who will know beforehand which tenants will have additional support needs in advance of the refurbishment works commencing. Arrangements will be made to assist those tenants who will need help in packing and unpacking their goods and temporary respite facilities will also be made available for those tenants who will need to be moved from their home whilst extensive works are being carried out.

General Principles

- 3.11 Key principles have been established with all contractors which will ensure that there is a standardised approach by all three refurbishment contractors that will be entering tenants' homes including the need to wear identification badges, parking arrangements, clear rubbish, courteous and polite manner of operatives and working respectfully in people's homes.
- 3.12 Tenants will have the opportunity to contact the Council via a council email inbox if they have any questions or concerns about the contractors. This will be supported by an externally commissioned telephone-feedback session. Satisfaction levels with the contractors will also be monitored via weekly on-site contract monitoring meetings.
- 3.13 Customer services have been briefed and provided with briefing information on the programme. A monitored housing email inbox has also been provided for both residents and Council staff alike. This allows for staff to respond to those queries which the local housing office and customer services have been unable to answer.
- 3.14 Critical to effective communications will be the handling of complaints during the period of works. Whilst the appointed contractor will have dedicated staff to

liaise with Thurrock tenants there will be a need for Thurrock's own complaints and customer service teams to be prepared for the early days and weeks of the programme. Measurable targets have been established to gauge the levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction amongst tenants in these early days. As the capital programme becomes embedded and commonplace so it is envisaged that concerns and complaints will lessen as the programme progresses.

- 3.15 The communications plan attached at Appendix 1 illustrates a three month cycle. At the end of each cycle the cycle re-commences in a different geographical area in the borough. The cycle will be in the form of a) mobilise, b) deliver and c) complete. As one cycle comes to an end another cycle commences. There will be overlap between the ending of one quarterly cycle and the commencement of the next. As identified above, the communications plan will be tailored and adjusted according to the lessons learned and best practice identified throughout the programme.

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION:

- 4.1 The communications plan together with the community investment outputs for the Housing Capital Refurbishment Programme are recommended for approval as key elements of the housing refurbishment programme. Poor communications or the lack of planning around communications could seriously affect the successful delivery of the programme costing resources, time and potentially pose a reputational risk for Thurrock Council. Conversely, a successful communications plan and good community outcomes would promote the Council's investment initiatives and the impact on and opportunities afforded for local people and businesses.

5. CONSULTATION (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 5.1 The communications plan has been discussed and agreed with relevant departments within the Council. The housing department's Senior Management Team have had an input into the creation of the plan with each Manager aware of their responsibilities in terms of mobilising their staff and equipping them to communicate internally and externally in relation to the Year one programme.

6. IMPACT ON CORPORATE POLICIES, PRIORITIES, PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 6.1 The outcome of this work will support wider local strategic priorities, including better health incomes, and improving the decency of homes in both the private and public sector.

7. IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 **Financial**

Implications verified by: **Mike Jones**
Telephone and email: **01375 652772**
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No financial implications arising from this report as the value of the contracts are being met within the financial envelope for the first year of the programme.

7.2 **Legal**

Implications verified by: **Assaf Chaudry, Major Projects Solicitor**
Telephone and email: **01375 652201**
assaf.chaudry@bdtlegal.gov.uk

This report primarily is concerned with the communication plans and the implementation strategy other than the reputational risk there is no direct legal implication arising from this report.

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Samson DeAlyn**
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01375 652472

There are no equality or diversity implications arising from this report

7.4 **Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Section 17, Risk Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, Sustainability, IT, Environmental**

N/A

BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN PREPARING THIS REPORT (include their location and identify whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- Cabinet report (January 13) – Housing capital programme, principles for establishing a five year rolling programme, contains some exempt appendices.
- Cabinet report (February 13) Housing capital programme five year programme for capital investment, contains some exempt appendices

APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT

Appendix 1 – Communications Plan

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