

**HOUSING INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 2009/10**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor Bill Dixon,  
Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio**

**Responsible Director - Cliff Brown, Director of Community Services**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the resources available for housing capital investment during 2009/10 and to recommend a programme to utilise these resources.

**Summary**

2. The annual Housing Investment Programme delivers essential home improvements for council tenants to ensure their homes meet their longer term expectations, create a safe and secure environment and meet quality standards over and above Decent Homes.

**Recommendation**

3. It is recommended that the annual Housing Investment Programme for 2009/10 be agreed and the funding released.

**Reason**

4. The recommendation is supported to enable the works and projects identified in the annual Housing Investment Programme for 2009/10 to proceed.

**Cliff Brown**  
**Director of Community Services**

**Background Papers**

Capital Medium Term Financial Plan 26 February 2009

Alan Glew - 388202

S17 Crime and Disorder	The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. It is considered that some of the improvement works identified in this report will be beneficial in reducing crime.
Health and Well Being	The annual housing investment programme will improve the health and well being of residents.
Sustainability	Investing in council owned housing is helping to create vibrant and sustainable communities where tenants wish to live in modern environments.
Diversity	The annual housing capital improvement programme will improve the accessibility of council owned property.
Wards Affected	Haughton East, Haughton West, Eastbourne, Cockerton West, Cockerton East, and North Road.
Groups Affected	Council tenants.
Budget and Policy Framework	The proposed programme is part of the current Medium Term Financial Plan as approved by Council and does not represent a change to the agreed budget or policy framework.
Key Decision	This is a key decision because agreement to the recommendation will result in the Council incurring expenditure that is significant. There will also be a significant effect on the communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards within the area of the Local Authority.
Urgent Decision	For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this represents an urgent matter, in order that housing capital expenditure for 2009/10 can be commenced with immediate effect. This will ensure that tenants do not experience any delays in having their homes improved and there is a steady flow of work.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	The annual housing capital programme contributes to the delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy through each of the theme areas.
Efficiency	A planned programme of work ensures the most effective and efficient use of resources and minimises inconvenience and disruption to customers.

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

5. Members agreed the Council's 2009/10 Capital Medium Term Financial Plan on 26 February 2009, including the Housing Capital Investment Programme. Prior to works commencing this detailed report is required to approve the physical works and formally release the Capital resources. Table 1 below details the estimated housing capital resources for 2009/10.

#### 6. Table 1: Estimated Capital Resources 2009/10

Resources	£000's
Major Repairs Allowance <sup>(a)</sup>	5,263
SHIP3 Funding (Private Sector) <sup>(b)</sup>	243
SHIP3 Funding (DFG's) <sup>(c)</sup>	385
Prudential Borrowing <sup>(d)</sup>	4,236
Capital Receipts <sup>(e)</sup>	360
Disabled Facilities Grant <sup>(f)</sup>	288
RCCO <sup>(g)</sup>	1,871
Total	12,646

- (a) The Major Repairs Allowance (MRA) is 100% grant funding received from the Department of Communities and Local Government.(CLG). The MRA can only be used for capital improvements to the Council's housing stock. The Authority have applied to bring forward £1.5M of MRA from 2010-11 to 2009-10 this is reflected in the estimated capital resources outlined in Table 1. The amount of MRA available in 2009-10 is dependent upon formal approvals from Central Government and subject to change. The annual housing investment programme will be adjusted downwards by £1.5M accordingly should approvals not be forthcoming.
- (b) Private Sector SHIP3 Funding is provided on an application basis by the Regional Housing Board. Previously this funding was given purely as a borrowing approval, but now comes as a capital grant. This funding is to be used for Private Sector investment according to the new Private Sector Financial Assistance Policy and energy efficiency measures for vulnerable households.
- (c) SHIP3 Funding (DFG's) comes from the same source as (b), and is a contribution to Private Sector Disabled Facilities funding that the Council provided from the old supported borrowing (HIP) allocation to match fund the DFG grant from central Government.
- (d) It was agreed at Council on 22nd July 2004, to retain the Council housing stock in-house and use prudential borrowing of up to £20m, over the next 6 years, to meet the new Darlington Standard for Council housing. This is the third year that prudential borrowing is being utilised.
- (e) Comprising 25% of usable capital receipts from the anticipated sale of Council houses in respect of the Right to Buy scheme.

(f) Government Office for the North East (GONE) allocation of £288,000 for 2009/10 for the provision of disabled facilities grants for privately owned properties. This budget is combined with the SHIP3 allocation outlined in (c) of £385,245 to provide a combined DFG budget of £673,245.

(g) The Revenue Capital Contribution is funding from the Housing Revenue Account used to fund major capital works.

7. The priorities identified through the Housing Business Plan to be funded from the estimated capital resources for 2009/10 are shown in Table 2 below:-

**8. Table 2: Housing Investment Programme 2009/10**

Programme	£000's	Total
<b>Planned Maintenance &amp; Renewals</b>		
Adaptations <sup>(a)</sup>	350	
Heating Replacement <sup>(b)</sup>	733	
Internal Planned Maintenance <sup>(c)</sup>	2,457	
Dinsdale Court <sup>(d)</sup>	1,660	
Windsor Court <sup>(e)</sup>	1,000	
Branksome Hall Drive <sup>(f)</sup>	1,450	
Digital TV Aerials <sup>(g)</sup>	50	
Structural Repairs <sup>(h)</sup>	120	
Energy Efficiency measures <sup>(i)</sup>	200	
Disabled Facilities Grants <sup>(j)</sup>	250	
Warden Link and Sheltered Housing <sup>(k)</sup>	200	8,470
<b>Estates &amp; Community Improvements</b>		
Lascelles public house <sup>(l)</sup>	210	
Footpaths/Construction <sup>(m)</sup>	1,000	
Fencing <sup>(n)</sup>	800	
Garage Improvements <sup>(o)</sup>	300	
Repairs Before Painting <sup>(p)</sup>	150	
Roof work <sup>(q)</sup>	800	3,260
<b>Private Sector</b>		
Private Sector Renewal <sup>(r)</sup>	93	
DFG Grants <sup>(s)</sup>	673	
Private Sector Energy Efficiency works <sup>(t)</sup>	150	916
<b>Total</b>		<b>12,646</b>

(a) The adaptations budget (£350,000) is to deliver adaptations within the Council's housing stock to enable tenants with a disability to remain in their own home and live independently across the Borough.

- (b) New condensing boiler central heating systems will be fitted to around 200 dwellings throughout the Borough but predominately in Haughton East, Haughton West, Eastbourne, and Cockerton West. The successful delivery of this programme is largely dependent on the responsiveness of utility services to provide new gas services to areas not currently serviced by gas on request from the local authority. The local authority (wherever possible) aim to programme gas installation works a year in advance of heating replacements being undertaken within specific households to overcome any potential delays.
- (c) An internal planned maintenance (IPM) programme to upgrade kitchens, bathrooms, electrical rewiring, security lighting, and, (where applicable) TV aerials and communal area redecoration. Approximately 409 dwellings located predominantly at Cockerton East, Cockerton West, Eastbourne, Haughton East, Haughton West, and North Road areas of the Town will benefit from these works.
- (d) The demolition of Dinsdale Court was completed in October 2008. The rebuilding programme of Dinsdale Court is now well underway and the level of investment in 2009-10 is a reflection of programmed slippage following approval in 2008-09 for the total scheme cost of £3.06M.
- (e) Windsor Court is due to be remodelled in 2009-10 following the completion of Dinsdale Court in October 2009. The aim of the programme is to improve accessibility within the scheme and thus improve the long term sustainability and lettability of the scheme. The investment will improve and update existing communal facilities, meet full Disability Discrimination Act 2005 standards and provide a safer and more energy efficient sheltered scheme. New kitchens and bathrooms with flat floor showers will be installed as part of the improvements.
- (f) Branksome Hall Drive will receive remodelling works providing new kitchens and bathrooms with those bathrooms with existing baths being replaced by flat floor showers. New independent heating systems will be installed offering greater independence and controllability of warmth to suit individual requirements. There will be a review of existing parking areas to try to increase existing provision.
- (g) A programme of TV aerial upgrades to meet new digital requirements will be installed to replace outdated analogue systems for communal entrance blocks of flats across the Borough.
- (h) A small budget has been set aside to address any structural issues that may be identified within the year.
- (i) A range of energy efficiency measures will be installed in targeted housing stock to increase existing levels of loft insulation, provide cavity wall insulation, draught proofing and examine options to improve glazing.
- (j) Disabled Facilities Grants provided to residents of local authority owned housing stock to fund adaptations to ones home to increase their level of independence and allow those residents with mobility difficulties to remain in their home with minimum levels of support.

- (k) £200,000 has been put aside to continue to provide upgrades to the Warden Call services (in addition to those picked up in the costs for remodelling works) within sheltered housing schemes and blocks of flats throughout the town, and to provide upgrades and modernisation to communal facilities in sheltered housing schemes such as common rooms and kitchens. There will also be investment to replace the existing telecommunications equipment to improve the level of service that can be provided to residents.
- (l) To assist in the regeneration of the Lascelles estate by the purchase, demolition and clearance of a vacant public house. In the short term the Lascelles estate will be relieved of a source of anti-social behaviour in the locality and provided with additional parking to service the existing shopping parade. The longer term vision is to deliver a new affordable housing scheme.
- (m) £1,000,000 is to be spent on improvements to footpaths at North Road, Bank Top, Central, Harrogate Hill, and Cockerton West.
- (n) £800,000 will be spent on fencing works in Haughton North, North Road, Lingfield, Bank Top, Park East, Central, Eastbourne.
- (o) £300,000 will be invested in improvements to the Council's garage blocks in areas to be determined.
- (p) £300,000 will be invested in joinery works in anticipation of the cyclical external painting programme in Bank Top, North Road, Northgate, Haughton East, North Road, and Heighington and Conniscliffe.
- (q) £800,000 has been set aside for roofing works throughout the Borough.
- (r) £93,000 set aside to support the Financial Assistance Policy targeted at areas of poor private sector housing.
- (s) DFG grants will continue to be offered according to the mandatory limit of £25k, plus the additional optional "Top up" Financial Assistance Loan of up to £10K as agreed by Cabinet in 2005. The total budget for mandatory DFG grants is £673,000. This is based on SHIP3 funding (£385k) and a Government Office for the North East allocation of £288k.
- (t) Private Sector funding of £150,000, will help deliver targeted energy efficiency works in the private sector in partnership with utility services and match funding Government grants.

### **Aims and objectives of the Housing Investment Programme**

9. The aims and objectives of the Housing Investment Programme are:

- (a) To meet the increasing expectations of local authority tenants.
- (b) To ensure that Darlington continues to meet an "enhanced Decent Homes" standard.

- (c) To improve the thermal comfort, safety and well being of local authority tenants.
  - (d) Provide a cyclical programme of improvement works.
10. The programme is not designed to remain static and priorities will be continually reviewed in the light of updated information such as public sector stock condition information.
11. There are two reasons why the Council may need to consider this programme:
- (a) Due to the nature of improvement works scheduled, there will be some inconvenience and disruption to tenants but this will be minimised through careful planning and consultation.
  - (b) There is a considerable financial commitment by the Council in delivering the programme but the commitment has been agreed as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan.

### **Outcome of Consultation**

12. The proposed programme is in line with Housing Business Plan priorities as agreed with tenants during the stock option appraisal process, and is aligned with the priorities for investment that have identified since that time. Consultation has been undertaken with the residents in each of the sheltered housing schemes and designs have reflected their aspirations as far as possible. The annual housing investment priorities follow a strict cycle of replacement and renewal as agreed with the Tenant Management Board.