
HOUSING INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 2012/13

**Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor Veronica Copeland,
Adult Social Care and Housing Portfolio
Responsible Director – Murray Rose, Director of People**

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 2012/13 and to recommend a programme to utilise these resources (subject to Council approval of the Medium Term Financial Plan on 1 March 2012).

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 as set out in Table 2 for 2012/13 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 2012/13 to proceed.

**Murray Rose
Director of People**

Background Papers

Capital Medium Term Financial Plan 1 March 2012.

Chris Harris 388312

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.
Carbon Impact	The implementation of the Housing Capital Investment Programme will reduce energy usage and provide higher levels of thermal comfort for dwellings benefitting from these measures thus reducing carbon emissions.
Diversity	The annual Housing Capital Improvement Programme will improve the accessibility of Council-owned property.
Wards Affected	All wards.
Groups Affected	Council tenants and Disabled Facilities Grant applicants.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not recommend any changes to the 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 2012/13 can be commenced with immediate effect.
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	Planned investment through the annual Housing Investment Programme will reduce the frequency and cost of reactive repairs and maintenance.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

5. At Council on 1 March 2012, Members have been asked to agree the Council's 2012/13 Capital Medium Term Financial Plan 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 2012/13.

6. Table 1: Estimated Capital Resources 2012/13

	2012/13
Resources	£000's
Capital Receipts ^(a)	140
Disabled Facilities Grant ^(b)	343
RCCO ^(c)	5,550
Total	6,033

(a) Comprising 25% of usable capital receipts from the anticipated sale of Council houses in respect of the Right to Buy scheme.

(b) The Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG) has confirmed that allocations for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) will be sustained to at least 2011/12 levels but final figures are not yet available. Social Care Funding of £300k will also be used to top-up this amount in order to address the high level of need for adaptations.

(c) 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 2012/13 are shown in Table 2 below:-

Table 2: Housing Investment Programme 2012/13

Programme	£000's	2012/13 Total
Planned Maintenance & Renewals		
Adaptations ^(a)	382	
Heating Replacement ^(b)	959	
Cockerton Regeneration ^(c)	2,934	
Energy Efficiency ^(d)	500	
Structural Repairs ^(e)	50	
Lifeline Services ^(f)	80	4,905

Programme	£000's	2012/13 Total
Estates & Community Improvements		
Pavement crossings ^(g)	25	
Garage Improvements ^(h)	50	
Repairs Before Painting ⁽ⁱ⁾	80	
External Works ⁽ⁱ⁾	330	
Roof work ^(k)	50	
Fees	250	785
Private Sector		
DFG Grants ^(l)	343	343
Total		6,033

8. The priorities identified through the Housing Business Plan to be funded from the estimated capital resources for 2012/13 are shown in Table 2 below:-

- (a) The adaptations budget 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 and central heating upgrades will be completed. This work will predominantly be completed in:- Cockerton East, Cockerton West, College, Eastbourne, Haughton North, Hurworth and North Road.
- (c) Internal planned maintenance works commenced in the Cockerton area in 2011/12. The 2012/13 budget will fund a continuation of this work and wider environmental works including repairs to structural elements and roofing in addition to boundary treatments such as new fencing and work to external pathways where appropriate.

The regeneration programme also includes the demolition of 76 homes and will fund payments of home loss and disturbance allowances to affected tenants and home owners.

- (d) The Energy Efficiency programme will focus on reducing energy costs, improving the health and well being of vulnerable tenants, reducing fuel poverty and exploring the potential of renewable energy. The work will include a contribution towards external wall insulation to a number of non traditional properties in Lascelles. We aim to continue with the installation of top up loft insulation and cavity wall insulation as required.
- (e) A small budget has been set aside to address any structural issues that may be identified within the year.
- (f) £80,000 is set aside to continue to provide upgrades to the Lifeline. There will also be investment to replace the existing telecommunications equipment to improve the level of service that can be provided to residents.
- (g) £25,000 has been identified to fund pavement crossings across the Borough.

- (h) £50,000 will be invested in improvements to the Council's garage blocks in areas to be determined.
- (i) £80,000 will be invested in joinery repair works in anticipation of the cyclical external painting programme in areas throughout the Borough.
- (j) £330,000 has been set aside for External Works including fencing replacement and external footpath improvements in areas to be confirmed throughout the Borough. The funds will also pay for the just in time replacement of rotten and defective external doors on a Borough wide basis.
- (k) £50,000 has been set aside to undertake essential roofing repairs in a planned way in properties throughout the Borough identified through estate and property surveys.
- (l) DFG grants will continue to be offered according to the mandatory limit of £30k, plus the additional optional "Top up" Financial Assistance Loan of up to £10K. The total budget for mandatory DFG grants is yet to be confirmed by the Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG) but announcements have confirmed that the allocation for 2012/13 will be no less than the allocation in 2011/12.

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 this 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 been identified since that time. Consultation has been undertaken with the residents of Cockerton area regarding how to best improve their area. The work being undertaken reflects their aspirations as far as possible. A report in respect of the Housing Investment Programme was agreed and approved by the Council's Asset Management Board on 14 February 2012 and the Tenants Board on 15 February 2012. The annual housing investment priorities follow a strict cycle of replacement and renewal as agreed with the Tenants Board.