

REPORT OF POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

(Meeting held 2 July 2001)

(Note: the report of the Committee meeting held on 11 June 2001 was considered at the special Council meeting on 11 June 2001)

1. HOUSING STRATEGY AND HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUSINESS PLAN 2002/2007 (REPORT B) (MINUTE No. 24).

The Committee has considered the Council's Housing Strategy and Housing Revenue Account Business Plan for the next five years. Both have to be submitted to the Government Office for the South East by 30 July 2001.

This year's Strategy is an up-date of last year's, refocused to take account of changing guidance and local needs. In particular, there is an increased emphasis on combating homelessness. The existing Older Persons, Single People, and Domestic Violence Housing Strategies have been reviewed, and new Empty Property and Private Sector, Energy Efficiency and Affordable Warmth, and Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Strategies have been introduced.

The Business Plan focusses on service provision and the development of the service to meet government targets and, importantly, the needs and aspirations of tenants and leaseholders.

A wider range of consultations has been carried out than in previous years, including consultation with the New Forest Housing Forum, Tenants' Housing Strategy and HRA Business Plan group, Town and Parish Councils, and the Citizens' Panel. The Housing Review Panel supported the Strategy and Plan at its meeting on 27 June 2001.

RECOMMENDED:

That the Council's Housing Strategy (including the new sub-strategies) and HRA Business Plan, as attached at Appendix 1 to this report, be adopted, subject to agreement of the final wording being delegated to officers in consultation with the Housing Portfolio Holder.

2. CORPORATE CHARGING POLICY (REPORT D) (MINUTE No. 26).

The Committee has considered a process that can be adopted so that charges can be set against a background of the corporate needs and objectives of the Council, rather than simply to address the needs of the budget process.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) That the charging policy and corporate guidelines for the setting of fees and charges, as shown in Appendix 2 to this report, be approved;**
- (b) That officers be requested to draw up some guidelines to achieve a corporate approach to concessions; and**
- (b) That the approach to the setting of charges be incorporated in the budget setting guidelines for the financial year 2002/2003.**

3. FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND EXPENDITURE PLANS 2002/03 – 2005/06 (REPORT F) (MINUTE No. 28).

The Committee has considered a financial strategy for revenue and capital expenditure for 2002/03, and a provisional financial strategy for the period to 2005/06. Forecasts of the General Fund budget, taking into account various assumptions regarding the financial background, and allowing for the proposed savings and bids included in the last review and other factors, resulted in forecast expenditure for 2002/03 above the estimated permitted maximum level.

The critical factor determining the level of capital expenditure is the amount of resources available to finance the schemes. Most of the expenditure will be financed from revenue and the general reserve. The General Fund budget includes only £250,000 per year to finance capital expenditure. Cabinet will need to recommend to Council a priority list of capital bids.

The following guidelines will enable Review Panels and Committees to review their current and proposed expenditure.

General Fund Expenditure

- (i) Review the validity of proposed savings and bids proposed last year for 2002/03 to 2004/05 (as shown in Appendix 3 to this report).
- (ii) Review the validity of discretionary expenditure included in the base budget for 2001/02.
- (iii) Consider existing and new areas for income generation, (noting that inflation of 2.5% has been included already in the forecast net expenditure), including increasing charges to reflect market rates or other local authority charges.
- (iv) State the impact on service delivery of proposed savings, including the impact on staff resources.
- (v) Include essential expenditure bids only, supported by business cases.

- (vi) Show the first year's, if a part year, and the full year's revenue cost implications of all proposed capital.
- (vii) Identify all costs which would transfer between the General Fund, the Housing Revenue Account, and capital expenditure.
- (viii) Report any proposals' environmental and sustainability implications.
- (ix) The Cabinet will recommend to Council what proposed savings and expenditure bids should be included in the budget for 2002/03. Priority will be given to proposals that meet the Council's corporate aims. To assist the Cabinet in this process, savings and bids must be prioritised by the Panels, and in a consistent format. Detailed guidance will be provided by Accountancy staff.

Capital Expenditure

- (i) Revise and re-phase the existing approved programme for 2001/02 showing the revised incidence of expenditure over 2001/02 and future years.
- (ii) Revise and re-price, using 2001/02 prices plus 2.5% for inflation, and re-phase existing bids for schemes planned to start from 2002/03 to 2004/05.
- (iii) Delete existing schemes due to start from 2002/03 that are under £10,000 and those of a maintenance nature that do not enhance the asset. (Enhancement is work that will lengthen substantially the useful life of the asset, and/or increase substantially the value of the asset and the extent to which the asset can or will be used).
- (iv) Show new bids required for each of the years 2002/03 to 2005/06, and how they fit in to the Council's capital strategy.
- (v) Prioritise all schemes, both new and existing ones, due to start from 2002/03.
- (vi) Show the first year's, if a part year, and the full year's revenue implications from 2002/03 of all bids.
- (vii) State the environmental implications, where relevant, of each bid.
- (viii) Show all bids on vehicles, plant, and equipment as memorandum items, indicating the purchase price and year of acquisition, and the revenue budget implications.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) ***That, in relation to the General Fund expenditure plans, the Review Panels and Committees report back to the Cabinet in November 2001 on the following:-***
- (i) ***Proposals in priority order, with supporting business cases, for essential expenditure bids from 2002/03 to 2005/06, indicating clearly the level of service provision;***
 - (ii) ***Proposals in priority order of cost reductions, indicating the impact on services and personnel;***
 - (iii) ***The validity of existing savings and expenditure bids included in Appendix 3 to this report;***
 - (iv) ***The consequences of increasing fees and charges above the estimated rate of inflation of 2.5%; and***
 - (v) ***New proposals for income generation, including the sale of any assets; and***
- (b) ***That each Review Panel and Committee, with the exception of Housing, be instructed to prepare capital expenditure plans based on the guidance set out above, for consideration by the Cabinet in November 2001.***

4. TREASURY MANAGEMENT (REPORT I) (MINUTE No. 31).

The Committee has considered an up-dated Treasury Management Policy Statement. This will be the key document for the Council and Director of Finance in the operation, review and performance of treasury management.

RECOMMENDED:

That the revised Treasury Management Policy Statement, attached at Appendix 4 to this report, be approved and implemented.

5. ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR CONTRACTS AND ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ORDERS – ADOPTION OF PROTOCOL (REPORT K) (MINUTE No. 33).

The Committee has considered a protocol on anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs). The protocol has been adopted as a joint agency protocol by the Community Safety Strategy Group. As well as ASBOs, it includes provision for acceptable behaviour contracts (ABCs), which are written agreements between an individual and the Council or one of its partner organisations that the individual will not engage in or continue with certain identifiable acts that can be construed as anti-social behaviour.

ASBOs and ABCs are not an instant solution to all occurrences of anti-social behaviour, and it is important that the public realise this. Specific types of activity have to be identified and procedures have to be followed before they can be implemented and, especially in the case of ASBOs, these are both lengthy and costly. For both ASBOs and ABCs, as a first step it has to be shown that the anti-social behaviour forms a pattern, although if this cannot be done the incident will still be noted for future reference. ABCs are much less expensive to implement than ASBOs, and have been used successfully by other local authorities. It is hoped that the knowledge that these tools are available and that authorities are willing to use them will also have a deterrent effect.

The Committee recognises the importance of all agencies continuing to work on other initiatives to combat anti-social behaviour, such as working to provide alternative facilities for young people who might otherwise be drawn to such behaviour. The possibility of releasing developers' contributions to fund such schemes is being kept under review, but the use to which developers' contributions can be put is tightly constrained.

RECOMMENDED:

That the protocol attached as Appendix 5 to this report be formally adopted as a means of enforcing the provisions in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, relating to Anti-social Behaviour Orders.

6. EXTENSION TO HEALTH AND FITNESS SUITE – APPLEMORE RECREATION CENTRE (REPORT M) (MINUTE No. 35).

The Committee has considered proposals to provide additional facilities at the health and fitness suite at Applemore Recreation Centre. Excessive demand for the existing facilities can lead to long waiting times for the use of machines, with a consequent loss of both members and casual users. The benchmarking exercise has shown that expansion of the facilities is the most likely way to increase income significantly.

A projected payback period of less than three years can be anticipated. This has been achieved in the case of all other fitness suite extensions the Council has undertaken.

Relevant Portfolio holders will be discussing elements of the business case with officers. Subject to a satisfactory outcome of these discussions, it is expected that the scheme can be completed, using a design and build approach, by the end of 2001. This will enable the new facilities to be in use during the peak months of January, February and March.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) That the principle of extending the Applemore Health and Fitness Suite be approved, subject to an urgent discussion taking place between the Chairman of the Cabinet and the Leisure and Finance and Support Portfolio Holders and relevant officers as to the detail of the scheme; and**
- (b) That, subject to a satisfactory outcome of the discussions in (a), a supplementary estimate of £167,100 be approved in the current financial year to fund the project.**

**Councillor S A Hayes
CHAIRMAN**

CORPORATE CHARGING POLICY

- 1 Fees and charges should be reviewed annually having regard to the priorities contained within the Councils Corporate Plan and should be used to facilitate improving the social, economic and environmental well being of the New Forest community.
- 2 Charges should not be levied on those services where: -
 - The service is used equally
 - It is difficult to establish the beneficiary
 - Charging would not be cost effective to collect
 - There is no legal basis to charge for a service
 - Charging would be counterproductive
- 3 Where charges are not made for a service or are not set at a level that would maximise income levels the reasons for not doing so be reconsidered as part of the annual review to ensure that they remain valid and that significant income is not foregone.
- 4 Where charges are not restricted by legislation either directly or indirectly they should be increased by a percentage rate above the rate of inflation annually as determined within the Council's financial strategy/guidelines unless to do so would result in reduced income being generated.
- 5 The use of charging, and therefore income generation, must be fully considered in any capital investment decisions.

CORPORATE CHARGING FRAMEWORK

- 1 When reviewing charging levels the following issues need to be considered
- 2 Services should seek to minimise the subsidies associated with that service unless specifically agreed as a corporate objective
- 3 Charges should: -
 - a) Either be set at market rates, having taken regard of service variations or
 - b) Be compared to charges in other local authorities where no market exists
 - c) All fees and charges should aim to cover the full cost of service, including a share of central costs except:

- where the charge is set by central government or,
 - due to market forces this is not possible or,
 - due to corporate objectives this is not seen as desirable
- d) Where income generated exceeds expenditure income should be maximised where legislation permits
- e) The Cabinet should agree which services do not need to achieve full cost recovery in light of the corporate plan and or other priorities.
- f) The design of charging structures should consider differential pricing as a tool if the following conditions apply:
- Target groups respond differently to prices
 - The targeting of specific groups is envisaged
 - The resulting charge structure is not too complicated (always remember charging should follow the basic principles of a good tax system i.e. it is clear, cost effective to collect, and is not regressive)
- g) Wherever appropriate people on low incomes should be charged less through a corporate concession scheme to: -
- Ensure that those on low incomes have equal access to public services
 - Increase social, cultural and civic involvement by widening access to social, leisure and cultural services,
 - Reduce expenditure levels for low-income groups

Housing Strategy 2002 - 2007

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[Appendix 1 -Summary and Key Priorities](#)
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Portfolio Holder for Housing's Introduction to the Housing Strategy and Housing Revenue Account Business Plan

PHOTO

New Forest District Council aims to ensure that its residents have access to decent housing and to encourage the development of sustainable communities.

Despite the District's outward appearance of affluence there is considerable housing need throughout the area. In particular we must focus on solving the serious homelessness problem that exists. In partnership with a wide range of stakeholders the Council is committing resources and working hard to ensure that the right kind of homes and services are provided to those in need. We are also focussing on other important housing issues such energy efficiency, and ensuring that key linkages to other needs and policy areas are identified and embraced. The adoption of cross-cutting responses to promote social inclusion is at the top of the Council's agenda. Our work with partners and stakeholders is productive and this enables both Council and others to direct investment and activities towards promoting and improving the social, environmental and economic well-being of the community.

In our Strategy and Business Plan we recognise that we have a number of housing responsibilities, which include providing accommodation for homeless households, keeping our properties in a good state of repair and ensuring that homes in the private sector are satisfactorily maintained and meet the community's needs and preferences. We welcome the proposals in *The Way Forward for Housing* for local authorities to adopt a more strategic role, and have already embraced this approach.

We are conscious of the diversity of the local community, and alongside the Council's overarching Diversity Strategy we have, this year, produced a housing strategy aimed at meeting the needs of the Black and Minority Ethnic community.

We aim to be innovative and, this year, we have introduced a range of measures to tackle homelessness. We are also very pleased to have been chosen as a pilot authority for Choice Based Lettings and will ensure our experiences are shared.

There are many pressing housing needs in the New Forest and with the holistic approach that the Council is taking we are well placed to identify and to meet them.

Signature.

Cllr. Peter Greenfield
Portfolio Holder for
Housing

Preface

This document is the Council's strategic housing plan and is closely linked to the Council's corporate strategy *The Heart of the Forest*. The Strategy provides a vision for the way in which we believe the Housing Service will adapt over the coming years to meet the needs we have identified, and establishes how the Council is able to develop its strategic leadership role. It should be read in conjunction with the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.

It is essential that evolving policies are put into a housing context and each year the long term Strategy is reviewed. The Strategy seeks to embrace issues arising out of *The Way Forward for Housing, the Urban and Rural White Papers and the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal*, and to develop good practice (some of which has emerged due to Best Value reviews and cross-boundary liaison) in order to be responsive to local circumstances.

The Strategy forms part of a series of documents that make up the Council's Housing Investment Programme submission. The full list of documents is included in Appendix 2.

This Strategy has not been produced in isolation from other policy areas. The Council has been working with a range of partners to address specific areas, and included as an appendix to the submission are a range of more detailed strategies (together with a monitoring report) for the following areas:

Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Strategy | Empty Homes and Private Sector Housing Strategy
Older Persons' Housing Strategy
Single Persons' Housing Strategy | Energy Efficiency and Affordable Warmth Strategy;
Domestic Violence Housing Strategy

In the past year the Black and Ethnic Minority Housing Strategy has been produced and the Empty Property and Private Sector Housing, and Energy Efficiency and Affordable Warmth Strategies reviewed. These documents make up a family of strategies that will guide the detailed work of the housing service and its partners in the future. The Council plans to build on its existing roles of providing strategic leadership and developing partnerships, and to increase the range of this family of strategies over the coming years.

The Council has taken a cross-service, corporate approach to the production of the Strategy and the strong intra-organisational links will be used as an implementation

tool. There are close links between the landlord and strategic side of the housing service, with the local planning authority, Home Energy Conservation Officer and the Community Safety Officer. Stronger links have been forged over the past year with those responsible for community planning, LA21 and economic development.

Local partnerships have been further strengthened this year in several areas, particularly with the voluntary sector, health agencies and social services through the New Forest Supported Housing Forum. This development is of particular relevance for the successful implementation of *Supporting People*.

Through its 2001 Housing Needs and Market Assessment the Council has the most comprehensive picture it has ever had about the needs and aspirations of the area. The analysis has allowed the Strategy to be refocused so it more comprehensively addresses housing issues across *all* tenures. The Assessment will be used to underpin future policy directions and be regularly reviewed to ensure that the Council, and stakeholders, has the best information on which to base decisions.

The Strategy has developed so that there is a greater focus on outcomes. Specific targets for action are contained in the accompanying document *Housing Strategy Targets and Action Plan* and the range of Sub-Strategies. They will be valuable implementation and monitoring tools. The *Action Plan* also sets out the resource implications of the Strategy and programme.

If you have any queries regarding this Housing Strategy please contact:

Simon Maggs, New Forest District Council, Appletree Court, Lyndhurst, Hampshire,
SO43 7PA

Telephone: (023) 8028 5122 or email: simon.maggs@nfdc.gov.uk

A full list of contacts is provided as Appendix 3

PART 1 Introduction

1. Consultation & Participation

To allow the production of this Strategy the Council embarked upon the most comprehensive series of consultation and participation exercises it has ever undertaken. The approach complements the dialogue that is ongoing throughout the year with stakeholders and ensures that the Strategy is not produced in isolation from other policy areas. A Council policy with supporting process on consultation and involvement has now been adopted. A variety of methods of consultation and participation have been used, including:

New Forest Housing Forum L **New Forest and RSL Tenants' Strategy Group** L **RSL liaison meetings** **Supported Housing Forum** L **The Citizens Panel** L **Town and Parish Council Forum**

One of the key questions asked is whether the methods of consultation and participation are satisfactory. The responses will be used to determine the approach to be taken in future years.

The New Forest Housing Forum brings together all stakeholders and partners to discuss local issues and to contribute to the formation of the Housing Strategy.

Attendees this year included:

- The Government Office for the South East
- L Other Local Authorities
- L Registered Social Landlords
- L The National Health Service
- L New Forest Social Services
- L Town and Parish Councils
- L The Housing Corporation
- L Private Developers
- L Tenants' Associations
- L Health Trusts
- L Voluntary Agencies
- L Estate Agents
- Building Societies
- Letting Agents

The production of the Housing Strategy in July is not the end of the development process. Policies and strategies will be developed and evolve with the input of key stakeholders on a rolling basis over the coming months. A Housing Strategy Group has been established to facilitate tenants' involvement in reviewing, monitoring and producing the Strategy.

2. New Forest District

New Forest District covers an area of 290 square miles in south west Hampshire, and is dominated by the New Forest - an area of great natural beauty and of ecological importance, both nationally and internationally. The Countryside Agency has commenced the process of designating the New Forest a National Park, consulting on the new National Park's boundary. The area proposed to be within the National Park is wider than the New Forest Heritage Area, which has already been given National Park status for planning purposes, and covers around three quarters of the District.

The expanding conurbation of Southampton lies to the east and Christchurch, Bournemouth and Poole are to the west. There are seven principal towns in the District, all located around the periphery of the New Forest. Fawley, Hythe, and Totton lie to the east of the District alongside Southampton Water; Lymington and New Milton are on the south coast; and Fordingbridge and Ringwood lie in the Avon Valley to the west. In addition there are many smaller settlements and villages both in and around the New Forest.

Population and Household Changes

The New Forest District is predominantly rural with 70% being in the New Forest Heritage Area. In May 2001, registered unemployment levels stood at 1.5%. Between 1972 and 2000 there was a significant 30% increase in the population from 131,000 to 170,661. Growth has been concentrated in Totton, the parishes along Southampton Water and the coastal towns of New Milton and Lymington. There has been a marked change in the age structure. The population of the New Forest has aged significantly with the proportion of residents under 16 years old decreasing and those over 60 increasing.

The change in households has been equally dramatic. The number increased by 45% from 45,100 in 1971 to 65,411 in 1991, although this figure is now nearer 72,500. In addition, the household structure has altered. In 1971 households of one and two people comprised 52.2% of the total. The Council's 2001 Housing Needs and Market Assessment revealed 70% of households now consist of 1 or 2 persons. The Hampshire County Council Long Term Population and Household Projections suggest a fall in the number of people and households in the 20-34 year age range, and a increase in the older age ranges (particularly 75 yrs. plus) can be expected by 2011. It is particularly noteworthy that a 27% increase in one-person households is forecast over that time period.

In the past thirty years the District has witnessed a huge increase in the number of houses built. Since 1974 more than 20,000 new dwellings have been built, about a 40% increase. From its peak of over 1,600 new dwellings in the mid 1980's the annual house building rate has fallen steeply, recently dropping to less than 400 a years. This reflects the effect of planning policies to reduce the rate of house building in the District.

It is important to note that the development of privately owned homes brings with it the additional pressure for affordable housing. The building of large numbers of new houses for sale on the open market simply attracts more people to live in the area and has done little to help address the housing needs of local people unable to compete effectively for housing on the open market. There has also been a shift in the dwelling balance with larger houses now making up a greater proportion of the dwelling stock than they did 10 years ago.

The majority of the dwellings built in the past twenty years were for owner occupation. The result is that privately owned homes have increased from 68% in 1991 (Source: 1991 Census) to over 85% (Source; Housing Needs and Market Assessment 2001), whilst the number of Council homes has fallen from 15% to 9.6%. There are now about 61,000 owner occupied homes compared with 5,400 Council homes.

Local Authority housing in the New Forest now represents around 7% of the total number of homes, substantially below the national average.

A further 106 properties were lost to the *Right to Buy* in 2000/01. This is in line with the steady upward trend in recent years, although it is a reduction from the 1999/2000 figure, which was exceptionally high. Lower interest rates are considered to be a contributory factor. It is likely that restrictions on the maximum level of discount, introduced in February 1999, have provided some disincentive to prospective purchasers. To date 3,869 properties have been sold.

3. New Forest District Council's Corporate Strategy, Community Strategy and the Land Use Planning Framework

New Forest District Council Corporate Strategy

In April 2001 the Council approved a new Corporate Plan *The Heart of the Forest*. The Plan is structured as follows:

1. Organisation of Excellence
2. Working with the Public and Partners
3. Economic Wellbeing
4. Social Wellbeing
5. Environmental Wellbeing

The Plan underlines the corporate commitment given to housing:

The Council has been deemed a high performing Housing Authority over recent successive years. We will continue to maintain a high quality of stock and provide services and new homes for people in greatest need. Our development

of the Tenants Compact will be our expression of intent to work closely with our tenants and further involve them in housing decisions.

A cross-service approach is taken to producing and implementing the Housing Strategy in order to ensure that it underpins the over-arching objective of promoting and improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area. Much is achieved in housing through partnership and the Council prides itself in the Housing Service making its own contribution towards making it an organisation of excellence. The new democratic structure of leader and cabinet that has been adopted has provided a means for the Portfolio Holder for Housing to ensure that housing remains central to debates and that linkages between policy areas are made. A Housing Review Panel has an annual programme for monitoring all aspects of the housing service and the performance of RSLs. It invites stakeholders to meetings in order to ensure it has a high quality information. A strengthening of Corporate Management Team's review of major policy issues also ensures a robust cross-service approach is adopted.

In 2000 participated in the Local Government Improvement Programme. Tenants representatives were involved in the week long Programme, taking part in interviews and workshops.

Developing Community Strategies

The Council has over the past 12 months been working with its partners towards the development of a process that will result in the production of the District's first Community Strategy in April 2002.

A key part of that process is the establishment of a Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) to oversee the development of the strategy. This is likely to be in place by the autumn. A multi-agency Community Strategy Steering Group has been set up covering economic, social and environmental groups and to date has met four times. Its remit is to recommend the detailed arrangement for the LSP – its membership, terms of reference, structure, frequency of meetings etc. Discussions to date have recognised many issues including:

- There is great deal already being done that contributes towards what Community Strategies are aiming to deliver. The creation of a LSP will need to facilitate, not hinder, that work;
- There is scope for improving existing partnerships and for creating new ones where they are needed;
- Improved research and better sharing of existing and proposed research is required if we are to fully understand the needs of communities;
- The need to make better use of resources across agencies; to avoid duplication of effort and to use knowledge and expertise to the advantage of all.

Meetings have also taken place between ourselves and the County Council and the town and parish councils. These have looked at both the strategic issues and the locality issues. The District Council will continue to meeting with town and parish councils and will encourage them to explore the opportunities provided by such initiatives as Vital Villages that will help understand our communities better and deliver against their needs. Housing will no doubt be an issue in many communities, but equally important to the Housing Strategy are the other issues that will be identified that impact on the quality of life of the people within that community.

One of the great benefits likely to come out of the overall process is that local communities should have greater access to the knowledge, skills and resources they need to take action in their community. This can only be a positive step towards creating sustainable communities, the many facets of which interrelate with the provision and maintenance of suitable housing.

The Land Use Planning Framework

Strategic planning guidance for the District up to 2011 is set out in the Hampshire County Structure Plan Review, which was adopted in March 2000. The District is required to accommodate 5,480 additional dwellings between 1996 and 2011, with a reserve housing provision of a further 500 dwellings if required, to meet revised Regional Planning Guidance. It is likely that house-building rates in the period to 2011 will be markedly less than rates experienced throughout the 1990s.

The New Forest District Local Plan was adopted in November 1999. The District Council is undertaking a review of the Local Plan and will place alterations to the adopted Plan on public deposit in 2001 following consideration of the results of the Housing Needs and Market Assessment. These alterations will reflect the revised strategic planning policies in the *Hampshire County Structure Plan Review*, including revised housing targets; and Government advice in Planning Policy Guidance Notes, including revised *PPG3: Housing*.

4. The Strategic Housing Framework

The Strategic Housing Framework is set at its highest level by the Government policy statement, *The Way Forward for Housing* and the Government Office for the South East and the Housing Corporation South East document *Regional Housing Statement 2000*. The key objectives for the region are:

- N To give everyone in the region the opportunity of decent housing and so improve people's quality of life, as well as promoting social cohesion, well-being and self-dependence;

- N To meet future needs within the region and so minimise homelessness and encourage the development of sustainable communities; and,
- N For the region to be seen as an exemplar in the way new housing is designed, developed, managed and maintained so that new and existing stock alike contribute to the diversity of local neighbourhoods.

The Council supports the focus of these key objectives.

Furthermore, it fully endorses the *The Way Forward for Housing* document's aims to offer everyone the opportunity of a decent home and so promote social cohesion, well being and self-dependence. Details of the approaches that are being taken are set out in the Strategy.

Close links are maintained with other local authorities, primarily through membership of several county-wide and sub-regional forums.

A communication's strategy is being devised aimed at promoting the understanding of housing issues in the New Forest and at breaking down the stigma that is often associated with affordable housing.

There is a clear landlord/strategic organisational split within the housing service, however there remains close liaison on strategic issues. To assist in meeting these aims the Council will continue to take a strong strategic role across all housing sectors.

Best Value

The following services will be tested with fundamental performance reviews:

Housing Development
Housing Needs and Advice
Housing Improvement Agency and Enforcement
The Landlord Role

To prepare for the Best Value process extensive benchmarking is underway both at a national and sub-regional level. The following services have been benchmarked:

Housing strategy
Housing enabling

Housing advice and the homelessness service

Voids and allocations management

Tenant participation

Other benchmarking and process reviews are planned. This activity has given the Council a good understanding of how its performance and activities compare with other authorities. Action Plans have been produced for several service areas and a number have already been implemented. A full Best Value review of the Housing Strategy will take place in association with the other elements of the housing service in 2006/7. An extract from the 2001/2 Best Value Performance Plan is included with the Strategy.

Members will be closely involved in the Best Value process. They have received training on Best Value and will be involved early in any Best Value process by taking part in the fundamental review. The results of this work are being used to continuously improve and are fed into the Housing Strategy.

Performance targets are set for all of the Housing Services and where these relate to the landlord services, tenants are part of the monitoring team. The Tenants will also be playing their part in the challenge and consultation sections of the review. The Tenant Compact will play an important role in Best Value, enabling the tenants to influence policies, processes and targets.

Strategic Housing Aims

The following main policy areas which form the basis of this Housing Strategy and are priorities for action:

- N Ensure that a high quality housing service is provided.
- N Assist homeless households in the District, by providing good quality temporary accommodation and improving access to private sector accommodation as an alternative to Bed and Breakfast, and by providing a high quality housing advice service.
- Assess the state of the housing market and housing needs across all tenures and meet the diverse range of local housing needs, ensuring that a corporate approach is adopted in addressing this aim
- Provide strategic leadership and promote strategic and service delivery partnerships with stakeholders, including cross boundary working with neighbouring local authorities.
- Identify and develop linkages between housing and other policy areas, to tackle social exclusion, and promote sustainable development and communities.

- N Ensure that Council homes, garages, and associated land are managed and maintained effectively and efficiently. Meet the cost of managing and maintaining Council homes, garages and associated land through Tenants' rents and service charges
- N Make the best use of affordable housing in the District and enable further homes to be provided.
- N Administer the Government's Housing Benefit Scheme
- N Encourage Tenant and resident participation and build community capacity
- N Administer the Government's Right To Buy Scheme
- N Provide and manage a Central Control and Community Alarm Service
- N Ensure that the District's housing is fit for people to live in and meets their requirements.
- Ensure the best use of the housing stock including bringing empty properties back into use
- To promote energy efficiency

PART 2 Assessing Housing Needs and Preferences

1. Assessing Housing Needs and Preferences

The Council takes a comprehensive approach towards the assessment of housing needs and preferences in the District. Housing needs are assessed in five ways:

- The Housing Needs and Market Assessment and regular reviews
- The Housing Register
- Measuring homelessness
- The Rough Sleepers Head Count.
- Detailed assessments of the needs of individual rural parishes

2001 Housing Needs and Market Assessment

In the first half of 2001 the Council carried out the most detailed study of local housing needs and the local housing market it has ever undertaken. The Assessment looked at all tenures and assessed preferences as well as needs. The methodology adopted ensures that the Council and stakeholders have a good understanding of the current and likely future level of housing need and state of the housing market. The assessment provides an analysis at a District –wide level and also at a more detailed

level. Data and information was collected for each of the 37 parishes in the District. The disaggregation of information to this local level will ensure that strategies and policies are effectively targeted. Attention was paid to ensuring the comparability of data to that available in neighbouring authorities and that collected through the 2001 Census. By doing this the analysis forms a firm basis for cross-boundary working and sub-regional analysis of information which is already underway.

The final Assessment reports were produced by consultants in mid July 2001. While the timing was such that a detailed analysis cannot be included here, the interim findings have informed the Strategy and the final summary is included as an appendix to this submission. Furthermore, the submission of the Strategy is not the end of the strategy development process, thus the implications of the Assessment will be considered carefully over the coming months.

Main Aims

The aims of the assessment were broad, the core aims being:

- An analysis of the local housing market
- To develop local definition(s) of housing need and affordability.
- To establish existing and forecast future housing needs and aspirations, including tenure and size.
- To assist in developing Local Plan policies
- To identify and inform strategies for meeting a diverse range of housing needs, including supported housing needs and the needs of the BME community.
- To help develop an energy conservation strategy.
- To assess the condition and suitability of the existing housing stock
- The collection of data and analysis at a small area level.
- To assess quality of life issues.
- To develop a local definition of *keyworker*.

Methodology

The methodology adopted closely followed the DETR's *Local Housing Needs Assessments: A Guide to Good Practice* guidance. The assessment was carried out

using a combination of postal questionnaire, face to face interviews and focus groups with users and providers, together with an analysis of secondary data sources.

In determining the issues that should be considered a scoping exercise was undertaken that involved a wide range of agencies and organisations, including GOSE, The Housing Corporation, the House Builders Federation, neighbouring local authorities, tenants and residents, health and social services, and potential keyworker employers.

The Assessment will be kept up-to-date by annual reviews prior to the next full scale Assessment in several years time. This will include analysis of the Housing Register, local house sale and rental prices, local incomes, mortgage rates and policies, household formation forecasts, supply of new housing, the impact of Local Plan policies and the results of the 2001 Census. Housing stock condition details were collected and analysed as part of the Assessment. A fuller stock condition survey will be carried out in the coming year.

Key Findings

The Assessment revealed a major problem in terms of affordability particularly for new and concealed households. With the average price of a terraced house of £99,966, the Assessment revealed that, conservatively estimated, around 97% of these “new” households have incomes that mean they are unable to afford to purchase. This represents around 3,300 households. This relationship between income and prices means there is a considerable affordability problem in the District. Furthermore the private rented sector makes little contribution to meeting the needs of these households. Addressing the lack of affordable housing must be a priority for action.

Affordability

A household is in need of affordable housing if:

It does not have a deposit equivalent to 5% of the price of a suitable home and has a gross household income less than one third of its mortgage requirement

or

Renting privately would take up more than 25% of its net income

Affordable Housing

Housing that is provided, with subsidy, for people who are unable to resolve their housing requirements, in the general housing market because of the relationship between local housing costs and incomes.

The market analysis has highlighted several interesting features. In particular differences between needs and preferences and changing desires and expectations with respect to homeownership and dwelling size. There is an apparent shift away from homeownership aspirations towards affordable and market rented, perhaps reflecting local economic conditions, but also changing lifestyles particularly amongst younger people. It also revealed a mismatch in the dwelling stock with a need for smaller dwellings and adaptations to existing dwellings to meet specific special needs. Over recent years the stock balance has shifted towards larger dwellings, while paradoxically, an analysis of demographic trends and data collected as part of the Assessment, indicates a downward shift in household size. There is a need to develop policy responses to ensure that dwelling types and sizes better match needs and preferences.

The Assessment also highlighted the requirements of those with special needs, and in particular the elderly and frail elderly. There is an increasing elderly population in the New Forest who will need to have their housing needs met. There is also a need to meet the needs of younger people, some of whom will require support as well as housing. These findings have significant implications for new housing provision, changes to the existing stock and support service provision for a range of agencies. They require specific action.

Further details of findings are contained in the summary of the Housing Needs and Market Assessment that is included with the Strategy.

The Housing Register

The Council operates a joint housing register with its partner RSLs. This provides a co-ordinated approach to the allocation of affordable housing as well as providing detailed information on the housing needs of the District. To ensure the information provided by the Register is up-to-date, a rolling review of applications is undertaken. When the Council's letting policy moves to a fully choice-based approach under the pilot lettings scheme, the information provided about the level of applications for individual properties will greatly increase the data available.

The register is managed by a review group led by the Council's Housing Needs Manager and includes colleagues from each partner RSL. A partnership agreement sets out performance targets for the participating organisations.

The register is open to all applicants in housing need from anywhere in the country and there are currently more than 2000 applicants registered. Diagram 6 shows the increase in households on the Register over the last four years.

Homelessness

The most serious housing problem facing the New Forest is the increase in homelessness. Due to the severe shortage of affordable housing in the district, there was a record number of homelessness acceptances in 2000/2001 (see below diagram 7.) Statistical information on homelessness and also on housing advice cases provides considerable information on housing needs.

Black and Minority Ethnic Issues

The Council has been concerned over recent years that whilst there is a very small percentage of black and minority ethnic (BME) representation within the population of New Forest District, that population could well be isolated and have significant housing problems because of that isolation. In 1999 the Council commissioned Shelter to conduct research into housing issues concerning the black and minority ethnic population of the District. The main conclusions of this research were:

- The New Forest's black and minority ethnic population is just over 0.7% of the population of the District as a whole.
- The main groups of black and ethnic minorities are (by census categorisation) Black Other, Indian and Chinese. There is also a significant gypsy population.
- The data shows that black and ethnic minorities are successfully accessing the Housing Service

While the report concluded that the Housing Service was providing equality of access to its small BME population, however, the Council recognises that attention must be paid to the needs of this dispersed community.

The Rough Sleepers Head Count

The Council is aware, through its own housing advice service and work with other agencies, that there are reports of people sleeping rough in the District. On average around forty people each year who seek housing advice had been sleeping rough at

the time they made contact with the Council. Following guidance from the DETR, snapshot evaluation of street homelessness was carried out in June 1999. One rough sleeper was identified, suggesting that the problem in the New Forest is a transient one. Rough sleepers may move quickly from the District to seek accommodation in the surrounding cities or may simply be passing through the area. It is also possible, however, that the head-count under reported the extent of the problem because of the nature of parts of the District which present difficulties to any comprehensive survey.

Supported Housing Needs

The Housing Needs and Market Assessment identified over 12,500 households with special needs requirements. In particular the needs of frail elderly households were identified, and it is noticeable that there is a high level households with a mobility impaired member, and with respiratory and visual/hearing impairments.

The number of households containing a member with mental health and learning disability problems are also significant. The impending closure of several Learning Disability Locally Based Hospital Units means that there is need to provide alternative accommodation to meet the needs of those with learning disabilities.

Rural Housing Needs

The Housing Needs and Market Assessment identified a range of needs in the rural part of the District. Discussions with Parish Councils has also identified that in many areas there is a shortage of affordable housing for locals and that the age structure of villages is being changed due to the out-migration of younger households due to this shortage.

Conclusions

This wide-ranging analysis of the local housing market has provided the Council with robust data on local housing needs and preferences. It reveals a significant undersupply of affordable housing and an imbalance in the dwelling stock. The scale of these problems is such that it is unlikely that short-term correction is possible. Indeed it is likely that affordable housing needs will increase in the coming years. Furthermore, it is evident that there is a mismatch between the type of housing provided and the current and future housing needs and preferences of the community. With detailed information available at a local level we are able to develop the Strategy so it meets local needs.

2. Public and Voluntary Sector Housing

Council Homes

The Council currently manages 5421 dwellings. Inevitably some dwellings and areas are more popular than others. In the limited instances where there is low demand, an assessment has been made for the reasons and plans are in place to improve and remodel them. The Stock is primarily low rise, traditionally built property. It is in good condition and there are no identified backlogs in terms of the planned maintenance programme. A 100% stock condition survey was carried out in 1998/9 and a rolling programme ensures that the condition of 20% of the Council housing stock is surveyed each year. Work is currently being undertaken to devise a programme of work to achieve the target of all homes meeting the new standard of fitness (decent home standard) by 2010.

Detailed information on Council homes, including Tenant participation can be found in the HRA Business Plan.

RSL Homes

Stock Condition

Most of the 2,600, mainly low rise, RSL homes in the District were built since 1990 and as such are in good condition, built as they are to Housing Corporation and Building Regulation standards.

Energy Efficiency

The current energy rating for these homes is above average at between 56 and 65 on the SAP scheme. The reason for this is mainly because the homes are new and have been developed to modern Building Regulation and Housing Corporation standards.

Tenant Participation

Following discussions with officers from the Government Office for the South East and the Housing Corporation it was agreed that although the Council was commended for levels of tenant participation for its own tenants the awareness and extent of tenant involvement throughout the district was unknown. A strategic lead was identified as being required to set standards in participation for the District and to monitor these standards.

A working group of Council and RSL Tenant Participation Officers has identified the need to build the capacity of communities to participate in influencing the future of their area. It has also identified the need to develop networks between RSL tenant groups and with resident associations in order to co-ordinate activity and provide mutual support.

3. Private Sector Housing

Stock Condition

Maintaining the private sector housing stock in a satisfactory condition reduces the pressure on social housing resources and contributes wider economic and social benefits. The House Condition Survey, completed in 1998, indicates that 2% of homes in the District are unfit for habitation, with another 4% in need of renovation. This suggests that the level of unfitness and disrepair has reduced by approximately 50% over a period of 10 years. There is though a high demand for renovation grants and the Survey results have been used to estimate cost of remedying unfitness at £9.27m. The Housing Needs and Market Assessment 2001 considered certain aspects of dwelling condition and revealed a higher level of disrepair than originally envisaged. This underlines the need for an updated stock condition survey.

Empty Properties

Despite the success of the Council's Empty Property Strategy that has facilitated the re-use of almost 700 dwellings, the number of empty properties remains high at around 900. The recently completed Urban Capacity Study has highlighted particular town centre areas where empty properties exist.

Energy Efficiency

The District's private sector housing was in the main built after 1945 and is of reasonable quality. Energy issues include the need to better insulate homes through better roof and wall insulation and more effective heating systems. The 1998 House Condition Survey assessed the average SAP rating as 50, compared to between 56 and 65 for RSL homes and 54 for Council homes.

4. Key Linkages

Deprivation

The District does not rank highly in the Government Index of Deprivation, however this masks problems that do occur at very local estate or neighbourhood level. This picture is not untypical of areas such as the New Forest with large rural components, where individual community populations may be small to start with and those who may be deprived are a small part of these populations. The Council, together with

partners, particularly health and RSLs, has employed a variety of methodologies so that it assesses levels of need and deprivation in specific parts of the District. Research has taken place through a Hampshire wide project and has identified areas around the District, but particularly around Fordingbridge, where the “Disadvantage in Rural Hampshire” survey, undertaken for Hampshire County Council, has shown that this area has high levels of relative deprivation by comparison to other areas in Hampshire. When combined with other urban indicators that highlight small areas right across the District and qualitative data from those working in communities, the need to tackle social exclusion becomes more apparent. These assessments reveal pockets of multiple deprivation that require a coordinated multi-agency response. The key for the Council is to develop an approach that recognises the problems of Ward based statistical indicators. The development of a Social Exclusion strategy in 2001/2002 will be central to future work.

Social Exclusion, Health and Community Safety

Housing is recognised as only one part of the larger social and environmental context in which people live and to treat any part in isolation could be to miss the benefits to be gained from making the links. Poor housing and poor environments lead to poor health. Social phenomena such as unemployment, poverty, anti-social behaviour and crime can lead to degradation of the environment and the housing in that environment. The challenge over the coming years will be to make those appropriate links between all the various strategies being developed, not only by the Council, but in partnership with other agencies such as the NHS, Social Services, Education, the Police and the Voluntary Sector.

In 2000 the Council published its *Social Exclusion Issues Paper*, following consultation with stakeholders. The responses will inform a Social Exclusion strategy that will be developed during 2001/2002. There is a need to build on partnerships, and create new ones to ensure that public service provision has common and complementary focus.

Sustainable Residential Quality

The importance of sustainable residential design quality in the provision of good housing has similarly been recognised. It is important that existing Council and RSL development are safe (and feel safe), and have well defined and usable open spaces. Attention must be paid to these matters on existing and new estates.

Tenants have identified the need to maintain responsive local services and management so that any problems that do arise on existing estates can be quickly

resolved. There is also a desire for area based strategies to be adopted where multiple problems are evident.

5. Key Priority Areas

Based on a robust analysis of local housing needs and a good understanding of the local housing market the following areas are identified as key priorities:

- The need to meet the diverse needs of the community, deliver housing services in a fair and equitable way, and , promote and improve the social, economic and environmental well being of that community.
- ? The need to ensure housing is provided in a way that promotes sustainable development, social inclusion and community safety.
- ? The need to continually assess the District's housing needs and make the Council's housing service available to all members of the community including those with particular supported housing requirements. In particular the need to address the requirements of the elderly and the young.
- ? The need to provide a high quality housing advice service in order to minimise the serious homelessness problem there is, and to reduce the need to use B & B accommodation, by providing alternative cheaper and more suitable forms of temporary accommodation.
- ? The need to promote sustainable communities and customer empowerment by providing a choice based lettings service.
- ? The need to address the shortage of affordable housing for local people who are unable to find a home in the private housing market. There is a mismatch between supply and demand for affordable housing across the whole of the District. The greatest need is for additional general needs dwellings for rent at Housing Corporation rent cap level or below. There is a lesser need for shared ownership accommodation. There is also a need to provide housing and support for those with special needs. While the need for keyworker housing provision has been identified and the Council will aim to secure provision, a strategic response is needed and it is important that this provision is not at the expense of those who the Council may be considered to be in greater housing need.
- The need to ensure that new affordable housing development is well integrated with other housing in the interests of creating mixed and sustainable communities, and to ensure that the mix of affordable housing on new schemes also reflects this aim
- ? The need to increase the supply of affordable housing in rural areas and engage communities.
- ? The need to ensure resources are available to assist RSLs in the provision of affordable housing through work with the Housing Corporation and the allocation of local authority social housing grant, and to explore other sources of funding such as through the Private Finance Initiative.

- The need to ensure that the balance of the housing stock (across sectors) meets the needs and preferences of the community.
- The need to make the best possible use of existing homes and reduce to an absolute minimum the number of empty properties.
- The need to manage, maintain, repair and improve Council homes
- The need to meet the Council's statutory obligations to ensure that homes in the private sector are fit for habitation by working with landlords and owner occupiers, enforcement action and the payment of grants.
- The need to improve home energy efficiency, to ensure the availability of affordable warmth, to meet the Council's obligations as a Home Energy Conservation Authority to reduce CO₂ levels and encourage its partner RSLs to ensure that their homes are as energy efficient as possible.
- The need to meet the Council's statutory obligations to ensure that homes are adapted for people with disabilities by the payment of grants or taking appropriate enforcement action.
- The need to develop Tenant Participation Compacts reflecting tenants' needs and wishes, and to work with RSL tenants and the wider community, to build their capacity for involvement and to ensure that key strategies are developed and implemented to ensure the social, environmental and economic well-being of local communities.
- The need to consult Council tenants about all aspects of the housing service and encourage tenant involvement in any changes that may affect them.
- The need to monitor and keep under review the performance of the Housing Service, and in particular to use Best Value as an opportunity to develop best practice and compare performance with other local authorities.

PART 3 Meeting Housing Needs

1. Introduction

In this chapter we look at the solutions and initiatives available to the Council to help solve the problems we have identified, over the next five years.

It is apparent from current needs analysis and future forecasting that high housing costs in relation to income, a high number of households in housing need and high homelessness, that even setting a target of 200 homes a year will lead to significant shortfalls in affordable housing in the District. Regrettably, the resources that are realistically likely to be available are far from what is considered necessary. Controls on capital expenditure and the lack of financial resources available to Registered Social Landlords will not enable all of the housing problems to be resolved in the next five years. Nevertheless, the Council will target its own efforts, and will encourage others to do the same, to improve the level and quality of housing provision in the

District. It will also take a strategic lead in developing policy areas that link housing to wider agendas such as social exclusion and sustainable development.

2. Options Appraisal

As this strategy document is an update rather than a full rewrite, a limited option appraisal exercise has been undertaken linked to the core strategic aims that have been developed in consultation with stakeholders and have taken account of likely resource availability. Forecasts of housing needs and preferences are derived from the Housing Needs and Market Assessment, which uses a range of primary and secondary data sources. Analysis of house building rates and impact of local planning policies further assists in the analysis of options. The reviews of the Housing Strategy that take place each year allows it to be sensitive to changes in legislation, Government policy direction, responsive to new opportunities, challenges and stakeholder requirements, and receptive to local changes in political and corporate direction.

The appraisal exercise has focussed on changing needs and circumstances and on opportunities. In particular attention has been directed to the increasing homelessness problem that is being experienced, the needs of the elderly, and to other needs that have emerged out of the early findings from the Housing Needs and Market Assessment. The opportunities presented by the national policy direction (*The Way Forward for Housing; the Urban and Rural White Papers and the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal*), the Local Plan review, the creation of Local Strategic Partnerships, Choice Based Lettings, the Care and Repair Agency and new RSL partnerships and liaison arrangements have also been influential in generating options.

A fuller options appraisal will need to be undertaken when the results of the Housing Needs and Market Assessment have been analysed.

Account has been taken of future likely resource. Clearly the Major Repairs Allowance (MRA) has had a major impact on resources available for new affordable housing provision. Other sources of finance are being explored, including accessing new public funding streams and private finance, both of which have already been successfully employed, and funds through Private Finance Initiative. The issue of future control of the Council stock is addressed in the *HRA Business Plan* and the *Housing Strategy Targets and Action Plan*. The *Housing Strategy Targets and Action Plan* sets out a prioritised option list for the allocation of resources.

In addition to the availability of financial resources, account has also been taken of organisational arrangements and capacity and policy direction to assess options. By

way of example, it is aimed to create a clearer framework for meeting supported housing needs through increased partnership working through the Supported Housing Forum. The range of sub-groups, which are led by a range of agencies, will ensure that a pooling of resources provides a capacity and synergy that would not be present if agencies worked in isolation. On going Best Value work and cross-service liaison is enhancing the ability to meet certain objectives without additional financial resources. The Local Plan review aims to produce robust policies that will influence housing development across all tenures.

It is important that the Council works with stakeholders to ensure that strategies are co-ordinated and that stakeholders' resources are focussed in a complementary way. The development of the Community Strategy and Local Strategic Partnerships offers opportunities to develop these areas of work.

There is thorough monitoring of performance against targets throughout the year and adjustments are made to activity where desirable, particularly in high-risk policy areas where external influences can be influential. Performance against targets and targets for future years are set out in the *Housing Strategy Targets and Action Plan* the *Sub-Strategy Monitoring Report* and the Sub-Strategies themselves.

3. Partnerships

One of the keys to ensure housing needs are addressed is the relationship between the Council and its RSL Partners. Relationships with RSLs has recently been strengthened by a re-organisation of liaison groups.

- RSL Strategic Liaison Group – an overarching group which considers strategic issues. Representatives from GOSE and the Housing Corporation are invited to attend.
- RSL Development Group – a group consisting of development officers looking who consider detailed operational issues and develop strategy themes to an implementation stage. The Housing Corporation are invited to attend.
- RSL Sustainable Development Group – a group drawn from all parts of RSLs and the Council and which co-opts on to it other stakeholders. It aims to develop and monitor a sustainable development strategy for the New Forest.
- RSL Partnership Group – a group consisting of lettings officers and estate managers which reviews the performance of the Housing

Needs Register and lettings service and considers detailed operational and strategy issues on allocations, homelessness and estate management.

- RSL Tenant Participation Officers Group – a group that has agreed and monitors and reviews minimum standards for tenant participation and seeks to develop coordinated action to promote tenant involvement.

The New Forest Partnership Agreement was reviewed in 2000/2001, and establishes a set of core standards and objectives for the Council and its partner RSLs to achieve. Two new partner RSLs have been added to strengthen the partnership. The performance of partner RSLs will be monitored and information on the Council's performance will be shared with RSLs.

Focuses:

- Ensuring there is strategic leadership and that partnerships are developed
- Ensuring equality and fairness of access to services and promote sustainable development, social inclusion and community safety
- Reconsidering approaches and options as part of an analysis of the Housing Needs and Market Assessment.
- Ensuring that the Assessment is regularly updated.
- Ensuring that the Council's housing service is comparable to the best performers
- Maximising investment in housing by investigating new opportunities

4. Homelessness, Housing Advice and Lettings

Advice, Tackling Homelessness & Assessing Homeless Households

The Council works in partnership with a wide variety of agencies to prevent and tackle homelessness in the District. In view of the increased homelessness problem priority will be attached to addressing this particular need.

The Council provides a 24 hour homelessness service, with assistance during office hours being provided at local surgeries throughout the District. Housing Advice and Homelessness officers have clear targets for processing homelessness applications.

The Council had reduced the use of B & B over recent years, as Diagram 8 on the next page shows. However, this trend is again on the increase because of record numbers of homelessness acceptances, reflecting the intense pressure in the local housing market. The Government's proposed strengthening of the safety net for homeless households and restriction of the use of the private sector for homeless applicants will inevitably lead to a further increase in B & B usage

Yet despite the increasing homelessness acceptances, the Council has been successful in limiting the rise in B & B use. This has been due to a number of factors and initiatives developed in 2000/2001.

- The success of the Council's Empty Property Strategy, in particular, the RSL leasing scheme, which provides a constant supply of leased properties. This initiative is now complemented by a range of other schemes that have increased the supply of temporary accommodation as an alternative to B & B. At present there are over 200 private sector dwellings available for temporary accommodation in the long term.
- Provision of housing advice at an early stage.
- The use of permanent homes as temporary housing.
- The Council's allocation policy which gives reasonable priority to homeless households and encourages and assists applicants to seek accommodation in the private sector.
- The Council's deposit guarantee and rent top-up schemes which helps applicants secure accommodation in the private sector.
- The review and streamlining of Housing Benefit administration.

Despite the major success of these new initiatives in increasing the supply of accommodation there remains a significant homelessness problem. Tackling homelessness is a major thrust of this Strategy and will be an area of work that we concentrate on in the coming years. A working party keeps our initiatives under review and, in partnership with RSLs and the private sector is considering other ways of reducing the use of B & B. The Council's new Empty Property and Private Sector Strategy, revised in 2001, now has this objective as a major focus, and alternative methods of funding temporary accommodation, such as PFI, are being investigated.

The principles underlying the advice service are that it should be inclusive, accessible and effective. In order to achieve these aims, trained housing advisers provide advice to the community at weekly local housing surgeries in all of the main settlements in the Forest. Advisers help to prevent homelessness and meet housing need by giving advice on housing options, arrears, tenancy issues, mortgage problems and other housing matters. They also act as advocates for clients who need help in liaising with landlords, solicitors and other agencies. Support is also provided for Hyde Housing Association's Floating Support scheme.

In addition to this, the Council works closely with other agencies in the District. Quarterly liaison meetings are held with the Citizen's Advice Bureau and other housing advice providers in the District to ensure a consistent approach to housing advice. Regular liaison meetings with the Women's Refuge, private and public sector landlords and various sections of the Social Services department, in particular the Locality Mental Health Teams and Children and Families' Teams also focus on housing advice and homelessness. Following the rough sleepers' head-count and as part of the Council's Single Persons' Strategy, a comprehensive directory of services and accommodation has been produced.

Lettings

The Council's Housing Register allocations policy has evolved over recent years to give greater choice to housing applicants and promote sustainability. The Council has recently been advised of the success of its bid for DETR funding of a fully choice-based lettings pilot scheme, and the new scheme will commence operation in October 2001.

The pilot scheme will be based on the proposals outlined in the Housing Green Paper with a Delft-type lettings process and use of a banding system for prioritising. The scheme will allow applicants much greater choice and empowerment and assist in creating and maintaining sustainable communities. Vulnerable applicants will be supported to ensure they are fully able to take part in the new process.

Focuses:

- Reducing homelessness and the use of Bed and Breakfast.
- Ensuring that, in partnership with others, advice and assistance is provided to homeless applicants and others in housing need
- Developing Choice Based Lettings and create sustainable communities
- Enabling the provision of temporary accommodation as an alternative to B & B
- Developing a role for protecting the public from dangerous offenders

5. Vulnerable People and Supported Housing Needs

The Council aims to ensure that the supported housing needs of its residents are addressed in a co-ordinated way. The Housing Needs and Market Assessment has highlighted the needs of the local community.

The Council has supported the development of the *New Forest Supported Housing Forum* where a range of voluntary and statutory agencies discuss particular supported housing needs. The Forum was relaunched in 2001 with a clear focus on producing outputs through multi-agency working has been introduced. A mapping exercise of local strategic planning groups has been completed and efforts are now being made to rationalise them and ensure information sharing. The Forum has established a series of sub-groups to take specific issues forward relating to:

- Young people
- Older people
- People with mental health problems
- People with learning disabilities
- People with physical disabilities
- Victims of domestic violence

A New Forest Supported Housing Core Group has been constituted as part of the Forum. It will take commissioning decisions on new proposals and Supporting People matters. The Core Group consists of representatives from the Council, Social Services, Hampshire Probation Service, the PCT and the voluntary sector.

Together with other Hampshire housing authorities and Hampshire County Council the Council is working in partnership to take forward the Supporting People initiative. Dedicated Supporting People co-ordinators have been recruited across the County to ensure the objectives set out in the Supporting People national strategy are achieved.

We have worked with Hampshire County Council to develop a protocol to ensure assistance is given to young homeless people that goes beyond assessing and meeting housing needs. This agreement will take account of the provisions of the Children Leaving Care Act 2000. A protocol for joint working with the Locality Mental Health Teams has been in place for a number of years. We also work closely with the multi-agency Womens' Refuge and Domestic Violence Forum to help people who are fleeing from domestic violence. The Council has supported a successful bid by a partner RSL under the Safer Communities Initiative to provide move-on accommodation for victims of domestic violence leaving the Refuge.

Attached to this submission are detailed strategies for assisting those with supported housing needs. These strategies have been developed in partnership with a range of statutory and voluntary organisations and will help to direct investment decisions on the development of new supported housing towards priority areas. Further strategies are currently being developed through the Supported Housing Forum Sub-Groups.

Black and Minority Ethnic Issues

Research by the Housing Corporation and others has shown that the New Forest has one of the lowest BME populations in the South East at 0.7% of the total population.

Despite its small BME community, the Council has been concerned that such a small isolated community spread across the District may suffer from social and economic exclusion. The Council monitors access to its housing service and is satisfied that there is equality of access. In 2000 a New Forest Conference considered the problems of the area's largest ethnic group – gypsies. The Council now plans to change its monitoring of housing services to ensure that the gypsy community is achieving full access.

The Council has produced a new strategy (attached) aimed at dealing with the needs of the BME communities and diversity in general.

Older People

In order to meet the needs of the significant number of households with one or more frail older person and, in addition, the ageing population of the Forest, the Council

has developed an *Older-Persons' Housing Strategy*. In the light of the Housing Needs and Market Assessment findings. This strategy is being reviewed by a multi-agency subgroup of the Supported Housing Forum. The revised strategy will be published in 2001. The present Strategy is attached as an appendix to this document.

Asylum Seekers

Following the introduction of the statutory interim arrangements for dispersing asylum seekers more widely across the country, New Forest District Council joined the South Central Consortium which is part of the Local Government Association voluntary scheme.

Whilst the Council has been unable to offer any of its own housing stock for the dispersal arrangements because of the severe shortage of affordable housing in the District, we have worked as part of the Consortium in helping to identify possible resources.

Focuses:

- Ensuring the diverse needs of the community are met
- Developing the Supported Housing Forum capacity to research needs and develop responses

6. Housing Enabling and New Housing

While a lot of the District's housing requirements will be met by flows within the existing stock, the provision of new housing has a contribution to make in meeting those needs. It is therefore crucial to ensure that the right sort of housing is provided in the right place.

New Housing and Partnership with RSLs

A key aspect of this Council's enabling strategy is its partnership work with RSLs active in the District. In order to ensure high management standards, security of availability, nomination rights, common standards of tenant participation and performance monitoring arrangements, new affordable housing is provided by the RSLs who are signatories to the New Forest Housing Partnership Agreement, revised in 2001.

Periodically, the Council considers whether it would be in the best interest of people in housing need to develop Council homes. On balance the Council has decided that better value for money is provided by working with RSLs because of their ability to raise private finance to invest in the development of affordable homes at affordable rents.

This approach, and the Council's commitment to the Housing Enabling Role, has allowed the level of RSL activity to increase. In 2000/1 197 new homes were funded in the District. In the interests of promoting sustainable communities the District ensures people can be housed, where possible, where their jobs, services and social networks are to be found.

In 2001/2, Social Housing Grant sufficient to provide around 160 new homes will be provided by the Council and the Housing Corporation. Due to the MRA there is a reduction in funds available for new starts in 2001/2. The level of resources is, unfortunately, insufficient to meet the Council's strategic housing target of 200 homes per year, however the opportunity to secure additional resources will be sought.

In order to ensure that the level of grant funding that is available helps to provide the optimum number of dwellings Council land is disposed of at below unconstrained open market value. A review of the Council's discounted land value policy for sites secure through the planning process will be completed in 2001/2, and it is hoped that this will help deliver schemes which represent improved value for money. It is also intended to introduce a competitive process (based on quality and meeting Strategy objectives rather than land value) for RSLs who wish to develop Council owned sites in order to encourage innovation. A revised model for assessing bids for Local Authority Social Housing Grant will be developed to improve the value for money of all new schemes.

Every opportunity is taken by the Council to nominate households to RSL homes and this includes 100% nomination rights on all property let through the New Forest Housing Register.

Focus For Development

While there is considerable housing need across the District it is clear that Housing needs are severe along the Waterside, and in the towns of Fordingbridge, Ringwood, New Milton, Totton and Lymington and it is proposed that investment opportunities in these towns should take priority. There is also a strong focus on developing rural sites to help sustain local communities.

While the intention is to provide a balanced programme to meet a wide range of needs, in developing new dwellings priority will be given to the provision of affordable rented accommodation. In determining dwelling types there will be regard to the desire to create sustainable, mixed communities. There is a lesser need for shared ownership accommodation, a modest proportion of the annual programme will be used to meet these needs, and for keyworker housing (provided it does not prejudice

the meeting of the needs of those who the Council consider to be in greater housing need). In order to reflect demographic trends and needs, greater attention is now paid to the creation of single person dwellings and dwellings for smaller households in new developments. There will also need to be greater attention to meeting the requirements of those with special housing needs, particularly the elderly, whose needs cannot be met by remaining in their current home.

Rented Housing and Affordability

As explained above the Housing Needs and Market Assessment revealed a major problem in terms of affordability.

The greatest need is for affordable accommodation is in the rented sector and priority will be given to the funding and provision of rented dwellings.

The Council will seek to ensure that rent levels are affordable by requiring its partner RSLs to bid at the maximum grant rate and at or, preferably, below the rent cap rents stipulated by the Housing Corporation, and by the provision of land at a discounted value through the planning process and by the disposal of Council owned sites. The issue of rent levels will continue to be a major factor when bids for Social Housing Grant are evaluated.

Rural Housing

Rural housing continues to figure highly in the Council's priorities. The Housing Needs and Market Assessment and Housing Register has illustrated clearly the unmet need in rural areas within the District. The Council will use this data to identify priority areas for attention and take a more proactive role in enabling development in where needs are high. Attention will be paid to the availability and accessibility of local services when planning new developments. It is recognised that due to the need for research and community involvement the development of affordable housing in rural areas requires significant resources, not least in staff time, and particular skills. As a result of this the Council proposes to adopt a joint commissioning approach with a small number of its existing partners who have these skill, and to investigate with neighbouring authorities further opportunities that may be presented by the Countryside Agency's Rural Enabler and Vital Villages Schemes.

Empty Property and Private Sector Housing Strategy

It is estimated that there are currently around 900 homes in the District that have been empty for longer than 6 months. In September 1995 the Council launched its Empty Homes Strategy. Since the launch of the Empty Homes Strategy, almost 700

homes have been filled. Redundant commercial property has been converted as well as dwellings brought back into use. Temporary Social Housing Grant has allowed very long term leases of up to 21 years to be secured, and partner RSLs have secured the freeholds of properties using private finance.

A dedicated Empty Homes Officer liaises owners and those concerned with empty property, through personal contact and the Private Rented Forum, to ensure the continued expansion of this strategy. The Strategy has been reviewed in 2001 (and is attached). There is an added focus on the use of existing properties as an alternative to B & B.

New Supported Housing Provision

As explained above the Council aims to ensure that the supported housing needs of its residents are addressed in a co-ordinated way.

A New Forest Supported Housing Core Group has been established to take commissioning decisions on new proposals. These decisions are informed by the Housing Needs and Market Assessment, ongoing monitoring of housing requirements and the detailed work of sub-groups. The Assessment indicates that particular attention needs to be paid to meeting the needs of older persons.

There is close interagency co-operation on all new proposals. Council representatives sit on working groups for all schemes, both pre and post development.

New supported housing schemes can often meet resistance from established communities. A multi-agency group has prepared a Supported Housing Communications Strategy in order to assist the provision of new schemes by enlisting the support of key players and providing information in order to allay fears.

Single People

Whilst the Council's primary responsibility is to secure homes for homeless households with priority need, the *New Forest Housing Register and Housing Needs and Market Assessment* highlights a significant need for accommodation for single people. In addition to the RSL development programme, the New Forest Supported Housing Forum are considering how best to meet the needs of young single people who often require services other than just housing, such as assistance with training, education and seeking employment opportunities.

The Council was concerned at the high numbers of single homeless households in housing need and commissioned Shelter to carry out detailed research into this area. The results have provided the basis of our *Single Persons' Housing Strategy* that is

attached as an appendix to this document. In view of the limited supply of accommodation suitable for single people particular emphasis will be placed on including such accommodation in new developments.

Low-Cost Home Ownership, Key Workers' Dwellings and Market/Sub Market Renting

Notwithstanding the greatest need is for rented accommodation in the New Forest, the Council recognises the importance of meeting a range of housing needs. Shared ownership has made an important contribution to solving local housing needs. Experience has shown that *Do It Yourself Shared Ownership (DIYSO)* has been more useful in the New Forest District than new-build, shared ownership developments. In addition to funding a DIYSO programme, the Council is supporting a Homebuy programme. As DIYSO and Homebuy programmes provide for different housing needs the Council considers it important that both are operated. All vacancies are allocated by way of nominations from the Council's Housing Register, with priority given to transfer applicants who will free up an existing dwellings for re-letting.

Good quality, affordable housing is important to a stable local economy and high quality service provision. A study carried out in 2000/2001 revealed particular recruitment and retention problems linked to housing costs for the NHS and Local Education Authority (LEA). The Council has supported the LEA through its successful first stage bid under the Starter Homes Initiative and is working closely with the NHS on a rented scheme for health and social services workers. The Council will continue to investigate the housing needs of key workers.

While there is clearly a need to provide keyworker accommodation it is important that a strategic approach to provision is taken to this having regard to other housing needs. Care must be taken not to compromise financial or land resources that may be required to meet other needs which have been identified as having a higher priority.

During 2000/2001 the Council successfully launched a sub-market renting scheme with an RSL partner to provide temporary accommodation for those in housing need. The success of this scheme will be monitored and new opportunities examined.

Flexible accommodation to meet the long term needs of occupants

In addition to encouraging the provision of special needs accommodation the District Council will encourage RSLs to develop *lifetime homes* that are capable of meeting the changing needs of the occupants. The Council is working closely with partner RSLs to review its current *lifetime homes* policy. This requirement will be extended to all new RSL houses and bungalows in the district.

In addition there is a continuing demand for grant assistance to adapt existing homes to meet the needs of occupiers with disabilities. The Council has a Disabled Facilities Grant programme that is available to adapt dwellings to meet the needs of disabled occupiers.

The Housing Needs and Market Assessment revealed that adapted homes were not necessarily re-occupied by those with special needs when the original occupier moved out. The new choice based lettings service will ensure that vacancies of adapted properties are advertised to promote best use of stock.

Planning Policy

The Housing Development Team has been involved in the development of affordable housing policies in the New Forest District Local Plan and the New Forest District Council was the Authority which pioneered the *rural exceptions policy* which has now been embraced in the Government's Policy. The District Local Plan also includes the new initiative of an *urban exceptions policy* to allow, in certain cases, the development of affordable housing to meet local needs on the edge of towns.

There is close liaison between Planning and Housing Departments in producing alterations to the Local Plan, which will be placed on public deposit in 2001. This has included joint Housing and Planning seminars for Members and stakeholders.

The Council supports the revised PPG3 which, for the first time, refers to Councils being able to influence the mix of size, type and affordability of housing in new developments where there is clear evidence of need for certain types of housing in specific areas. The Housing Needs and Market Assessment will form the basis for future policies that address these issues.

The Council also welcomes the assertion in the revised PPG3 that different types of housing and tenures do not make bad neighbours, and the presumption in favour of providing affordable housing as part of larger development sites. Through negotiation with developers the Council will strive to achieve this objective of creating mixed communities by adopting a presumption in favour of providing affordable housing as part of new residential development and by dispersing affordable housing units throughout a site. The aim will be to ensure a street level of mixing of different tenures occurs and that no single groupings in excess of 10 affordable housing units are created within market schemes.

The Council has sought to maximise opportunities for the provision of affordable housing through PPG3 sites. The New Forest District Local Plan contains a site threshold of 15 or more dwellings on residential sites of 0.5 hectares or more irrespective of the number of dwellings, and a threshold of 2 or more dwellings on residential sites within the main New Forest villages.

Land values have been increasing rapidly in the area. The Council continues to support RSLs in their negotiations with landowners and developers to secure land for affordable housing development at less than open market value in order to ensure that dwellings remain affordable.

All Council departments work together to ensure that opportunities for affordable housing development are identified and that clear information on site constraints and costs is readily available. In addition, the Council regularly reviews its own land holdings and releases land to RSLs at less than market value. Without compromising quality, the Council has adopted a flexible approach to the application of planning standards, in particular car parking standards through the issue of supplementary planning guidance, where this has assisted in enabling new development to take place. This approach has been especially beneficial in town centre areas where it has allowed the promotion of mixed-use schemes and the re-use of empty properties, with consequent regeneration benefits. More generally, lower parking standards have been adopted for affordable housing schemes.

There are regular meetings between Housing and Planning Officers, both on strategic and project based issues. Where appropriate officers from other service areas are involved in the dialogue. Considerable effort is made to ensure that issues that may prejudice project delivery are identified very early and that the planning system is used positively to identify solutions to problems.

The provision of affordable housing and the operation of local plan policies are closely monitored.

Sustainable Development

The Council recognises that sustainable development must be at the heart of its Housing Strategy and is a fundamental aspect of reducing social exclusion. The re-use of brownfield sites is encouraged and considerable emphasis is placed on identifying and re-using empty properties. The Council will encourage all new RSL development to be sustainable in environmental, social and economic terms. It will work closely with them in considering the sustainability of scheme location and design and in the application of Housing Quality Indicators and the Sustainability Toolkit.

The New Forest RSL Sustainable Development Group was established in 2000/2001 to develop a sustainable housing agenda and strategy for the New Forest. This is closely linked to the works that the Council and RSLs are carrying out on Local Agenda 21. In order to ensure that this complex task is comprehensive, the core group co-opts on members from other parts of their organisation and other organisations to input into specific areas of work.

The Council is also supporting and working with RSLs on innovative partnering and construction methods which embrace the principles advocated in the Construction Task Force's report *Rethinking Construction*. Hyde Housing Association are currently developing their *Amphion* project , a prefabricated scheme which incorporates many *Egan* principles, on a former Council garage site. The outputs from the project will be closely monitored and the results shared.

RSLs are encouraged to make provision for cycle parking within new developments. The first new build car free scheme within the District was completed in 2000. The success of this scheme will be closely monitored to see how replicable the principles are elsewhere.

The Council also encourages the use of energy conservation measures to make homes energy efficient and affordable to heat. The Energy Efficiency and Affordable Warmth Strategy is a key element in ensuring this objective is achieved. Opportunities to introduce new technology to reduce the incidence of fuel poverty are being investigated.

Sustainable Residential Quality

It is aimed to ensure that existing estates are maintained to high standards and that responsive local management is provided. The Council and its partner RSLs strive to ensure that new affordable housing developments are indiscernible from other forms of housing and that the design, mix and layout of new estates help to create a sense of community. Supplementary planning guidance has also been produced that promotes a socially and environmentally sensitive approach to "Secured by Design" principles and creating accessible environments.

It is necessary for Council homes, existing RSL homes and new developments, to be carefully considered in relation to:

- Sustainable residential quality that, in terms of design, layout and allocation of space creates a sense of community
- The creation of mixed and inclusive communities that meet a range of needs
- The location of new development in relation to jobs, services and transport
- Safe and accessible environments.
 - The provision of appropriately located and adequate car parking, and adequate access for emergency vehicles
- The need for area based strategies to be developed where multiple problems are identified
- The need for responsive local management
- Energy efficiency and affordable warmth

Affordable Housing Development Guide

A guide is being produced for RSLs, developers, and others involved in the development process, aimed at increasing certainty and clarity about the housing priorities and Council policies and processes, and improving deliverability.

Focuses:

- Ensuring housing needs and preferences are met, with a particular priority being given to the provision of affordable rented accommodation provided by partner RSLs
- Promoting sustainable development and mixed communities
- Influencing the size and type of new dwellings
- Assisting in meeting supported housing needs, and needs for flexible accommodation
- Supporting RSLs by making social housing grant and land available
- Promoting the re-use of empty properties
- Working with the local planning authority to identify opportunities and constraints, reviewing planning policies and delivering new affordable dwellings.
- Providing new dwellings in rural areas, and engage local parishes and communities

4. Public and Voluntary Sector Housing

Council Homes

Information on Council homes, including Tenant participation can be found in the HRA Business Plan.

Currently the Council requires right to buy properties that are to sold to be offered to sale to the Council in the first instance. Unfortunately due to its limited resources it is unable to purchase back the dwellings. It is intended to investigate further the imposing of other restrictions on re-sales in the light of encouragement given in the *Rural White Paper* to ensure such housing meets local needs.

RSL Homes

Management Issues

The Council undertakes continual monitoring of the management standard of all our partner RSLs. The Council is satisfied, through its monitoring processes, which now includes scrutiny by a panel of Councillors, cross-boundary comparisons, and those of the Housing Corporation, that all Registered Social Landlord partners are effectively managing their own homes.

Most of the 2,600 RSL homes in the District were built since 1990 and as such are in good condition, built as they are to Housing Corporation and Building Regulation standards. The Council works with RSLs to ensure that potential management problems on new developments are identified at design stage and are then designed out of a scheme. In addition, RSLs will be encouraged to invest in the improvement of their own homes, particularly using the Housing Corporation's miscellaneous works programmes.

Anti-Social Behaviour and Racial Harassment

The Council is committed to dealing effectively with anti-social behaviour and racial harassment. Housing Services has adopted joint working arrangements with partner RSLs, the Police and the Council's own Environmental Health Department. All tenancy agreements prohibit racial harassment and the Council will pay particular attention to any incidents that do occur. In addition it has, in partnership with the Police, recently adopted a multi-agency procedure for recording and reporting racial incidents. Protocols have also been endorsed to facilitate the use of Anti-Social Behaviours Orders and Acceptable Behaviour Contracts as provisions of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

Home Energy Efficiency

RSLs are also assessing the energy efficiency of their homes and as partners of the Council will continue to share information, including energy ratings. The Government Grant, Home Front and House Warmers Training is promoted to landlords to ensure that whilst it is available to tenants, take up is encouraged.

Tenant Participation

As a result of the need that was identified for greater RSL tenants involvement the Council has established a Forum of tenant participation officers, which includes representatives both of the Council's and RSLs, which discusses issues and shares experiences. RSL tenants now have the opportunity to participate in the production of the Housing Strategy. Minimum standards for tenant participation have been agreed that will promote tenant involvement, implement good practices and working in

partnership. Existing residents organisations are being mapped in order to promote networking and capacity building initiatives are being pursued. In addition, we have undertaken a pilot project to compare management standards on a particular estate where there is more than one landlord. Residents' Action has been introduced for the Heather Road estate, following resident consultation to improve services and facilities for their community.

Focuses:

- Investigating opportunities for restricting Right to Buy re-sales.
- Building capacity and opportunity for tenant involvement
- Working with RSLs to limit anti-social behaviour and racial harassment

5. Private Sector Housing

New Market Housing Development

The Hampshire County Structure Plan Review requires that 5480 dwellings are provided between 1996 and 2011. This represents 365 dwellings a year. There is a 'reserve housing provision' in the Structure Plan for a further 500 dwellings. Despite the high levels of need for affordable housing, and existing policies in the Local Plan to seek the provision of such housing, it is envisaged that most new dwellings will be for sale at market values. Given the relationship between house prices and income it is not considered that new house building will ensure market house prices are affordable for those in housing need. House prices in the locality remain buoyant and a combination of new household formation in migration for market dwellings suggests that demand will remain high in the coming years.

The Council will be able to influence the location and design of dwellings through Local Plan policies and development control decisions. Following the release of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing* the Council has ensured that new planning proposals are, where appropriate, of a higher density than, perhaps, they would have been in the past. The Housing Needs and Market Assessment revealed that the dwelling balance has shifted in recent years towards larger dwellings while the Hampshire County Council Small Area Population Projections suggest an increase in the number of smaller, particularly single person households in future years. As part of the Local Plan review consideration will be given to the desirability of influencing the mix of market sale dwelling sizes in future developments.

Stock Condition

In the light of the results of the Housing Needs and Market Assessment a stock condition survey is planned for 2001/2002. The information collected by the assessment will be used to inform the survey.

The improvement grant policy mainly focuses resources on dealing with dwellings that fail the standard of fitness for human habitation or are unsafe, adapting homes for disabled people, and for conversions to create new dwellings to rent. It also allows grants to be given to repair or adapt mobile homes. This policy concentrates on the Audit Commission Best Value Indicator for dealing with unfit dwellings but also supports the Empty Property and Private Sector Housing Strategy. Grants are either income or age related so are targeted to those unable to afford the cost themselves thus enabling them to remain in their own homes for as long as possible.

There is currently out for consultation, proposals from the DETR to replace the majority of grants with a new flexible system of loans, grants, and equity release. The proposals advocate that the Council becomes more of a facilitator, encouraging and enabling people to maintain their own homes and remaining in their own communities. The new Care and Repair Agency that was created in April 2001 will support the authority achieve its targets when this new system becomes clearer.

A flexible enforcement policy, where dealing with the condition of rented accommodation, aimed at meeting the needs of both tenants and landlords, has resulted in a realistic balance in improving housing conditions and respecting the role played by landlords in providing rented accommodation.

Home Energy Efficiency Strategy

New Forest is committed to the positive issues of Local Agenda 21 and HECA in meeting the needs of today without compromising the lifestyles of future generations. We recognise that increasing energy efficiency has social, economic and environmental benefits to the community.

The Council has a dedicated officer to co-ordinate its Strategy in response to the Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA). She provides advice and promotes both local and national initiatives to the local community. Working in partnership with other statutory and non-statutory agencies and the business and voluntary sectors assists in building an energy efficiency profile of the New Forest District. The success of the Council's HECA strategy relies heavily on corporate commitment. The HECA Working Group, a cross-service team with an involvement in housing, Environmental Health and Local Agenda 21 issues meet bi-monthly to ensure commitment and co-ordinated action.

New Forest District Council is a member of Shecane (The Southern Home Energy Conservation Action Network) which aims to develop partnerships to reduce domestic fossil fuel consumption and carbon dioxide emissions, and to eliminate fuel poverty.

Through a range of local and national initiatives, like the DETR's own "Are you doing your bit" campaign, householders and landlords are encouraged to take up and adopt energy efficiency measures. Using a grass roots approach in meeting the community

is helping people to understand how their use of energy causes global warming and climate change. By increasing awareness and stimulating interest in energy efficiency we are encouraging simple, permanent changes to our lifestyle to help protect the local and global environment.

Details of how we aim to achieve our home energy efficiency strategy are contained in the Energy Efficiency and Affordable Warmth Strategy (attached).

Focuses:

- Promoting sustainable development and mixed communities
- Influencing the size and type of new dwellings
- Promoting the re-use of empty properties
- Working with the local planning authority to review planning policies.
- Assessing stock condition and houses in multiple occupation
- Ensuring that the best use is made of the existing stock through improvements and adaptations so it meets the community's needs
- Launching a Care and Repair Agency
- Increasing the level of awareness of the Housing Improvement Section's work.
- Implementing the Energy Efficiency and Affordable Warmth Strategy

6. Key Linkages

Social Exclusion and Health

The Government has clearly indicated that it wishes to tackle social exclusion. The Council recognises the links between housing and social exclusion and wishes to work with others to deal with this issue.

Work has commenced by:

- Establishing a Council based internal officer mechanism to look at the issue and current service provision.
- Involvement in development of Credit Unions.
- Development of *Opening Doors*, a Social Exclusion Issues Paper that draws together details of possible areas for further work locally.

The longer term aim will be to develop a integrated and strategic approach with partner agencies and the community. There are many strategies developing or under development, such as the Health Improvement Programme, Community Care Plan and Drug Action Team Strategy, as well as the District Council's own Community, Social Exclusion, Housing, Health, Community Safety, and Local Agenda 21 strategies. Practical examples include Participatory Needs Assessments which aim

to provide local communities with the opportunity to identify their own needs and to work with agencies to meet them. Work is also being undertaken to promote a variety of initiatives such as the *Community Legal Service* and *UK On-Line*. Arrangements are in place to investigate how linkages between education, training and employment can be further developed.

In order to tackle some of the issues highlighted by the section on assessing need, it is necessary to look across a wide range of strategies and services both within and outside the District Council.

Community Safety

It is clear from the emerging strategies attached to this submission that the Council takes seriously partnership working with a range of statutory and voluntary agencies. The Crime and Disorder Act (1998) placed a statutory duty on all departments within the Authority to take into consideration the crime and disorder implications of every decision made. This strategy reflects this by drawing links between poor housing and incidence of crime, disorder and victimisation. The three key themes of the Community Safety Strategy therefore are:

- Young People
- Community Issues
- Violence and Intimidation

The aims of the Strategy of direct relevance to housing are to:

- Reduce levels of crime
- Make the community aware of support agencies
- Continue to make improvements to the physical environment

- Improve community awareness of crime and disorder
- Tackle domestic Violence
- Achieve Secured by Design
- Consideration of particular problems facing the District's Black and Minority Ethnic community
- Encouraging communities to tackle crime and disorder in their own neighbourhoods.

April 2002 will see the production of the second Community Safety Strategy. The Local authority has a duty to consider the crime and disorder implication of all its decisions, this will be reflected in the Housing Strategy. The two strategies will compliment each other to further reduce crime and disorder in the District. Council housing officers will be taking a more active role over the coming years as systems are designed to map crime hot spots and follow trends across the district.

Council housing officers take an active role in the Domestic Violence Sub-Group of the Supported Housing Forum. In partnership with a wide range of agencies the Council has produced a Domestic Violence Housing Strategy which is included as an appendix. The Council is also represented on the steering group of the Hampshire

Potentially Dangerous Offenders' Protocol that seeks to protect the public from the risk caused by serious offenders.

Focuses:

- Playing a central role in Community Planning
- Developing linkages with other agencies and policy areas so housing is not seen in isolation and complementary approaches to meeting needs are adopted

Appendix 1

Summary of the Strategy and Key Priority Areas

The Strategy will evolve through the following processes:

- Participation of, and consultation with stakeholders
- The regular monitoring of performance against the targets set in this strategy
- Continuous monitoring of local housing needs
- A review of the effectiveness of targets in meeting key areas which need to be addressed.

The Strategy will be updated annually following the performance against targets set out in the *Strategy Targets and Annual Plan*.

This Housing Strategy has highlighted the housing challenges and key priorities that the need to be tackled in the next five years and these are:

- The need for the Council to adopt a strategic role, and corporate approach, to meeting local needs. It must link with other key local strategies and partnerships, and with co-ordinate action with neighbouring authorities, in order to meet the diverse needs of the community, promote and improve the social, economic and environmental well being of that community. It must also ensure housing is provided in a way that promotes sustainable development, social inclusion and community safety.
- ? The need to continually assess the District's housing needs and ensure the Council's housing service is provided in a fair and equitable to all members of the community, including those with particular supported housing requirements. In particular the need, as a result of demographic trends and economic conditions, to address the requirements of the elderly and the young.
- ? The continuing high level of homelessness and the increasing dependence on Bed and Breakfast (B & B). The need to provide a high quality housing advice service in order to minimise homelessness and to minimize the need to use B & B accommodation, by providing alternative cheaper and more suitable forms of temporary accommodation.
- The need to promote sustainable communities and customer empowerment by providing a choice based lettings service.
- ? The need to address the shortage of affordable housing for local people who are unable to find a home in the private housing market. The greatest need is

for additional general needs dwellings for rent at Housing Corporation rent cap level or below. There is a lesser need for shared ownership accommodation. There is also a need to provide housing and support for those with special needs. While the need for keyworker housing provision has been identified and the Council will aim to secure provision, a strategic response is needed and it is important that this provision is not at the expense of those who the Council may be considered to be in greater housing need.

- The need to ensure that new affordable housing development is well integrated with other housing in the interests of creating mixed and sustainable communities, and to ensure that the mix of affordable housing on new schemes also reflects this aim
- ? The need to identify opportunities for new affordable housing development on Council owned land and release land on the most favourable terms in order meet the objectives of the Housing Strategy.
- The need to increase the supply of affordable housing in rural areas and engage communities.
- ? The need to ensure resources are available to assist RSLs in the provision of affordable housing through work with the Housing Corporation and the allocation of local authority social housing grant.
- The need to ensure that the balance of the housing stock (across sectors) meets the needs and preferences of the community.
- The need to make the best possible use of existing homes and reduce to an absolute minimum the number of empty properties.
- The need to manage, maintain, repair and improve Council homes
- The continuing high demand for grants to repair and improve the private sector homes and the need to meet the Council's statutory obligations to ensure that homes in the private sector are fit for habitation by working with landlords and owner occupiers, enforcement action and the payment of grants.
- Continuing need to improve home energy efficiency and ensure the availability of affordable warmth. Meet the Council's obligations as a Home Energy Conservation Authority to reduce CO₂ levels and encourage its partner RSLs to ensure that their homes are as energy efficient as possible.
 - Meet the Council's statutory obligations to ensure that homes are adapted for people with disabilities by the payment of grants or taking appropriate enforcement action.
 - Develop Tenant Participation Compacts reflecting tenants' needs and wishes, and to work with RSL tenants and the wider community, to build their capacity for involvement and to ensure that key strategies are developed and implemented to ensure the social, environmental and economic well being of local communities.
 - Consult Council tenants about all aspects of the housing service and encourage tenant involvement in any changes that may affect them.

- The need to monitor and keep under review the performance of the Housing Service, and in particular to use Best Value as an opportunity to develop best practice and compare performance with other local authorities.

The targets set out in the *Strategy Targets and Annual Plan* reflect these key priority areas.

Appendix 2

Housing Investment Programme List of Documents

- Housing Strategy
- Housing Strategy Summary
- Housing Strategy Sub Strategies
 - Affordable Warmth and Energy Efficiency Housing Strategy
 - Domestic Violence Housing Strategy
 - Empty Properties and Private Sector Housing Strategy
 - Single Persons Housing Strategy
 - Older Persons Housing Strategy
 - Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Strategy
 - Monitoring Report
- Housing Strategy Targets and Annual Plan
- Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.
- Statistical appendices for the Housing Strategy and HRA Business Plan
- The 2001 Housing Needs and Market Assessment Summary
- Tenants Compact
- Best Value Performance Plan.

Appendix 3

Contacts

Strategy	Nick Cross..... Simon Maggs.....
Enabling	Simon Maggs.....
Needs/Lettings	Gregory Spawton.....
Landlord	Dave Brown...
Empty Properties	Pam Smith.....
Housing Improvements	Rob Easton.....
Land-Use Planning	Louise Evans.....
Energy Efficiency	Mary Rainbow....
Social Exclusion and Health	Neil Frost.....
Community Safety	Sian Jenkins...
Community Strategy Development	Keith Smith.....

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

HOUSING LANDLORD SERVICES

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUSINESS PLAN

2 THE HRA BUSINESS PLAN

July 2001

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document is the Council's five-year business plan for the management and development of the Housing Landlord Service. It provides a comprehensive vision for how we believe the landlord service will develop and adapt over the next five years to meet the needs identified. The Plan also identifies how the landlord service will meet the aims laid down in the Council's overall Housing Strategy.

1.2 NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL WAS FORMED AFTER THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW IN 1972 FROM THE FORMER BOROUGH OF LYMINGTON, THE FORMER NEW FOREST RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL AND THE FORMER RINGWOOD AND FORDINGBRIDGE RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL. IT STRETCHES FROM THE BORDERS OF WILTSHIRE IN THE NORTH TO THE SOLENT IN THE SOUTH AND FROM THE BORDERS OF DORSET IN THE WEST TO SOUTHAMPTON WATER IN THE EAST. THE DISTRICT COVERS SOME 290 SQUARE MILES AND IS PRIMARILY RURAL IN NATURE WITH THE MAJORITY OF COUNCIL OWNED HOUSING CONCENTRATED IN THE SEVEN PRINCIPAL TOWNS AND PARISHES SURROUNDING THE NEW FOREST. AT THE TIME OF AMALGAMATION THE TOTAL SOCIAL HOUSING STOCK OWNED BY THE LOCAL AUTHORITY WAS IN EXCESS OF 9,000.

- 1.3 The majority of housing within the district is privately owned (81%) with the Council owning just 9.6% (5,421 dwellings). Right to Buy continues to reduce the numbers of local authority homes available to rent.
- 1.4 *The Council's 5,421 dwellings are mostly made up of low-rise homes of traditional construction. Over 80% were built after 1945.*
- 1.5 The need for social housing in the area was identified from a housing needs survey last carried out in 1995/96. This survey identified 3,775 households as being in housing need. A survey has been carried out during 2001/2002 and this will aim to update the information currently held so that both the Council's housing stock and other affordable housing resources within the District can assist in meeting current and future housing needs. The final report on the results of this survey is due in July 2001. Further information on housing need is obtained from the Housing Register, which was set up in 1997. There are currently more than 2,000 households on the register because of their housing need. A rolling review of applicants on the Register ensures that the information is continually updated.
- 1.6 Demographic trends indicate that, whilst there are forecast to be falls in the population of people in the age range 20 – 34 (-13.8% between 1996 and 2011), there will be increases in the age range 35 – 85+ (+12.65% between 1996 and 2011). In addition it is forecast, over the same period, to be a 10% reduction in demand for married couple households and a 27% increase in one-person households. With a changing population it is likely that both the demand for social housing and the demand for particular types of social housing will also change. The business plan will need accurate forecasts of these anticipated changes and a strategy for coping with expected changes in demand. (Information source: Hampshire County Council's Long Term Population Projections).
- 1.7 The management of the Housing Landlord Service is crucial to making the most of the valuable asset and the Plan details how this is currently carried out and looks to the future and how management needs to adapt and where necessary improve to meet the changing demands of the service.
- 1.8 The Council's stock has been well maintained over the past 10 years with an effective planned maintenance programme that has ensured that all properties are wind and weathertight. All have had external major elements replaced, when required, in accordance with the 10 year planned maintenance programme. There are no significant backlogs in the areas of external repairs although the same cannot be said of internal repairs and

improvements where there is a backlog of work. All properties, with the exception of those where existing tenants refused the improvement, have had the installation of full central heating. With the exception of approximately 1,000 homes new double glazed windows have been installed which has ensured good levels of insulation and draught proofing. The window replacement programme is continuing.

1.9 THE AREA WHERE FINANCE HAS BEEN RESTRICTED AND FOR THE LAST FEW YEARS UNAVAILABLE IS IN THE IMPROVEMENT OF PROPERTIES TO ENSURE THEY MEET CURRENT NEEDS. THIS HAS TENDED TO BE IN THE IMPROVEMENT OF KITCHENS AND BATHROOMS, INTERNAL ARRANGEMENTS AND IN EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS INCLUDING CAR-PARKING PROVISION. THIS SITUATION WILL NOW BE RESOLVED BY THE ADVENT OF THE MAJOR REPAIRS ALLOWANCE, WHICH WILL ENABLE THE EXISTING INVESTMENT LEVELS TO DEAL WITH THE CURRENT MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENT BACKLOG WHILST THE MRA CAN DEAL WITH ON-GOING MAINTENANCE REQUIREMENTS.

1.10 THIS BUSINESS PLAN AIMS TO IDENTIFY CURRENT AND FUTURE EXPENDITURE NEEDS OF THE COUNCIL'S HOUSING STOCK AND PERFORMANCE ON SERVICE DELIVERY. IT ALSO LOOKS AT THE FUTURE FOR THE BUSINESS AND HOW THE COUNCIL INTEND TO ALLOCATE RESOURCES AND DEAL WITH IDENTIFIED PRIORITIES AND NEEDS.

1.11 FINALLY, THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR OF THE NEW BUSINESS PLANNING APPROACH TO THE LANDLORD SERVICE AT NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL. WE RECOGNISE THAT FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS ARE REQUIRED BEFORE THE BUSINESS PLAN CAN BE FULLY REFLECTIVE OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE DETR AND OUR AIMS AND OBJECTIVES BUT ARE CONFIDENT THAT THIS CAN BE ACHIEVED IN THE NEXT TWO YEARS.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUERIES REGARDING THIS BUSINESS PLAN PLEASE CONTACT

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2. SUMMARY

2.1 The objectives and aims contained within the business plan can be summarised as follows:-

- **We will maintain the current levels of service delivery to our customers and continue to strive to achieve high levels of customer satisfaction with services.**
- **We will strive to maintain the recognition we currently achieve with the DETR and others for the quality and performance of our services.**
- **We will maintain our services in accordance with the principles of Best Value and in accordance with the needs and wishes of customers.**
- **We will look at different ways of providing our services to ensure that they are provided in the most effective way.**
- **We will use new technology to the maximum advantage.**
- **We will look to increase opportunities for tenant participation and consultation and will continue to develop the Tenant Participation Compact.**
- **We will maintain our homes to a good standard and achieve the decent homes standard within 10 years.**
- **We will ensure that a 10-year planned maintenance and improvement programme that reflects future levels of funding is prepared within the next 12 months to replace the existing 10-year programme.**
- **We will ensure that our employees remain committed to our aims and objectives and provide the necessary training and support to achieve this.**
- **We intend to achieve the proposal for rent re-structuring in accordance with the DETR timetable.**
- **We will continuously monitor our performance against the targets within the Business Plan and review how we have done against those targets at the time of the review of the Plan in July 2002.**



3 MISSION STATEMENT

- 3.1 The Mission Statement or “statement of purpose” encapsulates New Forest District Council’s long-term goal for the housing service.

New Forest District Council’s Landlord Service will provide high quality, value for money housing services to its tenants, leaseholders, residents and other customers and ensure that the services meet the needs of users. All services will be provided in accordance with legislation and the principles of “Best Value” and continuous improvement and wherever possible will respond to demand and need and not just legislative requirements. In partnership with the tenants the wish is to create a service that responds to customer needs rather than just legislative requirements.

4 CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 4.1 A Diagrammatic illustration of the Council’s strategic documents is shown at Appendix 1

4.2 AS WELL AS THE COUNCIL’S HOUSING STRATEGY THAT CLEARLY SETS THE OVERALL SCENE FOR THE HRA BUSINESS PLAN THERE ARE A NUMBER OF OTHER STRATEGIES AND POLICIES THAT IMPACT UPON THE HRA BUSINESS PLAN. A LIST OF THESE STRATEGIES AND POLICIES AND THEIR IMPACT UPON THE HRA BUSINESS PLAN ARE LISTED IN APPENDIX 2.

5 STAKEHOLDERS

- 5.1 *The primary stakeholders in the New Forest District Council housing business are the tenants and leaseholders who occupy the properties together with resident and tenant associations. Those people who have purchased an ex-council property on an estate would also have an interest in how the estate and the immediate environment is managed.*
- 5.2 *However these are not the only people with an interest in the business. These would also include Council members, Council taxpayers, staff and also individuals who are looking to be housed. In addition other housing providers have an interest in what New Forest Housing Services do since it could impact upon their own businesses. There are other agencies involved in the provision and support of social housing such as Hampshire County Council Social Services and other public and voluntary social care agencies who provide support and assistance to tenants. The wider business community and employers have a need for adequate housing provision in the District for their employees and will be interested in the development of the Council’s landlord service. Contractors who provide services to the organisation would also have interests in the overall performance of the business. Lastly the DETR have an interest and a wish to see the business succeed and be run efficiently and effectively.*

6 RESOURCES

- 6.1 The Housing business is substantial. Total rental income for the year 2000/2001 was £17,111,392 for houses and £431,692 for garages. Future income in this area will depend upon the rent strategy and the results of the rent restructuring exercise that it currently underway in response to Government guidance.
- 6.2 The resources that comprise the Housing Landlord Services are the housing stock, the staff and the rental income from the properties. Other assets include the office accommodation and furniture and fittings including information technology all of which are provided by New

Forest District Council although costs incurred are paid from the Housing Revenue Account. These costs include the necessary corporate and democratic costs ancillary to the Housing organisation being part of New Forest District Council.

6.3 *The Housing stock comprises 5,421 dwellings of various types detailed in the Statistical Appendices. A valuation of the stock has just been completed to comply with the DETR Guidance on Stock Valuation for resource accounting purposes. The Existing Use Value of the stock and other housing assets is valued at £236,007,828.*

6.4 *The Council has invested heavily in Information Technology in recent years and now runs a fully integrated housing management IT system that enables all users to have access to details of properties and tenants. This improves efficiency and means that the customer can easily gain information regarding services and quick answers to questions on their tenancy and property details be they regarding rent or repairs etc. A future development in this area currently being investigated is remote working, yet still maintaining access to the database of information.*

6.5 THE TOTAL NUMBER OF STAFF WHOLLY EMPLOYED IN THE LANDLORD FUNCTION IS 73.5 FTE (FULL TIME EQUIVALENT). THESE STAFF ARE EMPLOYED IN A NUMBER OF DISTINCT SECTIONS PROVIDING THE FULL RANGE OF SERVICES AND THIS IS SHOWN IN THE STAFFING STRUCTURE IN APPENDIX 3. NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL HAS ACHIEVED THE INVESTORS IN PEOPLE ACCREDITATION AND WE BELIEVE THAT BY OUR INVESTMENT IN EMPLOYEES WE CAN ENSURE THAT OUR SERVICES ARE OF THE HIGHEST QUALITY. EVERY MEMBER OF STAFF HAS AN ANNUAL APPRAISAL CONSOLIDATED BY REVIEW AT A MINIMUM OF EVERY 3 MONTHS. THIS ENABLES MANAGERS TO ENSURE THAT BUSINESS OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS ARE FULLY DISSEMINATED TO ALL STAFF AND THAT EVERYONE HAS A GOOD UNDERSTANDING ON HOW THEY CONTRIBUTE TO THE OVERALL BUSINESS OBJECTIVES.

6.6 CONTINUED TRAINING OF ALL OUR EMPLOYEES IS SEEN AS CRUCIAL AND TRAINING NEEDS ARE IDENTIFIED AT THE TIME OF THE ANNUAL APPRAISAL.

7 CORE BUSINESS AND SERVICE OBJECTIVES

7.1 The following services represent the core business of New Forest District Council's Housing Landlord Service: -

- The provision of social housing accommodation to those in housing need.
- The management of tenancies and estates.
- The asset management of the housing stock including repair and maintenance strategies.
- The provision and management of a warden and central control service.
- The provision and management of a rent accounting, rent collection and service charge service.
- The promotion and organisation of resident involvement in the overall service.

7.2 Service Objectives

New Forest Housing Landlord Services has the following main objectives: -

- To provide a customer orientated and high quality service within the principles of "best value".

- To maintain the housing stock in good condition and in accordance with the recognised principles of good asset management.
- To collect and account for rents and service charges due from tenants and residents.
- To provide a caring warden and lifeline service in accordance with the wishes and needs of residents.
- To consult and involve tenants and leaseholders with all services and the future development of those services.

8 SWOT ANALYSIS

8.1 Prior to the writing of this business plan a number of employees carried out a SWOT analysis of the existing service. The results of this can be seen at Appendix 4. The purpose of this analysis was to identify areas of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and to ensure that the Business Plan reflected these areas. In particular it was considered important that areas of weakness or threat should, as far as possible, be tackled in the Business plan and that these would be seen as areas for future development.

9 OPTIONS AND STRATEGIES FOR THE HOUSING SERVICE AND FACTORS CONSIDERED WITHIN THIS BUSINESS PLAN

9.1 For any business plan to be effective over a long period it is recognised that many options and strategies need to be considered and evaluated to ensure that changes in both the internal and external environment are taken account of and the plan amended or changed as necessary. The “SWOT” analysis above lists many of the factors that must be taken into account and the consequence of these factors on the business plan are analysed below.

9.2 Many difficult questions need to be asked and analysis undertaken to ensure that the right answers for the service at New Forest District Council are achieved. The questions will range from: “Are the Council best placed to provide this service to its tenants or are other providers better placed to provide this?” to “Should the whole or parts of the service be given to others to provide?” Most, if not all of these questions will be answered as part of Best Value reviews which are due to be undertaken in all parts of the service during the next few years. However, one major issue, that of stock transfer, has already been examined and the issues detailed in Appendix 5.

9.3 The two tables at Appendix 6 show the result of the analysis undertaken as part of the review. From this information the Council concluded that at this stage it would not pursue LSVT as it was not in the financial interests of the Council as a whole. The current position with the business and in particular the situation that the Major Repairs Allowance now provides means that tenants are satisfied that repairs and improvements to the stock will be undertaken to appropriate levels and further capital expenditure is not required in excess of current and proposed funding levels.

9.4 As part of the Council’s strategy it is now looking at the option of Arms Length companies and Tenant Management Organisations and will consider how these options could contribute to the overall strategy. We will continue to consider issues such as these as part of the annual review of the Business Plan

9.5 The Opportunity for Different Ways of Working

9.6	THE PROVISION OF A HOUSING SERVICE HAS TRADITIONALLY BEEN CARRIED OUT BY STAFF AND RESOURCES BASED IN A CENTRAL AND/OR DISTRICT OFFICES. MODERN TECHNOLOGY
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NOW WILL ALLOW FAR MORE RADICAL WAYS OF PROVIDING THESE SERVICES, IN MANY CASES TO THE BENEFIT OF BOTH STAFF AND TENANTS.

- 9.7 Many organisations are now looking at supplying front line telephone services from a call centre. This requires highly trained and competent staff that are the first point of contact from a tenant and where at least 75% of tenant's queries are answered without recourse to other members of staff. This avoids the transfer of the tenant between staff of other sections and ensures higher levels of satisfaction.
- 9.8 New technology can also mean that site based staff, housing and maintenance officers can spend more time on their patches and thereby become more effective and efficient. Technologies required are laptop computers, mobile phones all with direct links to the housing systems to enable immediate and ready interrogation of information.
- 9.9 New Forest Housing Services are currently looking at ways and means of moving the service forward in this way and the business plan recognises and allows for the substantial investment required initially.

9.10 Legislation

- 9.11 The social housing business within the local government arena is governed by a variety of legislation ranging from national legislation that effects all landlords to specific legislation that affects services within local government. Changes to any of this legislation can and will have effects on the way the business operates and develops over the life of the business plan. It is, however, impossible to forecast the effects of any changes since they may never occur. Steps can and are taken to assess the effects of forthcoming legislative changes that are proposed in Green Papers or other consultation documents.

9.12 Local Political Priorities

9.13 WITHIN THE BUSINESS PLAN IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO PREDICT THE CHANGES THAT MAY BE REQUIRED DUE TO CHANGING LOCAL POLITICAL PRIORITIES. THIS COULD OCCUR DUE TO THE CHANGE OF ADMINISTRATION OR SIMPLY DUE TO A CHANGE OF LOCAL POLITICAL DIRECTION. IT IS, HOWEVER, NECESSARY TO ENSURE THAT THE BUSINESS PLAN IS FLEXIBLE SO THAT THE IMPACT OF SUCH CHANGES ON THE PLAN CAN BE ASSESSED QUICKLY AND ACCURATELY AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL ADVISED OF ANY IMPLICATION AS A RESULT OF THEIR DECISIONS.

9.14 Local Authority Businesses

9.15 THE WEAKNESS OF ANY BUSINESS WITHIN A LOCAL AUTHORITY IS ITS LACK OF ABILITY TO TAKE DECISIONS IN ISOLATION WITHOUT RECOGNISING THE IMPACT OR EFFECTS ON THE CORPORATE WHOLE. THIS COULD ONLY CHANGE AS A RESULT OF LEGISLATION OR IN A STOCK TRANSFER OF THE BUSINESS TO EITHER AN EXISTING SOCIAL LANDLORD OF TO A NEW REGISTERED SOCIAL LANDLORD. THIS CAN LEAD TO A LACK OF FLEXIBILITY WHEN COMPARED TO OTHER SOCIAL LANDLORDS' ABILITY TO DEVELOP THEIR BUSINESSES. THE BUSINESS PLAN THEREFORE MAKES NO ATTEMPT TO FORECAST WHEN OR IF THIS MIGHT OCCUR. HOWEVER, THE OPPORTUNITY THAT MAY BE PRESENTED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000 AND THE NEW POWER TO PROMOTE WELL-BEING IS A FACTOR THAT COULD CHANGE THIS OUTLOOK.

"WHERE ARE WE NOW"

10.1 IN 1996 THE HOUSING LANDLORD SERVICE, COMPRISING REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE, ESTATE MANAGEMENT, WARDEN AND LIFELINE SERVICES AND RENT COLLECTION WERE SUBJECTED TO THE RIGOURS OF COMPULSORY COMPETITIVE TENDERING (CCT). FOLLOWING A THOROUGH EVALUATION THE IN-HOUSE TEAM WERE SUCCESSFUL IN WINNING THE CONTRACT FOR THE PROVISION OF THESE SERVICES AND COMMENCED A 5-YEAR CONTRACT ON APRIL 1 1996. FOLLOWING THE DEMISE OF CCT IN 2000 THE IN-HOUSE TEAM HAVE CONTINUED TO PROVIDE THE SERVICE TO THE STANDARDS AS WAS REQUIRED UNDER THE CCT CONTRACT. HOWEVER, FOLLOWING RECOGNITION THAT THE LANDLORD SERVICE SHOULD BE SEPARATED FROM THE STRATEGIC HOUSING ROLE, RENT ACCOUNTING AND TENANT PARTICIPATION HAVE NOW ALSO BEEN INCLUDED WITH THE LANDLORD SERVICE AND IS NOW PROVIDED UNDER THE ETHOS AND PRINCIPLE OF THE CCT CONTRACT.

10.2 DETAILED TARGETS AND STANDARDS OF SERVICE HAVE BEEN APPLIED TO ALL ASPECTS OF THE HOUSING LANDLORD SERVICE AND THESE ARE MONITORED MONTHLY BY OFFICERS AND TENANT REPRESENTATIVES AND REGULAR REPORTS ARE PRODUCED FOR COUNCILLORS ON RESULTS AGAINST TARGETS. APPENDIX 7 IS A FULL LIST OF ALL PERFORMANCE TARGETS AND RESULTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING MARCH 31 2001.

10.3 NEW FOREST HOUSING SERVICES ARE FORTUNATE TO HAVE A COMMITTED AND ABLE WORK FORCE THAT ARE WELL EXPERIENCED IN THE MANAGEMENT OF AN EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE HOUSING MANAGEMENT SERVICE. THIS HAS BEEN RECOGNISED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT AND REGIONS IN ASSESSING PAST PERFORMANCE AS WELL ABOVE AVERAGE WHEN COMPARED WITH THE PERFORMANCE OF OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITY LANDLORDS IN THE SOUTH EAST REGION.

10.4 The reputation of the service amongst its peers is therefore good and this is also reflected in high levels of tenant satisfaction across all parts of the service. However, the organisation is not complacent and will continue to strive for continuous improvement in all aspects and to maintain its reputation as a provider of quality services. The objectives and targets in the business plan will ensure this position is maintained and monitored.

10.5 HOWEVER, IT IS RECOGNISED THAT THE IN-HOUSE TEAM MAY NOT BE THE MOST APPROPRIATE MEANS OF PROVIDING THE SERVICES TO TENANTS. THE BEST VALUE PROCESS DUE TO TAKE PLACE DURING 2004/2005 WILL BE USED TO LOOK AT ALL OTHER OPTIONS OF SERVICE PROVISION SO THAT THE BEST APPROACH BOTH IN TERMS OF COST AND QUALITY CAN BE PROVIDED. STEPS TO GAIN EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE BEST VALUE APPROACH HAVE AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE TAKEN. THIS WILL INCLUDE BENCHMARKING EXERCISES WITH THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR AND INVESTIGATIONS INTO PARTNERING ARRANGEMENTS AND POSSIBLY SELECTIVE VOLUNTARY COMPETITIVE TENDERING IN APPROPRIATE AREAS. A NUMBER OF BENCHMARKING EXERCISES HAVE ALREADY BEEN COMPLETED AND THE RESULTS OF THESE ARE DETAILED LATER IN THIS DOCUMENT.

10.6 The housing service manages 5,421 dwellings across the District. The strategy employed by the Landlord service is to ensure that these dwellings produce the maximum income for the business at the lowest possible cost yet provide best value for the tenants and leaseholders. This is achieved by ensuring that all management activities are efficiently and effectively carried out ensuring that costs per unit are maximised. Targets for all activities have been set and are monitored on a monthly basis. Where targets are not

achieved investigations are carried out as to the reasons and, if necessary, remedial action taken.

10.7 FOUR AREAS HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AS CRUCIAL TO THE SUCCESS OF THE ESTATE MANAGEMENT BUSINESS, THESE ARE:-

- void management,
- the collection and management of rent arrears, and
- the identification and management of hard-to let properties, and
- the involvement of tenants and leaseholders in the management of their homes. Standards and levels of service delivery are crucially important to the customer and New Forest District Council's Housing Landlord Service is dedicated to identifying needs and wherever possible in meeting those needs and providing best value across all services.

How we deal with these areas is discussed later in this section.

10.8 Housing Needs

- 10.9 The provision and management of social housing must be based upon need and ultimately on the demand for low cost rented housing. It is vitally important to ensure that the supply of such housing meets this demand both now and in the future for the business to succeed. This area is covered in the main Housing Strategy document.

10.10 THE BUSINESS PLAN WILL TAKE ACCOUNT OF DEMAND AND ENSURE THE APPROPRIATE REINVESTMENT IN THE EXISTING STOCK TO MEET THE DEMAND. FOR INSTANCE IT IS ALREADY BECOMING APPARENT THAT THERE IS NOW A GREATER NEED FOR SINGLE PERSON ACCOMMODATION THAN HAS BEEN FOUND IN THE PAST. TO MEET THIS DEMAND, WHICH IS EXPECTED TO INCREASE, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO CONVERT SOME OF THE DIFFICULT TO LET PROPERTIES FROM LARGER SIZED ACCOMMODATION TO SINGLE PERSON ACCOMMODATION. THIS WILL ENSURE THE EFFECTIVE USE OF RESOURCES AND WILL ENSURE A CONTINUING DEMAND AND RENTAL INCOME FOR THE PROPERTY.

10.11 IT IS, HOWEVER, RECOGNISED THAT THE COUNCIL'S HOUSING STOCK WILL BE INSUFFICIENT TO MEET DEMAND IN THE FUTURE AND OPTIONS FOR ENSURING THAT THIS DEMAND CAN BE MET ARE DISCUSSED IN THE MAIN HOUSING STRATEGY DOCUMENT. NEVERTHELESS, IT IS VITAL THAT THE COUNCIL'S HOUSING STOCK IS USED EFFECTIVELY AND THAT VOID TIMES ARE KEPT TO A MINIMUM. THIS IS DISCUSSED LATER IN THIS DOCUMENT.

10.12 A HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY HAS RECENTLY BEEN UNDERTAKEN AND THE RESULTS OF THIS WILL IDENTIFY THE LIKELY REQUIREMENTS FOR SOCIAL HOUSING IN FUTURE YEARS. THE ANALYSIS OF THIS SURVEY WILL GIVE INDICATIONS ON THE LIKELY NEEDS FOR INVESTMENT IN THE COUNCILS STOCK AND THE FUTURE REQUIREMENTS BY DWELLING TYPE. FUTURE BUSINESS PLANS WILL NEED TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE RESULTS OF THIS SURVEY.

10.13 AN ISSUE, WHICH WE ARE AWARE OF AND HAVE YET TO DECIDE UPON A STRATEGY TO TACKLE, IS THAT OF UNDER-OCCUPATION. MANY OF OUR PROPERTIES ARE FAMILY HOMES, WHICH WITH THE PASSAGE OF TIME MAY NOW ONLY BE OCCUPIED BY ONE OR TWO PERSONS, OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS HAVING GROWN UP AND LEFT HOME. THIS CLEARLY LEAVES A PROPERTY OF PERHAPS THREE BEDROOMS BEING UNDER-OCCUPIED. IN THE PAST INCENTIVES HAVE BEEN USED WITH SOME SUCCESS TO ENCOURAGE THOSE TENANTS IN SUCH A SITUATION TO ACCEPT MORE SUITABLE ACCOMMODATION. IT IS, HOWEVER, DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE HIGH MEASURES OF SUCCESS IN THIS AREA. WE ARE AWARE OF THE IMPACT THAT SUCCESS COULD HAVE ON OUR CURRENT AND FUTURE HOUSING NEEDS AND WILL LOOK TO DEVISING A SUITABLE

STRATEGY THAT RECOGNISES INDIVIDUAL'S RIGHTS AND YET ENCOURAGES A MOVE, IN THE APPROPRIATE CIRCUMSTANCES, TO MORE SUITABLE ACCOMMODATION.

10.14 Choice based lettings

10.15 THE COUNCIL HAS RECENTLY BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN OBTAINING FUNDING FROM THE DETR FOR A CHOICE BASED LETTINGS PILOT SCHEME, WHICH WILL COMMENCE OPERATION IN 2001. THE PILOT WILL PROVIDE HOUSING APPLICANTS AND TENANTS WITH ENHANCED CHOICE OVER WHERE THEY WANT TO LIVE AND WILL CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS CREATING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES.

- 10.16 One of the other advantages of the pilot scheme is that it will provide much greater detail on the demand for specific types of accommodation in the New Forest than that provided by a housing register. This information, along with data from the Housing Needs Survey, will allow the business plan to take full account of demand issues when deciding on investment in the stock.
- 10.17 The impact on void times of the pilot will be closely monitored to ensure that the pilot scheme does not lead to an increase in the length of time that a property remains vacant between lettings.
- 10.18 The proposals for choice based lettings may well reduce the existing void periods for properties that are considered hard to let and this benefit in terms of increasing rental income must be set against the possible losses mentioned under "void management".

10.19 Right to Buy

- 10.20 The effects of the Right to Buy legislation have led to the sale of approximately 3,800 properties since 1980. These sales are continuing with approximately 108 properties a year now being lost to Right to Buy. The initial effect of this process is the loss of rent for those properties that are sold. However, there are other factors that must be taken into account. The effects of Right to Buy losses occurring at a similar rate to that for the past 12 months are detailed in the financial spreadsheets.
- 10.21 The resources that are required to manage and maintain the remaining dwindling stock may need to reduce as the losses take effect. Careful management is required to ensure that staffing resources are sufficient to manage the stock and are not left at a level to manage the higher numbers and thereby lead to higher than the normal management and maintenance costs. The business plan attempts to forecast the numbers of properties that will be lost to Right to Buy and adjust staffing resources as necessary. Subject to the results of the Best Value the reduction of staffing resources that may be necessary will need to be identified.
- 10.22 A further consequence of the Right to Buy legislation is that the most attractive properties are bought leaving those properties that are perhaps less attractive to future tenants in terms of their amenities and location. Actions need to be taken where possible to improve the attractiveness of these properties by carrying out necessary improvements and the costs of this will be taken account of in the financial forecasts. In addition the remaining social tenants tend to be those who are the poorest and often socially excluded from the main stream of society. This can give rise to higher levels of rent arrears in these cases and other factors relating to social deprivation, e.g. crime and disorder, anti-social behaviour. These factors can give rise to higher than expected management costs.

10.23 Difficult to Let Properties

- 10.24 With a diverse housing stock in a rural area it is clear that some properties will be more attractive than others in terms of location or in the standard and type of accommodation

offered. It is essential that these properties are identified and wherever possible steps taken to improve the attractiveness of these properties to prospective tenants. This ensures that rental income is maximised and void periods are minimised.

10.25 THE STRATEGY OF NEW FOREST HOUSING LANDLORD SERVICES IS TO FIRSTLY IDENTIFY HARD-TO-LET PROPERTIES, TO IDENTIFY ANY NECESSARY WORKS THAT COULD BE UNDERTAKEN TO THOSE PROPERTIES TO ENSURE THAT THEY BECOME MORE ATTRACTIVE, AND TO PROGRAMME ANY NECESSARY WORKS INTO MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMMES. THIS INCLUDES PRIORITISING THESE WORKS WITH OTHER MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENT WORKS. OTHER APPROACHES TO TACKLE LOW DEMAND IN THE HOUSING STOCK ARE ALSO BEING CONSIDERED, INCLUDING CHANGING THE USE OF PROPERTIES SO THAT THEY CAN BE OCCUPIED BY DIFFERENT TYPES OF HOUSEHOLD WHERE DEMAND IS HIGHER, AND BY AMENDING THE ALLOCATION POLICY TO PROVIDE GREATER CHOICE AND THE USE OF MARKETING TECHNIQUES.

10.26 Identifying the hard-to-let properties is achieved by statistical research on refusals and the reasons for those refusals. For example, this has identified that many of the Council's older sheltered bed-sit flats fall into this category. A 10-year improvement programme has been identified and is underway to tackle this issue.

10.27 Over the period of the business plan statistical information will be gathered to provide every possible early warning should areas or individual properties become hard to let. This will be achieved by recording the level of transfers from areas together with the reasons and numbers of refusals for properties or areas. An amended allocation policy using a version of the Delft model of allocating will provide much more detailed market information on the popularity of individual estates and schemes.

10.28 Due to the current constraints on the financial abilities of local authorities to build new social housing stock of their own the number of properties managed by New Forest Housing Services is fixed (with the exception of losses due to Right to Buy). Therefore, particularly in an area like the New Forest, affordable housing is in very short supply and demand has always been high for its housing. It is likely that if further homes could be built they could be let easily and would enable substantial increased income to be achieved.

10.29 Void Management

10.30 In order to maximise rental income to the business it is essential that void properties remain empty for the shortest length of time possible. The housing service therefore aims to turnaround all properties within 3 weeks from them becoming vacant. In 2000/2001 Landlord services relet 412 void properties in an average of 2.5 weeks. This compares to 495 properties relet in 3.1 weeks in the previous year.

10.31 The level of works carried out on void properties need to be minimised to keep void periods as short as possible and costs down, but still sufficient to ensure that properties are attractive to potential new tenants. This is to reduce the risk of refusals, which can further increase void periods.

10.32 A working party was established in 2000 including tenant representatives to look at reducing void costs. This involved agreeing criteria for void standards and what works should be done during the void period and which work could be carried out after the new tenant has moved in. This led to a reduction in the average void maintenance costs per property of £1600 in 1999/2000 to the current figure of just over £ 1100.

10.33 FURTHER PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVING VOID PERFORMANCE BY CONSIDERING THE FEASIBILITY OF MIDWEEK LETTINGS HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED JOINTLY WITH TENANTS AND IS INCLUDED IN THE ACTION PLAN FOR THE CURRENT YEAR.

10.34 As referred to previously the Strategic Housing Service have been selected by the DETR as a pilot authority for a new choice based lettings scheme following the Governments housing green paper on reforms to the way allocations are carried out. The advertising and letting of properties under this new model would need to be carried out swiftly in order to ensure that void times do not increase. Any increase in void times will reduce the overall rental income of the business. The following table indicates the potential annual reduction in income should void times increase.

Void time increase	Average weekly rent (01/02)	Annual number of voids (00/01)	Resulting loss of rental income
1 week	£ 61.83	412	£ 25,474
2 weeks	£ 61.83	412	£ 50,948
3 weeks	£ 61.83	412	£ 76,422
4 weeks	£ 61.83	412	£ 101,896

10.35 The impact upon void times will therefore need to be carefully monitored during the pilot to ensure that the length of time for which properties are vacant do not increase.

10.36 CHOICE BASED LETTINGS MAY, HOWEVER, REDUCE THE VOID PERIODS FOR PROPERTIES WHICH ARE CONSIDERED TO BE HARD TO LET, BY ADVERTISING ON A MORE COMMERCIAL BASIS WHICH COULD ATTRACT A WIDER CUSTOMER BASE.

10.37 DETAILS OF BENCHMARKING THAT HAS BEEN CARRIED OUT ON VOID MANAGEMENT IS INCLUDED UNDER THE BENCHMARKING RESULTS IN THE REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE SECTION DETAILED IN APPENDIX 8.

10.38 Rent Arrears Management

10.39 Effective collection of the rental income and arrears of rent is essential in order to fund the management and maintenance of the housing stock. The business plan has a number of targets relating to arrears levels and the success of the business relies on these being consistently achieved. High arrears not only reduce the overall level of income to the business but also are costly in officer time, due to an increase in staff time being spent on recovery action. If not controlled rent arrears ultimately could lead to higher rent increases or a reduction in the maintenance work programme to cover the shortfall in income.

10.40 IT IS IMPORTANT THAT PAYMENT METHODS OFFERED ARE CONVENIENT AND ACCESSIBLE TO CUSTOMERS PARTICULARLY GIVEN THE RURAL NATURE OF SOME PARTS OF THE DISTRICT. CURRENTLY THE RANGE OF OPTIONS IS AS FOLLOWS:-

- Fortnightly door to door collection
- Local cash offices
- Handitills in three locations in the district.
- Direct debits
- Standing Orders
- Bank giro credit transfer.
- Electronic transfer
- Postal payments

10.41 Payment methods are kept under review and the Council have just introduced the facility to enable debit and credit card payments as an additional facility. As a result of selective marketing the number of customers now paying by direct debit now exceeds 1,100.

10.42 Another factor that can affect arrears is the payment of housing benefit. Good liaison exists between housing officers and the Councils housing benefit team who meet on a quarterly basis to discuss any problems. Any backlogs of housing benefit claims can have a serious impact on the level of rent arrears. To minimise delays in customers receiving housing benefit, housing officers have been trained to verify tenants documents under the verification framework. The Council's processing times for housing benefit claims are as follows:

1999/2000	Target	Actual performance
The average time taken to process new claims	52 days	40 days
New claims processing times	90 % to be processed within 14 days	90%
Renewal claims processing times	90 % to be processed within 14 days	93 %

10.43 Three important targets are used to closely monitor performance on rent arrears, these are :

- . total rent arrears not to exceed 2 % of the annual gross rent due
- . no more than 78 tenants to have an arrear of more than £ 500
- . no more than 1 % of tenants to owe more than 13 weeks rent

10.44 During 1997 to 1999 it was identified that rent arrears were increasing and that the above targets were not consistently being achieved. Extra resources were therefore targeted at reducing rent arrears during 1999/2000, which involved a thorough review of the entire process, including rewording all arrears letters and tightening up the criteria for repayment agreements. A specialist arrears officer was also recruited for a one year pilot to increase the number of home visits. At the end of the review figures showed that although the package of changes had made a positive effect on the overall arrears performance, the extra visiting officer was not an effective use of resource. Following discussions with the Tenants Services Working group it has been agreed that this resource could be better used to enhance the estate management service. (see later text in this section).

10.45 During 2000, benchmarking was undertaken with the "Southern Ten" benchmarking group which comprised other local organisations similar to New Forest. The results of this showed that we were performing well and were in fact the only organisation whose arrears had decreased in the previous 12 months. Key results are included in Appendix 8.

10.46 THE FOLLOWING TABLE INDICATES A COMPARISON OF THE ANNUAL PERFORMANCE IN RELATION TO THE ABOVE TARGETS OVER THE LAST 5 YEARS AND THE OVERALL IMPROVEMENT IN THE LAST 2 YEARS.

Year	Percentage of annual gross rent due	Number of cases owing over £ 500	Percentage of tenants owing more than 13 weeks	Arrears balance at year end (week 52)
March 1997	1.2 %	76	1.8 %	£ 216,315

March 1998	1.3 %	63	1.8 %	£ 213,918
March 1999	1.5 %	81	2.26 %	£ 240,887
March 2000	1.3 %	83	1.87 %	£ 227,456
March 2001	1.26 %	87	1.76 %	£ 219,469

10.47 Arrears recovery remains a prime function for the business but it is felt by officers and tenants that the current level of actions are effective and probably at optimum for the level of service which tenants are currently prepared to pay for.

10.48 Estate Management

10.49 The estate management service comprises a wide range of functions including dealing with tenancy breaches such as neighbour nuisance/anti social behaviour, untidy gardens, abandoned vehicles, rubbish dumping, illegal occupants/abandoned properties and other general tenancy matters.

10.50 Tenants behaviour in their homes and how they treat their home and its surroundings are covered by the tenancy conditions. The current tenancy conditions have been identified as in need of review to ensure that they are clear, robust and realistic.

10.51 An important feature of the estate management role is addressing instances of neighbour nuisance/anti social behaviour. If not tackled this can have a dramatic impact on the quality of life of those directly affected. There are 6 area housing officers who are each responsible for investigating breaches of tenancy on their patch to ensure that tenancy conditions are adhered to. There are clearly laid down procedures, which were revised by a project group of officers and tenants during 1998 and range from informal discussions with parties with a view to resolving problems using mediation, through to the other extreme of pursuing possession proceedings to eviction for serious breaches.

10.52 In addition to our landlord powers to resolve such problems strong links have also been forged with both internal and external partners such as environmental health, community safety officer, police and RSL's operating in the district. Regular meetings are held between these partners through the corporate Divided We Fall protocol, which was established in 1997 and preceded the statutory requirements of partnership working introduced through the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. As indicated by the groups title it recognises that joined up working can produce far better results than by each agency working in isolation.

10.53 In conjunction with the Councils Community Safety Strategy in the coming year multi agency training is being organised to train housing officers in the use of acceptable behaviour contracts (ABCs) and anti social behaviour orders (ASBO's) for dealing with anti social behaviour. Other work under this corporate Strategy involves extracting details of crime hotspots on housing estates identified through a GIS (geographical information system) system. This information will be used to target resources in dealing with problem areas.

10.54 The Tenants Satisfaction survey conducted between Nov 2000 and March 2001 achieved a 64 % return rate of all tenants and the following issues were identified as being the top four main concerns to residents.

- 1 Dog fouling – 50 %
- 2 Vandalism – 42 %

- 3 Litter/rubbish and street cleaning – 41 %
- 4 Parking – 41 %

10.55 As referred to previously a key priority identified through consultation with tenants is to increase the amount of time housing officers spend on estates in order to be more proactive in identifying and dealing with problems. The introduction of regular estate walkabouts with local tenant representatives will be organised in order to ensure that the end users of the service are able to give feedback and areas of dissatisfaction can be identified and dealt with. To achieve this it is planned to recruit two additional housing assistants to reduce the level of administrative duties currently carried out by housing officers. A further initiative currently being examined is the possibility of locality-based management to ensure that all aspects of service that can affect an estate or area can be the responsibility of one officer. This would avoid the need for tenants to need to contact several officers to resolve issues or problems and would also conform to the principles of the Government's aims contained within the strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal.

10.56 The survey information will help to prioritise such areas needing attention. A wider set of local performance indicators for measuring estate conditions are to be established and monitored to track progress in this area. Currently the only indicators in this area relate to the removal of rubbish and abandoned vehicles.

10.57 A weakness in monitoring and dealing with estates issues and tenancy breaches is the lack of information technology for case management purposes. A suitable module of the in house IT system (Orchard) is to be introduced and will greatly improve the efficiency and monitoring of this part of the estate management service.

10.58 Rental Income

10.59 The rent charged for properties is the main source of income for the business and forecasting future rental income is therefore crucial to the overall success of the business. This forecast must take account of the loss of properties due to Right to Buy and future rent increases. In respect of rent income much will also depend upon the outcome of the rent restructuring exercise currently underway. The Council is also aware that the subsidy system may be adapted to enable the Government's rent restructuring objectives to be achieved.

10.60 The strategy of New Forest Housing Landlord Services is to provide affordable rented homes to people in need and yet ensure that rental income is sufficient to provide the level of services required. To do this requires our rents to be at a level (compared to both private sector and other social landlords) in comparison with average incomes in our area that clearly are affordable and reduce dependency on Housing Benefit and other social benefit payments. A recent review of our rent setting policy has been undertaken in conjunction with tenants and proposals for some changes have been made. The objectives of the review were to ensure that rents more clearly reflected property type, size, and facilities and that rent differentials were more consistent with the private sector. In view of the recent Government Green Paper on Housing Rents no action will be taken in this area until the White Paper is available.

10.61 Warden And Central Control Services

10.62 The warden service comprises a total of 755 sheltered scheme units of accommodation, specifically designed for independent living, in 26 sheltered housing blocks and linked bungalows and flats. All residents of this accommodation have access to a 24-hour emergency alarm monitoring system and receive a warden service. These services offer both assistance and support, enabling residents to remain in their own home. Each scheme has an appointed resident or mobile warden who is responsible for its

management. Resident wardens provide the current warden service. In recent years it has become increasingly difficult to recruit high calibre wardens who are prepared to live on site. Therefore it is likely that all future wardens will be recruited on the basis that they will be able to live off site. The implications of such a move will be discussed with wardens and tenants to ensure that they find this acceptable.

- 10.63 It has been established that no reference is made to the tenant's frailty or needs in respect of support in the present allocation system for sheltered housing tenants. The accommodation is let simply on the basis of need and tenant choice. This policy is to be reviewed together with the need for sheltered housing in various categories as part of the review mentioned in paragraph 9.
- 10.64 It has also been identified that there is an over provision of sheltered housing in the District. Evidence for this comes primarily from the larger numbers of hard to let dwellings and the time that it can take to relet existing units after they become vacant. At the end of March 2001 it was identified that 5% of sheltered schemes were classified as hard to let. In the past schemes have been extensively refurbished to overcome the problems of identified hard to let issues. However, it has been also identified that in spite of such refurbishments many schemes remain difficult to let. Often this is simply because of location or simply that individuals now prefer to remain within their own homes. Any necessary care or support is then delivered to them at home. A strategy for dealing with these issues will be developed as part of the warden service review and as part of the Best Value process. This review will also examine those schemes where investment is still viable and where such improvements will bring real benefits in increased rental income. Where such investment is not viable other options will be examined which could include the return of such properties to general needs housing.
- 10.65 The Central Control service comprises a communication centre providing an emergency alarm monitoring service to over 7,000 sheltered housing residents and lifeline users. The service provides for an immediate response to vulnerable residents should they require help and assistance, caused through an accident or illness. The service also provides an out of hours emergency repair monitoring service for both council tenants and RSL residents.
- 10.66 The service has its own business plan, which is up dated every two years. The plan will be up-dated during the period April 2001 and March 2002. The plan recognises that the support of the elderly and other vulnerable people is an important function and the strategy is to continue to provide these services and wherever possible expand the business in line with need and demand. The demographic projections for the New Forest District indicate an ageing population and therefore it is likely that demand for central control and lifeline service will increase.
- 10.67 The implications of the new Power to Promote Well Being encompassed in the Local Government Act 2000 are being examined with the view of using these powers to expand the business. As yet it has not been possible to identify whether this power will enable the legal expansion of the business to residents of the District or others outside the area.
- 10.68 The Association of Social Alarm Providers code of practice stipulates the need to answer 80% of calls within 30secs, 98.5% of calls within 60secs. This would require an increase in staffing levels if we wish to achieve these indicators. To increase staffing levels, income must be generated from other sources.
- 10.69 A review of the service is being conducted in line with Best Value process. This will include carefully considering the expansion of the service. An action plan will be drawn up looking at all future options for the service. This will include the need to examine if we should provide the service, solely, or if there are partnership opportunities

- 10.70 The Central Control and Lifeline Service made a surplus of £65,000 during the year April 2000 – March 2001. 60% of this goes into the Housing Revenue Account. NFDC sheltered housing tenants currently provide £94,000 of the income to provide the service. There is a need to review if the service to these users can be provided by other emergency alarm monitoring service providers at less cost. There is also the need to consider as part of the sheltered housing service charge review if the surplus can be used to reduce the service charges. This is in line with the Best Value principles and will form part of the review.
- 10.71 The Lifeline Service could be operated as a stand alone service and continue to be promoted to those users within the New Forest District, although to enable to continue to provide this service to potential customers there is a need to recruit additional sales and back up staff to meet the expected expansion. A Benchmarking Exercise has taken place, comparing the Lifeline Service with 10 other Lifeline services. Comparable results were achieved and showed that we were amongst the upper quartile of those benchmarked.
- 10.72 To date no benchmarking exercise has been carried out on the Central Control service. There is reluctance from others in this competitive market to benchmark. We will continue to search out providers who may be willing to carry out this process during the period April 2001 – March 2002, in preparation for Best Value.
- 10.73 A review of the whole warden service is progressing with the aim of being completed in time for the formal Best Value review in 2004/2005. As part of this review a postal survey has been undertaken of all sheltered scheme residents asking for their views on the current service and what (if any) additional services they would like to see provided. By this means tenants will be able to have the opportunity to exercise choice in relation to future service provision. The survey results will be available in late June 2001. Once the results of the survey have been analysed an action plan will be developed for the introduction of any changes.
- 10.74 Currently approximately 65% of sheltered housing residents are on full or part housing benefit. However, as more and more elderly people are able to retire with adequate pension provision they are likely to wish for more control on their rent and service charges particularly in relation to services provided. This will also be clearly in line with the principles contained within the Tenant Compact. A service charge review is to be undertaken so that all the individual components of a service charge can be broken down between schemes and also between the various services. This will enable open and accountable reports to be given to tenants and may also enable a significant amount of choice in services that tenants wish to purchase.
- 10.75 The Supporting People initiative is a partnership approach to the needs of the elderly and vulnerable. It will require partnership working between the Local Authority housing service, health service providers, social services, the probation service and other providers of supported housing. It will give people the choice over the services they receive and what they wish to pay for. The implementation of this policy will be achieved by 2003 and we will need to consider changing some of the services we currently provide within sheltered housing to meet the new framework.
- 10.76 A wider view of the needs of the elderly person in the community is proposed and this will necessitate working with other partners (Social Services, Primary Care Trusts, private sector providers). It is proposed to open a dialogue with these partners as soon as possible. It is also proposed to offer a warden type service to non-sheltered elderly tenants within the next 2 years.
- 10.77 It has been identified that many of the communal lounges within sheltered schemes are under utilised by residents and that there may be the opportunity to let these to other community users. This will be investigated and tenants consulted prior to setting a

proposed letting and charging policy. Any funds received could be used to enhance services to those residents in the particular scheme.

- 10.78 A separate business plan will be prepared for the Warden service by March 2003, which will incorporate the above issues.
- 10.79 In addition to the above, the central control business is also being examined with a view to ensuring that all business opportunities are being maximised and that where the business can be expanded it is. This will involve the active promotion of the business to the market. Business plan projections have been carried out and additional staffing will be recruited to meet the expansion targets in the business plan.
- 10.80 Benchmarking has been undertaken for the Warden service and the results of this are summarised in Appendix 8. (To date it has been difficult to find organisations to benchmark with on central control services. However, this will be a target for the forthcoming year)

10.81 TENANT PARTICIPATION

- 10.82 Tenant involvement in all aspects of the management of their homes is crucial to the success of our business. There are a number of ways that tenants and residents can become involved at present, which are outlined in Appendix 9. -
- 10.83 Attached at Appendix 10 is a flow chart detailing the structure of tenant participation at New Forest District Council. There is a designated Officer employed by the Council for tenant participation. In addition resources are available to provide support to tenants and residents including grants for recognised associations, producing newsletters and a Government grant of £18,950 to introduce Compacts. Travel and carer allowances are also available to enable representatives to attend meetings. An annual training budget of £3,150 is prioritised by the Tenants and Residents' Consultative Group to use for their development.

10.84 REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

- 10.85 All maintenance, repairs and improvements are undertaken in accordance with our Repairs and Maintenance Strategy, which is detailed at Appendix 11.
- 10.86 We have a good knowledge of the condition of all our stock based upon a 100% internal and external survey and this information is held on a computer database and has been used to prepare our 10 year planned maintenance and improvement programme. A copy of this is attached at Appendix 12. Only one area of data has still to be collected and that is details of the communal areas of blocks of flats. During 2001/2002 we will devise a survey form to capture this data and subsequently collect the necessary data and ensure that it is transferred to the database.
- 10.87 We have in the past examined ways of collecting and updating the stock condition data. Options include using in-house resources or employing external professional expertise. The cost of using external professionals was considered expensive and it has therefore been decided that in-house staff will do all data collection and the updating of the data base information. In addition it has been found that using in house staff can capitalise on knowledge on the stock that they already have and reduce the time and effort required to amass the necessary information.

10.88 WE HAVE RECOGNISED THAT THE WAY OUR CURRENT DATABASE IS HELD AND FORMATTED DOES NOT ENTIRELY MEET THE CURRENT REQUIREMENTS OF THE DETR AND THE STATISTICAL ANALYSIS REQUIRED. AS A RESULT THE COUNCIL HAVE RECENTLY PURCHASED A PC BASED SOFTWARE PACKAGE ("CODEMAN") WHICH CAN EXTRACT INFORMATION FROM OUR DATABASE, REFORMAT IT AND CARRY OUT VARIOUS ANALYSES TO ASSIST COMPLETION OF THE DETR FORMS

AND ALSO ENABLE US TO PROVIDE SUBSTANTIAL ANALYSIS IN RELATION TO FUTURE MAINTENANCE PROGRAMMING. WORK ON THIS IS CONTINUING AND WE ANTICIPATE THAT FURTHER DETAIL AND INFORMATION WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR INCLUSION IN NEXT YEAR'S BUSINESS PLAN.

10.89 THE NEW PC PACKAGE IS ENABLING DETAILED ANALYSIS OF THE STOCK SURVEY DATA. WE ARE AWARE OF AND HAVE IDENTIFIED THE EXTENT OF THE BACKLOG AND FUTURE REQUIREMENTS FOR WORK, WHICH IS NECESSARY TO BE UNDERTAKEN FOR OUR PROPERTIES TO MEET THE PROPOSED NEW STANDARD OF FITNESS (DECENT HOME STANDARD). WORK IS CURRENTLY BEING UNDERTAKEN TO DEVISE A PROGRAMME OF WORK TO ACHIEVE THE TARGET OF ALL HOMES MEETING THE STANDARD BY 2010 YET ENSURING THAT THE EXPENDITURE PROFILE IS EVENED OUT OVER THE NEXT 8 YEARS. THIS PROGRAMME WILL BE COMPLETED BY 31 MARCH 2002 AND WILL REPLACE THE CURRENT 10-YEAR PROGRAMME.

10.90 THE MAJOR REPAIRS ALLOWANCE, INTRODUCED ON 1 APRIL 2001, SET A FIGURE OF £558.17 PER PROPERTY FOR NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL'S STOCK. THIS ALLOWANCE REPRESENTS THE COST OF MAINTAINING AND IMPROVING THE STOCK TO THE DECENT HOME STANDARD. THE COUNCIL'S PREVIOUS 10-YEAR MAINTENANCE PLAN HAS RESULTED IN A SHORTFALL OF PLANNED MAINTENANCE EXPENDITURE OF £8.4MILLION. THEREFORE WE HAVE AN IDENTIFIABLE BACKLOG OF WORK. HOWEVER, THIS IS NOT THE WHOLE PICTURE. THE PREVIOUS 10-YEAR PLAN WAS BASED UPON LIKELY LEVELS OF FUNDING THAT COULD BE ACHIEVED AND THEREFORE WORK WAS PRIORITISED ACCORDING TO NEED. MANY TYPES OF LOWER PRIORITY WORK THAT ARE NEEDED TO ACHIEVE THE DECENT HOMES STANDARD (I.E. LOW PRIORITY KITCHEN AND BATHROOM MODERNISATIONS WERE NOT INCLUDED AND THEREFORE THE ACTUAL BACKLOG OF WORK IS MUCH HIGHER. THE 2000 HIP ANNUAL PLAN IDENTIFIED THE BACKLOG AS A TOTAL OF £19.2 MILLION. THE NEW 10-YEAR PLAN CURRENTLY IN PREPARATION WILL IDENTIFY HOW THIS BACKLOG WILL BE TACKLED TOGETHER WITH THE ON-GOING NEED TO DEAL WITH FUTURE PLANNED MAINTENANCE LIABILITIES. THE RESULTING WORK NEEDS TO BE TACKLED USING THE RESOURCES AVAILABLE (INCLUDING THE MRA) IN A PLANNED AND EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT WAY. IN ADDITION, HOW THIS WORK IS COMMISSIONED NEEDS CAREFUL CONSIDERATION TO ENSURE THAT BEST VALUE IS ACHIEVED.

10.91 The 10-year plan was produced prior to the changes in financing proposed under the Major Repairs Allowance and will now be subject to further analysis and reprogramming to meet the requirement as mentioned in the paragraph above and to meet the targets set by the DETR in respect of the number of non decent homes being reduced by one third by 2004, and all properties achieving the decent homes standard by 2010. At this stage we are not sure whether these targets can be easily achieved.

10.92 To achieve the increases in expenditure required to meet the increase in resources brought about by the introduction of the MRA additional staffing resources were required. Investigations into options has taken place and it has been decided to recruit additional in house resources to carry out the larger programmes proposed. Without the recruitment of additional in-house resources to fully utilise the additional resources it was estimated that the value of work that would need to be put to external consultants would be in the region of £3 million. Various consultants were approached informally and it was established that fees of between 8 and 10% would be charged depending upon the type of work. This would attract fees of between £240,000 and £300,000. A new staffing structure to deal with the increased workload has been established that requires the recruitment of an additional 4 staff. The additional cost of these staff over and above the costs of the existing staffing structure is £126,200.

10.93 A substantial programme of internal improvement and modernisation will be undertaken over the next 10 years to both deal with the backlog created in past years and also to meet the need. Tenants also see this as an important area of work.

10.94 WITH ALL PLANNED MAINTENANCE, REPAIR AND IMPROVEMENT WORKS IT IS SEEN AS ESSENTIAL TO WORK CLOSELY, NOT ONLY WITH TENANTS (SEE TENANT STRATEGY), BUT ALSO WITH CONTRACTORS. A PARTNERING APPROACH THAT WILL MEET THE PRINCIPLES OF THE EGAN REPORT WILL BE FURTHER DEVELOPED OVER THE PERIOD OF THE INITIAL BUSINESS PLAN. THIS WILL ENSURE THAT VALUE FOR MONEY IS ACHIEVED WITH SUPPLIERS AND CONTRACTORS. THE PARTNERING APPROACH IS ALREADY BEING TAKEN IN A NUMBER OF AREAS, THESE ARE:-

REACTIVE MAINTENANCE - THE EXISTING TERM CONTRACTS ARE DUE TO COME TO AN END IN JULY 2002 AND IT IS PROPOSED THAT DISCUSSIONS WILL TAKE PLACE WITH THE EXISTING CONTRACTORS TO MOVE FORWARD WITH A PARTNERING APPROACH TO FUTURE SERVICE PROVISION RATHER THAN TO FORMALLY RE-TENDER THESE CONTRACTS.

PLANNED MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS FOR EXTERNAL PAINTING, REPLACEMENT DOORS AND REPLACEMENT WINDOWS - A LARGE PROPORTION OF THE BUDGET FOR THESE WORKS IN 2001/2002 ARE TO BE PILOTED USING A PARTNERING APPROACH. THE EXISTING IN-HOUSE CONTRACTOR HAS AGREED TO PILOT CONTRACTS FOR THESE WORKS (TOTAL VALUE APPROXIMATELY £1 MILLION) TO ENSURE THAT PROCESSES CAN BE CLEARLY ESTABLISHED BEFORE STEPS ARE TAKEN TO MORE GENERALLY USE THE PARTNERING APPROACH ON A WIDER SCALE AND WITH EXTERNAL CONTRACTORS. PILOT TEAMS OF OFFICERS, SUPPLIERS, AND TENANTS REPRESENTATIVES HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED TO IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR THESE PROPOSALS.

PLANNED MAINTENANCE CONTRACT FOR ROOFING CONTRACTS - IT HAS BEEN AGREED THAT WHERE GOOD SERVICE HAS BEEN GIVEN BY CONTRACTORS IN THIS AREA, EXTENSIONS OF CONTRACT WILL BE NEGOTIATED TO ENSURE THE SERVICE AND QUALITY PROVIDED CAN BE EXTENDED FOR LONGER PERIODS. THIS IS SEEN AS A FIRST STEP TO A MORE FORMAL PARTNERING APPROACH AND WILL ENABLE GOOD CONTRACTORS WHO PROVIDE A QUALITY SERVICE TO CONTINUE WITH THE WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE COUNCIL.

10.95 CURRENT SERVICE DELIVERY IN ALL AREAS OF THE REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE SERVICE IS GOOD WITH ALL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS BEING ACHIEVED AND HIGH LEVELS OF TENANT SATISFACTION WITH THE SERVICE. BENCHMARKING HAS BEEN UNDERTAKEN IN THE REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE (BOTH REACTIVE AND PLANNED MAINTENANCE) SERVICE AND THE RESULTS OF THIS ARE SHOWN IN APPENDIX 7. HOWEVER, ALTHOUGH THE RESULTS OF RECENT BENCHMARKING DO SHOW THAT WE ARE PERFORMING WELL AND GENERALLY IN THE UPPER QUARTILE OF THOSE WE HAVE BENCHMARKED WITH WE RECOGNISE THAT OUR SERVICE COULD BE IMPROVED AND DEVELOPED. WE INTEND TO WORK WITH TENANTS AND OTHERS TO ENSURE THIS DEVELOPMENT TAKES PLACE. IDEAS AND PROPOSALS ARE INDICATED IN THE NEXT SECTION OF THIS PLAN.

11 THE FUTURE OF THE HOUSING SERVICE "WHERE DO WE WANT TO GET TO"

11.1 THE ESTATE MANAGEMENT SERVICE IS UNDER A GREAT DEAL OF PRESSURE, MUCH OF WHICH HAS ARISEN WITH THE INCREASE IN TENANTS EXPECTATIONS WHO RIGHTFULLY EXPECT THEIR LANDLORD TO ENSURE THAT ESTATES AND RESIDENTS ON THEM ARE MANAGED EFFECTIVELY.

11.2 In recent years services have been provided in accordance with the agreed targets under the CCT specification, however it is now necessary to look at performance standards and in line with tenants expectations, to adapt and provide the service in accordance with the current level of need. It is planned to introduce a wider set of performance indicators upon which to measure individual estate conditions in order to monitor and improve the overall

environment and standards on our estates. It is recognised however, that a balance must be made between tenants expectations and the level of service that the majority want and are prepared to pay for.

- 11.3 One aspect, which is currently under review, is the level of Housing Officer resource that is allocated to estates. Current working practices mean that the amount of time that an officer can spend on estates is limited. Tenants and officers are concerned at this situation and a review of staffing levels has led, in consultation with the Tenants Services Working Group, to a change of responsibilities for housing officers that will enable them to double the amount of time spent out on estates.
- 11.4 It is expected that all housing staff will become much more proactive and will deal with issues before complaints or requests for action are received from residents.
- 11.5 Housing Officers will be required to target specific issues on estates that are of concern to the residents who live there. These problems will be identified by regular estate walkabouts with local tenant representatives and will ensure that direct consultation and feedback takes place. Also the results from the Tenants Satisfaction Survey conducted between November 2000 and March 2001 have helped to identify main areas of concern of which dog fouling, vandalism, litter/street cleaning and parking problems featured most highly.
- 11.6 In conjunction with the Councils Community Safety strategy, in the coming year training is being organised for housing staff in the use of ABC's (acceptable behaviour contracts) and ASBO's (anti social behaviour orders). These will then be considered and sought as part of our measures to deal with anti social behaviour.
- 11.7 The tenancy conditions themselves are the elementary basis to the management of individual tenancies. It is essential that they are clear and robust in order to convey the standards under which tenants must conduct their tenancies.
- 11.8 Abandoned vehicles have been identified as a significant problem on both the housing estates and district wide. Joint operations have already been carried out with the police targeting problem areas. A working group has been set up comprising officers, tenant representatives, police and local RSL's to work on reviewing the entire process with the aim of reducing our costs in dealing with this issue.
- 11.9 Opportunities for using new technology to increase efficiency are also being explored in the following areas.
- 11.10 The Council has initiated a pilot scheme of home working and one housing officer is taking part in this 6-month trial. Computer links have been made to the officer's home so that all information normally accessed in the office is now available at their home. This will enable that officer to become more flexible with their working practices and it is hoped that this will increase their time spent on estates and in dealing with estate management issues and have the effect of increasing overall efficiency. Subject to the results of the pilot further development of this proposal is expected to have an impact on the overall service delivery.
- 11.11 It is planned in the current year to look at improving the use of the Orchard system for advertising and managing mutual exchanges and for the case management of tenancy breaches, both areas which at present are still managed under manual systems and hence not operating at maximum efficiency which has been identified as an area of weakness.
- 11.12 Other areas that will need to be examined in the future is the use of new technology to enable field staff to have access to information on site via the use of laptops linked directly to the Councils data base. This would assist officers in their dealings with tenants and enable more efficient working.

11.13 Rent arrears will continue to be a major priority for the service and new ways of working and new initiatives will continue to be reviewed to ensure that best practice is adopted. Performance against targets will be closely monitored with the aim of being in the top quartile for all best value and audit commission performance indicators.

11.14 IN ALL AREAS OF THE ESTATE MANAGEMENT SERVICE THE OPPORTUNITY WILL BE TAKEN TO LOOK AT DIFFERENT WAYS OF WORKING AND DIFFERENT METHODS FOR OBTAINING CUSTOMER FEEDBACK ON SERVICES WILL BE EXPLORED. THE RECENT BENCHMARKING EXERCISE WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS WILL ENABLE BEST PRACTICE TO BE IDENTIFIED AND WHERE NECESSARY INTRODUCED INTO THE SERVICE. WE WILL NOT BE COMPLACENT AND ARE PREPARED TO UNDERTAKE INVESTIGATIONS AND INTRODUCE PILOT APPROACHES TO TEST NEW WAYS OF WORKING AND PROVIDING THE SERVICE. OUR OVERALL AIM IS TO PROVIDE A HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE FOR THE TENANTS AND RESIDENTS WHO LIVE ON NFDC ESTATES

11.15 The Future for Rents.

11.16 IN VIEW OF TENANT ASPIRATIONS FOR REPAIRS, MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENTS AND GENERAL MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENTS TOGETHER WITH THE PROVISION OF OTHER SERVICES IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THEY UNDERSTAND THE CONSEQUENCE OF ADDITIONAL SERVICES UPON THE LEVEL OF RENTS. TENANTS ARE THEREFORE INVOLVED AS PART OF THE RENT SETTING PROCESS. THIS ENSURES THAT THEY HAVE AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE COSTS OF PROVIDING THE SERVICE.

11.17 It is also recognised that in any rent setting strategy the importance of defining clearly differences between cost reflective and non-cost reflective improvements and their impact upon rental income cannot be ignored. The impact in these areas particularly of cost reflective improvements must be considered carefully to ensure that the right balance is struck between the generation of additional income from increased rents and the tenant's ability to pay. The rental cost of any property could have an affect on demand for that type of property. All these issues will be considered and discussed with tenants prior to the final strategy being decided upon.

11.18 Rents are currently assessed using a points system. A review of rent attributes was completed in July 2000 in consultation with tenants and a new rent structure agreed. Following Government advice, further action to implement the new structure was suspended, pending the outcome of the Green Paper.

11.19 It is aimed to produce target rents for each property, calculated using the new national formula, by July 2001. Stock valuation data, now being finalised for resource accounting purposes, will be adapted as required. Following this, the extent of changes required to existing rents, and the effect on overall rent income, will become clear. Consideration may then be given to the scope for local discretion in consultation with tenants. Plans will then be prepared for the phasing-in of the new rents. The commencement date of the implementation will depend on several factors, including the degree of change required, and the availability of the necessary computer software but is unlikely to be prior to April 2003. The need to complete the process by 2012, and to limit weekly rent changes, over and above the normal increase for inflation, to £2, is recognised.

11.20 As target rents and phasing-in arrangements became clear, projections will be prepared, to assess the impact on overall rent income year by year. General service objectives will be reviewed in the light of this information.

11.21 The Future of the Warden and Lifeline Service

11.22 It has been recognised that the whole of the warden and lifeline services currently provided by the Housing landlord Service is in need of fundamental review. The need for sheltered

schemes must be critically examined as to whether it will be needed in the numbers and types that are currently under management in the District. Discussions will need to take place with all interested parties including partners as to what services will be required for elderly and vulnerable people in the future and who is best placed to provide these services.

- 11.23 Many of the questions that need to be asked are mentioned briefly above and steps are now being taken to collect evidence and information to support future decisions. The Best Value reviews due in 2002/2003 (lifeline service) and 2004/2005 (warden Services) due for these services will aid the decision making process. As part of the review it is recognised that we must work with our colleagues in Social Services and Health Trusts, to look at categories of care. This will be complete by March 31 2002. There is also a perceived need to raise the profile of the service with other professionals in the care field and to ensure that the service meets the needs of all residents in a professional and caring way.
- 11.24 There are no national standards for sheltered housing management. As a major provider of sheltered housing in the area we should ensure that the our sheltered housing premises, wardens, managers and staff who work within them are fit for the purpose. This will be done as part of the warden service review and we hope that other service providers will follow suit.
- 11.25 A competent quality workforce is essential. Within the next 10 years all our wardens will be trained to a minimum of NVQ level 3 in Promoting Independence. All new staff recruited will have to be trained to a minimum of level 2 in the care provision,
- 11.26 Each sheltered housing scheme will have its own brochure and service user guide, setting out its objectives and the range of facilities and services it can offer. This will also enable prospective tenants to make their own their own choice on its suitability. A general brochure will also be produced, setting down general information about the service and the role of the staff within it.
- 11.27 The Community Care Act enables older people to stay in their own home for as long as possible. All older tenants should be able to access a warden service if needed. A pilot scheme will be introduced during September 2001 to March 2002 with the intention of a warden service being offered to non-sheltered housing elderly tenants within the next 2 years.
- 11.28 A survey will be conducted within the local community to ensure links are developed /maintained in accordance with the residents preferences.
- 11.29 The sheltered housing scheme lounges are a financial asset. A letting / charging policy will be considered by June 2002.
- 11.30 Future strategies are to be put into operation for enabling staff, residents and other stakeholders can affect the way in which the service is delivered. This will include survey / consulting with over 55 year olds on their wants for the future.
- 11.31 The emphasis in the interim period will be to continue providing a high quality service and to achieve all the current performance targets.

11.32 The Future of Tenant Participation

- 11.33 Officers and the Tenant Compact Committee have recognised, during a review of participation arrangements, that the number of active tenant and resident associations were declining with young tenants and tenants with special needs not coming forward at local or district wide meetings. It was agreed that a survey should be produced to ask all permanent tenants whether they wish to become involved, and if so, how. Different

methods of involvement were suggested including postal/telephone surveys and focus groups to increase the opportunities and options for involvement. It was felt that these options would mean less commitment for tenants, if required, with the opportunity for greater involvement and feedback. As a result, the Tenant's Satisfaction Survey was sent out at the end of last year inviting tenants to express their views and 3,354 replies have been received. Questions were also included on service provision, problems in the area and the Best Value Performance Indicators required by the DETR to compare satisfaction results with other organisations. The results are currently being analysed. Once the full results are known an action plan to tackle issues will be prepared.

- 11.34 The Tenants Compact Committee have also prepared and agreed an action plan for the district wide compact (see Appendix 13). The initial draft is currently under review by the Committee following a delay due to representatives concern about their partnership with the Council. The targets have not been met due to this delay and the staff resources that have been required to produce and analyse the Satisfaction Survey. Training by an independent facilitator has been suggested to assist in minimising barriers to involvement at all levels.
- 11.35 The Council, at an annual cost of £58,000, has recently approved additional staff resources for tenant participation.
- 11.36 Monitoring of the service by tenants continues to been seen as important. With the abolition of Compulsive Competitive Tendering there is a need to review the ways that tenants are involved in the monitoring of the service. The monthly Client/Contractor meetings have already extended the range of performance indicators beyond that required in the original CCT contract. The monitoring of the Compact will also need to be finalised.
- 11.37 Representatives have recently reviewed the role of the "Round the Houses" Editorial Team and discussions of the way forward are planned with the Council.
- 11.38 The Heather Road Resident Action Agreement is due to be reviewed. The three landlords involved on this estate are currently planning a survey and focus groups with the residents.
- 11.39 There are a number of other issues, which over the life of this Business Plan will need to be addressed. These are: -
- 11.40 Leaseholders - Whilst these are eligible to join the Consultative Group, none are currently involved. Methods of getting their involvement need to be identified and promoted to ensure this group are properly represented.
- 11.41 The Council need to ensure that all tenants are represented with a view to providing opportunity and choice of involvement for all tenants.
- 11.42 It is necessary to devise, implement and monitor a range of performance indicators for tenant participation focusing on outcomes and satisfaction levels.
- 11.43 The Future of the Repairs and Maintenance Service**
- 11.44 We recognise that the repairs and maintenance service is very important and is an area which the tenants will use to judge the overall standard of the housing service. It is therefore necessary to ensure that our current high standards of service delivery are maintained and that the service is developed to meet tenants aspirations and the needs of the housing stock.

11.45 WE BELIEVE WE HAVE BEEN VERY SUCCESSFUL WITH OUR MAINTENANCE STRATEGY OVER THE PAST 10 YEARS. WE HAVE A WELL-MAINTAINED STOCK WITH A RELATIVELY SMALL BACKLOG OF WORK. THIS BACKLOG IS IN THE AREA OF INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS AND GENERALLY CAN BE SEEN AS RELATIVELY LOW PRIORITY IN TERMS OF MAINTAINING THE INTEGRITY OF THE ASSET. WE

INTEND TO CONTINUE WITH OUR CURRENT APPROACH AND USE THE MAJOR REPAIRS ALLOWANCE TO PROVIDE THE ADDITIONAL FUNDS THAT ARE REQUIRED TO BOTH TACKLE THE BACKLOG AND CARRY OUT THE WORKS REQUIRED TO MEET THE ON-GOING NEEDS. IT IS RECOGNISED THAT FURTHER WORK IS REQUIRED TO FULLY ANALYSE OUR STOCK CONDITION SURVEY DATA AND FORECAST EXPENDITURE OVER THE NEXT 10 YEARS SO THAT WE ARE ABLE TO MEET THE GOVERNMENT'S TARGET OF ALL HOMES MEETING THE DECENT HOMES STANDARD BY THAT DATE. WE ALSO RECOGNISE THAT THE COMPLETION OF OUR NEW 10-YEAR PLANNED MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME IS CRUCIAL TO THE LONGER TERM PLANNING OF THE NEED FOR CONTINUED INVESTMENT IN THE STOCK. THIS WILL BE GIVEN A HIGH PRIORITY IN THE COMING YEAR AND WE AIM TO HAVE IT COMPLETED BEFORE APRIL 2002.

- 11.46 It will also be necessary over the coming year to fully assess the various options and strategies that could be used to deal with the current maintenance backlog and the on-going maintenance requirements of the stock.
- 11.47 There is concern currently that the additional employee resources needed for the larger programmes of repairs and maintenance that are now possible will be difficult to recruit and retain. It will be necessary to have a strategy to deal with this. This will include the possibility of using consultants or temporary staff to undertake the work together with the further development of partnership opportunities, which will ensure the most effective use of scarce resources.
- 11.48 We intend to develop a more proactive approach to assessing tenant satisfaction with the maintenance service. Currently this is assessed by means of postal surveys and satisfaction cards. Although we get a good response to these (over 30% returned) we would like to base our satisfaction levels on a higher response. We therefore intend to investigate the option for using a level of telephone surveys in conjunction with postal surveys.
- 11.49 Further development of the partnership opportunities in the reactive maintenance service will be investigated. The current method of working with contractors is considered labour intensive and relies much on the paper transference of works orders and invoices. We will investigate the options for a greater level of electronic transference of data and more direct contact between tenants and contractors. The option of tenants' calls being directed straight to the contractor will also be investigated with technical staff being more responsible for standards of performance and quality issues. Discussions with the Council's in-house contractor, including tenant representatives, have commenced on these issues and will be progressed as quickly as possible. It is probable that a pilot scheme to test some of these proposals will be established during the coming year. We also wish to develop a fully operational appointment system for reactive repairs and to investigate the opportunities for the electronic reporting of repairs via the Internet.
- 11.50 We will examine the opportunities for developing partnership opportunities in the area of planned maintenance and improvements. Discussions have taken place with one of the Council's partner Housing Associations with a view to carrying out kitchen and bathroom modernisations using their currently established team of specialist contractors. Further work in this area will be undertaken.
- 11.51 The Council over the past 15 years have sold 99 flats on long leases. We consider it would be appropriate to develop a handbook for these leaseholders and to encourage their involvement in the management of these leasehold interests by the Council.
- 11.52 The integrated housing management computer system that the Council use for the management of its homes has the capability to provide a fully functional planned maintenance package. It is planned to introduce this in the coming year to assist in the

automatic updating of the stock database when planned maintenance or improvement works are completed.

12 PRIORITIES FOR ACTION “HOW WE ARE GOING TO ACHIEVE OUR AIMS”

12.1 WE RECOGNISE THAT IT IS ALL TOO EASY TO HAVE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES AND YET FAIL TO FOLLOW THROUGH AND ACHIEVE THE END RESULT. FOR THIS REASON WE HAVE IDENTIFIED ALL THE ACTIONS NECESSARY BOTH TO ACHIEVE THE CURRENT LEVELS OF SERVICE AND TO MOVE TOWARDS THE CHANGES WE HAVE IDENTIFIED AS BEING NECESSARY IN THE “WHERE WE WANT TO GET TO “ SECTION OF THIS BUSINESS PLAN. THE ACTION PLANS ATTACHED AT APPENDIX 13 IDENTIFY EACH TASK AND WHEREVER POSSIBLE PROVIDE TARGET DATES FOR ACHIEVEMENT AND A LEAD OFFICER WHO HAS RESPONSIBILITY FOR ACHIEVING THE TASK AND ENSURING PROGRESS THROUGHOUT THE PERIOD OF THE ACTION PLANNING PROCESS.

12.2 MANAGERS OF THE SERVICES WILL MONITOR THE ACTION PLANS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR AND IT IS INTENDED TO REVIEW PROGRESS AGAINST THE INDIVIDUAL TARGETS IN THE REVIEW OF THE BUSINESS PLAN IN JULY 2002.

12.3 We also recognise the benefit of tenant consultation and involvement in all major tasks particularly where changes to service delivery are proposed or intended. For this reason it is intended to ensure that tenant representatives are involved in the monitoring of action plans and have as much input in the overall process as is possible.

13 BEST VALUE

13.1 The Council’s Best Value Performance Plan titled “Performance Matters” has been produced for 2001/2002 and details information and results for all services provided including the housing service. A summary document has been published and issued to all residents, including tenants. The document describes the strategic objectives from the Housing Strategy, identifies key stakeholders and the links between them and the Council and the consultation that is undertaken throughout the housing service.

13.2 New Forest Housing Landlord Services supports the principles and ethos of the Government’s Best Value regime and has identified a programme for testing its various services against this regime. We expect to make savings as a result of the best value process but at this stage do not feel it would be prudent to include any anticipated savings in the business plan model. Although savings may be made it is also possible that any savings achieved could be re-invested to enhance services and indeed service delivery.

13.3 With regard to the best value process it is intended to subject the following services to the process in the years identified. Services will be tested with fundamental performance reviews using the business excellence model:-

- Lifeline Service (Including Central Control) 2002/2003
- The Landlord role 2004/2005

13.4 The tenants and leaseholders are seen as an important part of the best value process and they will take their part in the challenge and consultation sections of the review. The Tenant Compact will also play an important role in Best Value enabling the tenants and leaseholders to influence policies, processes and targets.

13.5 In advance of the formal best value review of the services a number of reviews are being and have been undertaken in service provision. This includes voids procedures; rent arrears procedures and reviews of the warden and central control service. These are undertaken using the principles of Best Value and are intended to ensure that sufficient

time is given to all services to ensure a thorough and detailed review of all aspects of the service. In every case the involvement of the customer (tenants and residents) is seen as crucial to the effectiveness of the review.

- 13.6 Benchmarking is also seen as crucial to both Best Value and the continual improvement of the service. The New Forest Housing landlord Service is part of the “Southern Ten” benchmarking group, which comprises both local authorities and registered social landlords in Hampshire. All services have now been through one complete round of benchmarking and work is on-going to learn from best practice in each area. Summary results of benchmarking undertaken to date is shown at Appendix 7.

14 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

- 14.1 It is recognised that it is necessary to set challenging targets for all aspects of the service and it is also recognised that for these targets to be effective and meaningful they must also be monitored. Where performance fails to meet the target actions must and will be taken to investigate the reasons for that failure and to instigate corrective action as necessary. Policies and procedures will be flexible and reactive to change to enable this to happen.
- 14.2 It is intended to maintain all current targets as they are until a full review following benchmarking and Best Value has been completed. Exceptions may occur where it is identified that the existing targets are insufficiently challenging or perhaps unachievable. Where this occurs changes will be made following consultation with tenants, staff and Councillors. All performance targets are monitored monthly by means of a report produced and circulated to all managers and tenant representatives. (See Appendix 7). Monthly management meetings identify where performance targets have not been met or where performance is considered less than satisfactory and discussions take place as to any necessary action needed to rectify the position.
- 14.3 The Action Plans listed in Appendix 13 detail how the Landlord Service intends to meet its operational objectives and to achieve the changes and improvements in service delivery as has been explained in this Plan.
- 14.4 In addition to the targets mentioned above and those indicated at Appendix 8 the Landlord Service is keen to do well against national performance indicators. Appendix 14 provides a list of all the national indicators showing performance of the New Forest landlord service against these national indicators.

15 FINANCIAL STRATEGY

15 Current Financial Planning

- 15.1 The Council currently maintains its own spreadsheet model for medium term forecasting of the financial position of the Housing Revenue Account. This is used to model the effect of proposed rent increases and is used as the basis of consultation with Council members and tenants. A copy of the model is attached at Appendix 15.
- 15.2 It is proposed that this model will be maintained in the short term as it has proved to be a reliable tool. Work has continued on the DETR Business Plan Model since last year to shadow our current arrangements. There are still some concerns over the accuracy of the information that is being produced and a number of issues that need to be resolved before there is enough confidence to rely on this model as the only means of long term planning. The Operating Account is attached at Appendix 16 .

16 Financial Strategy

- 16.2 The current financial strategy is based upon equalising rent increases over the short term, while at the same time reducing the relatively high level of HRA balances. At this stage, the strategy is dominated by achieving acceptable levels of annual rent increases. The DETR Business Plan Model at Appendix X has been compiled assuming a 6½% rental increase in Years 2 and 3, rising to a 10% increase in Year 4. This strategy is likely to be superseded by the Rent Restructuring that is currently being considered. Rent levels and the effect on the Business Plan Model will need to be assessed when the outcome of the restructuring is known.
- 16.3 The financial strategy also takes account of District Audit opinion that the current HRA balance needs to be reduced to £750,000. In order to achieve this, and to address the £8.4 million backlog of repairs, the strategy has been developed around allocating £2,161,000 additional resources to supplement the £3,091,000 Major Repairs Allowance. The Operating Account at Appendix 16 assumes that the MRA and the additional resources will continue at the current rate over the next 5 years. (*Link to Decent Homes Indicators*) It also assumes that responsive and void repairs will continue at their current level of £2 million per year. In reality it is expected that these costs will decrease due to the additional investment from the MRA on planned maintenance and as catch up repairs are achieved. It is not possible to make an accurate assessment of these implications and this will need to be reviewed as work progresses. However, this level of investment in the Housing stock can be achieved over the next five years whilst maintaining a Housing Revenue Account balance of £801,000 at the end of this period as demonstrated in the following table:

Housing Revenue Account Balance

Year	HRA Surplus C/Fwd £'000s
2001/02	3,128
2002/03	2,747
2003/04	2,000
2004/05	1,505
2005/06	801

- 16.4 The HRA Business Plan Model highlights that Management costs are in excess of £3 million. District Audit has undertaken initial work on Performance Indicators that has indicated that this is high. An internal review is currently underway to determine the factors behind these costs. The Housing Service will also be subject to a Best Value Review in 2004/2005 and the HRA Business Plan Model assumes that 2% efficiency savings will occur as a result of this review from 2005/2006.

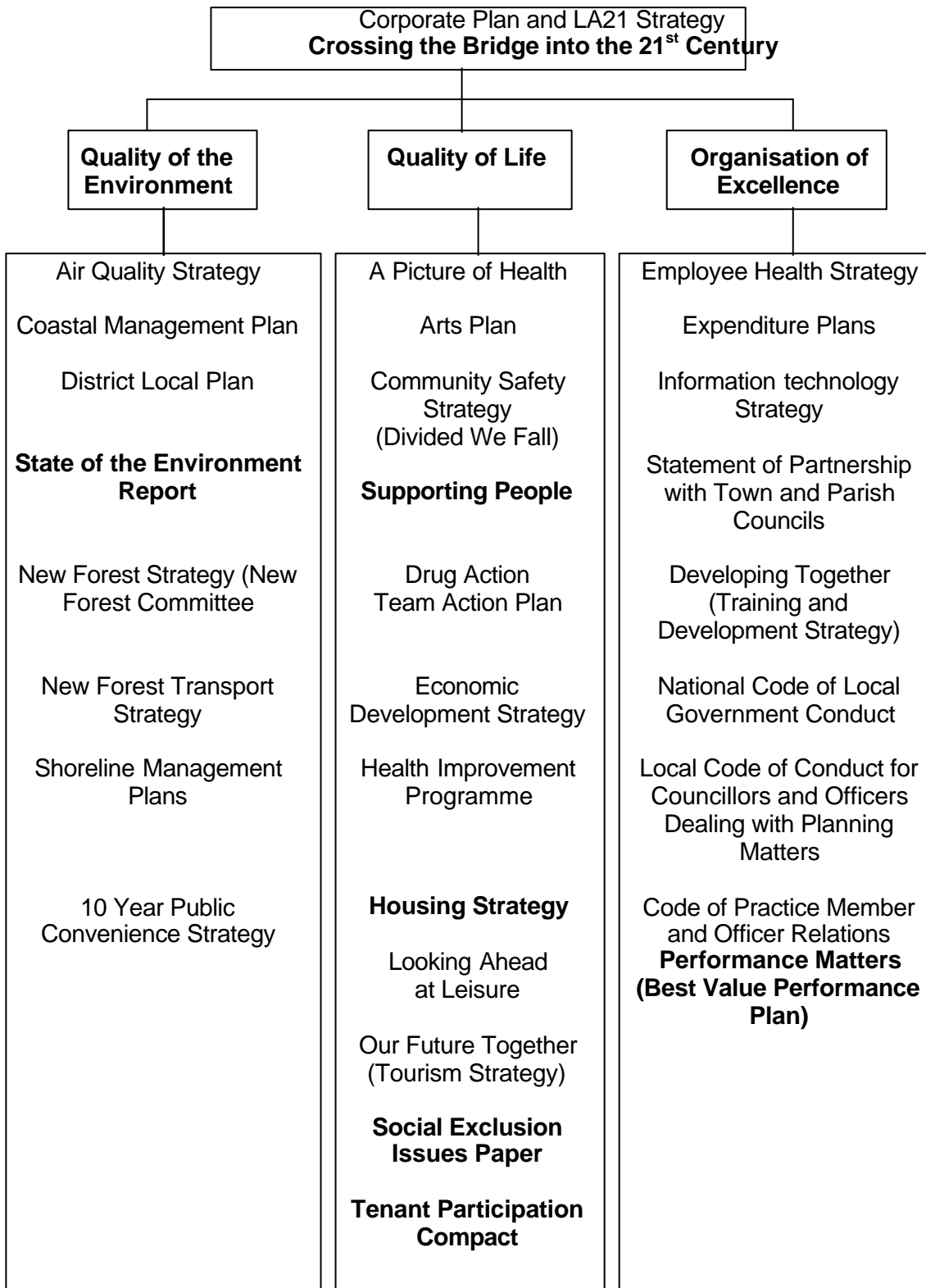
16.5 Future Financial Planning

16.6 IT IS RECOGNISED THAT MORE WORK NEEDS TO BE UNDERTAKEN ON THE HRA BUSINESS PLAN MODEL OVER THE NEXT FEW MONTHS IF THIS IS TO BE USED AS THE FINANCIAL MODELLING TOOL FOR THE COUNCIL IN THE FUTURE. GREATER USE NEEDS TO BE MADE OF SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS TO DETERMINE THE FINANCIAL EFFECTS OF DIFFERENT STRATEGIES. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF AREAS WHERE THE MODEL COULD BE USED IN THE NEAR FUTURE TO ASSESS THE FINANCIAL IMPACT OF VARIOUS CHANGES THAT WILL IMPACT ON THE HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT. FOR EXAMPLE, THE EFFECT ON THE INCOME STREAM ONCE THE OUTCOME OF THE RENT RESTRUCTURING IS KNOWN; THE EFFECT ON MANAGEMENT COSTS AS A RESULT OF THE BEST VALUE REVIEW; CHANGES IN SERVICES AS REQUESTED BY TENANTS; AND THE AVAILABILITY OF CREDIT APPROVALS.

17 TENANT CONSULTATION ON THE BUSINESS PLAN

- 17.1 A tenant representative has been part of the Officers' working group that has prepared this second year plan and has played an active part in formulating this business plan. This tenant representative has ensured that tenants views are represented throughout the document, in particular where future service delivery is discussed and options put forward for change and improvement. Officers see the involvement of tenants as crucial to successfully developing services to give tenants the levels of service and standards that they wish to see.
- 17.2 Tenants representatives generally have welcomed the opportunity to be involved in the process of writing the business plan for the Housing Revenue Account service and in particular to understand and be part of the decision making process in identifying and deciding upon the various strategies that can be implemented. However, the tenant representative is concerned that the active involvement of tenants in the process of writing and developing the business plan will take time to develop. Whilst tenants know what they want in terms of service delivery and standards they sometimes lack the necessary skills and knowledge to fully understand the implications of changes in service, particularly where this relates to costs and staffing implications. For that reason the tenants welcome the proposal for the Business Plan Working Group to become a permanent and regular reviewing body throughout the period of the 5 year plan and not just at the time of submission to the DETR at the annual review. The tenant's representatives are satisfied with the work that has been carried out to date and support the narrative that is in this business plan.
- 17.3 They are interested in the effect of the varying strategies on the financial plan and the impact of the Major Repairs Allowance on future maintenance and repair programmes. Further active involvement and training would be welcomed to ensure that they have a better understanding of the impact and effect of changes.
- 17.4 It has been agreed that a group of tenant's representatives will be established to work with Officers in the production, amendment and analysis of the Business Plan. This group will ensure that the interests and concerns of tenants are reflected in the document and that the various strategies reflect their needs and concerns as far as is possible. To ensure that the Plan develops it has been agreed that a series of regular business plan meetings will now be held throughout the year. This will ensure that the Business Plan becomes a "living document" and is not just subject to annual review.

THE COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS



APPENDIX 2

CORPORATE DOCUMENTS THAT AFFECT, SUPPORT AND IMPACT UPON THE HRA BUSINESS PLAN

1 Crossing the Bridge into the 21st Century

1.1 THIS IS THE COUNCIL'S OVERALL CORPORATE STRATEGY AND SETS OUT HOW THE COUNCIL WILL PROVIDE ITS SERVICES AND MANGE THE NEW FOREST DISTRICT IN THE FUTURE. WITHIN THIS DOCUMENT THE COUNCIL HAS SET OUT ITS AIMS IN 27 STATEMENTS. THESE ARE GROUPED INTO THREE SECTIONS - QUALITY OF THE ENVIRONMENT, QUALITY OF LIFE AND ORGANISATION OF EXCELLENCE. THESE HELP THE COUNCIL TO WORK TOWARDS ITS VISION FOR THE DISTRICT. OF THE 27 AIMS THE COUNCIL HAVE IDENTIFIED FOUR PRIORITY AREAS. THESE ARE: CRIME PREVENTION, ECONOMY AND JOBS, POVERTY AND WELFARE, AND SUSTAINABILITY.

1.2 Housing is specifically mentioned within the Quality of Life aims in that the Council will "give priority to housing for local needs through new initiatives and the extension of existing initiatives; make the best use of existing homes; and work with others to provide new homes."

1.3 HOUSING IS AN IMPORTANT AND INTEGRAL PART OF ALL THE PRIORITY AREAS IDENTIFIED. IN TERMS OF CRIME PREVENTION WITHOUT ADEQUATE DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS AND THE IMPROVEMENT OF PROPERTIES TO APPROPRIATE STANDARDS THEN OPPORTUNIST BURGLARY, STREET CRIME, ETC., CAN BE ENCOURAGED. WITHOUT GOOD AFFORDABLE HOUSING THE LOCAL ECONOMY AND JOBS WOULD BE NON-EXISTENT OR AT THE VERY LEAST IN DECLINE. THE REMOVAL OF POVERTY AND WELFARE AMONGST THE LOCAL POPULATION IS DEPENDANT PRIMARILY ON GOOD QUALITY AFFORDABLE HOUSING BEING AVAILABLE. IN TERMS OF SUSTAINABILITY, WITHOUT ADEQUATE HOUSING BUILT AND MAINTAINED TO GOOD STANDARDS, TOWNS AND VILLAGES WOULD NOT SURVIVE. ALL THE PRIORITY AREAS ARE LINKED AND TO SOME EXTENT NO SINGLE PRIORITY IS MORE IMPORTANT THAT THE OTHER. THE PROVISION OF HOUSING THAT PEOPLE WANT AND CAN AFFORD IS CLEARLY A NECESSARY FOUNDATION.

1.4 All other strategies and policies produced and operated by the Council are linked to the overall corporate strategy and to one or more of the four priority areas and 27 aims. This is true of the Housing Strategy and the other important documents mentioned below.

1.5 The Council's Strategy is currently in the process of being re-written and re-titled as "Heart of the Forest". A full consultation process is underway to ensure that all stakeholders have the opportunity to comment on and influence this new strategy and this Business Plan will be adapted as necessary to reflect this new strategy.

2 The Council's Asset Plan

2.1 The Council has an asset plan for the management of its buildings and although this does not specifically include the Council's housing stock the same principles applied for non-housing buildings are applied to the Council's stock. These principles are described in greater detail as part of the Maintenance Strategy within the HRA Business Plan.

3 State of the Environment Report

3.1 This strategy relates to the Local Agenda 21 and the concepts of sustainable development. Again housing is seen as a crucial part of this area. Poor housing is recognised as having a detrimental effect upon health and well being. Energy conservation is another crucial area highlighted in this document and it states that the Council will continue to improve the energy efficiency of council owned housing.

4 Opening Doors (Social Exclusion Issues Paper)

4.1 The Council, as one of the four corporate priorities that guide its work, has highlighted poverty and Welfare. This document represents the views and current position of the Council and the role of the Council in combating Social Exclusion. Housing is recognised as one of the most important issues in terms of social exclusion.

5 Capital Strategy

5.1 THIS STRATEGY IS DESIGNED TO SUPPORT AND HELP ACHIEVE PROGRESSIVELY THE AIMS OF THE AUTHORITY BY DEVELOPING A CAPITAL PROGRAMME, WHICH ADDRESSES THESE ISSUES. IN TERMS OF HOUSING THERE ARE A NUMBER OF TARGETS, WHICH ARE SUPPORTED BY THIS STRATEGY, THESE ARE:

- To work with partner Housing Associations to provide 200 new homes per year for local households in housing need, and fully utilise any further grant allocations, which may be obtained.
- To invest £2m per year in the Council's housing stock.
- To improve home energy efficiency so that there is a reduction in CO2 emissions.
- Work towards meeting any Government targets which contribute towards achieving sustainable communities.

6 Divided we Fall

6.1 This is a strategic document (part of the Council's Community Safety Strategy) produced in partnership with New Forest District Council, Hampshire County Council Social Services, the Police and other Social Landlords in the district. The purpose of the document is to deliver a partnership approach to dealing with neighbour nuisance and anti-social behaviour in the District.

7 The Housing Strategy

7.1 This Business Plan is designed to meet the overall requirements of the Council's Housing Strategy insofar as the aims contained in that Strategy relate to the Council's own stock and the management of the Housing Landlord Service.

8 BME Strategy

8.1 The BME strategy is a sub-strategy of the overall Housing Strategy and is important in that it provides an overall ethos in terms of diversity and equal opportunities for all that is reflected in the way the authority works and in particular how services are provided to all customers in an unbiased and fair way.

9 Tenant Participation Compact

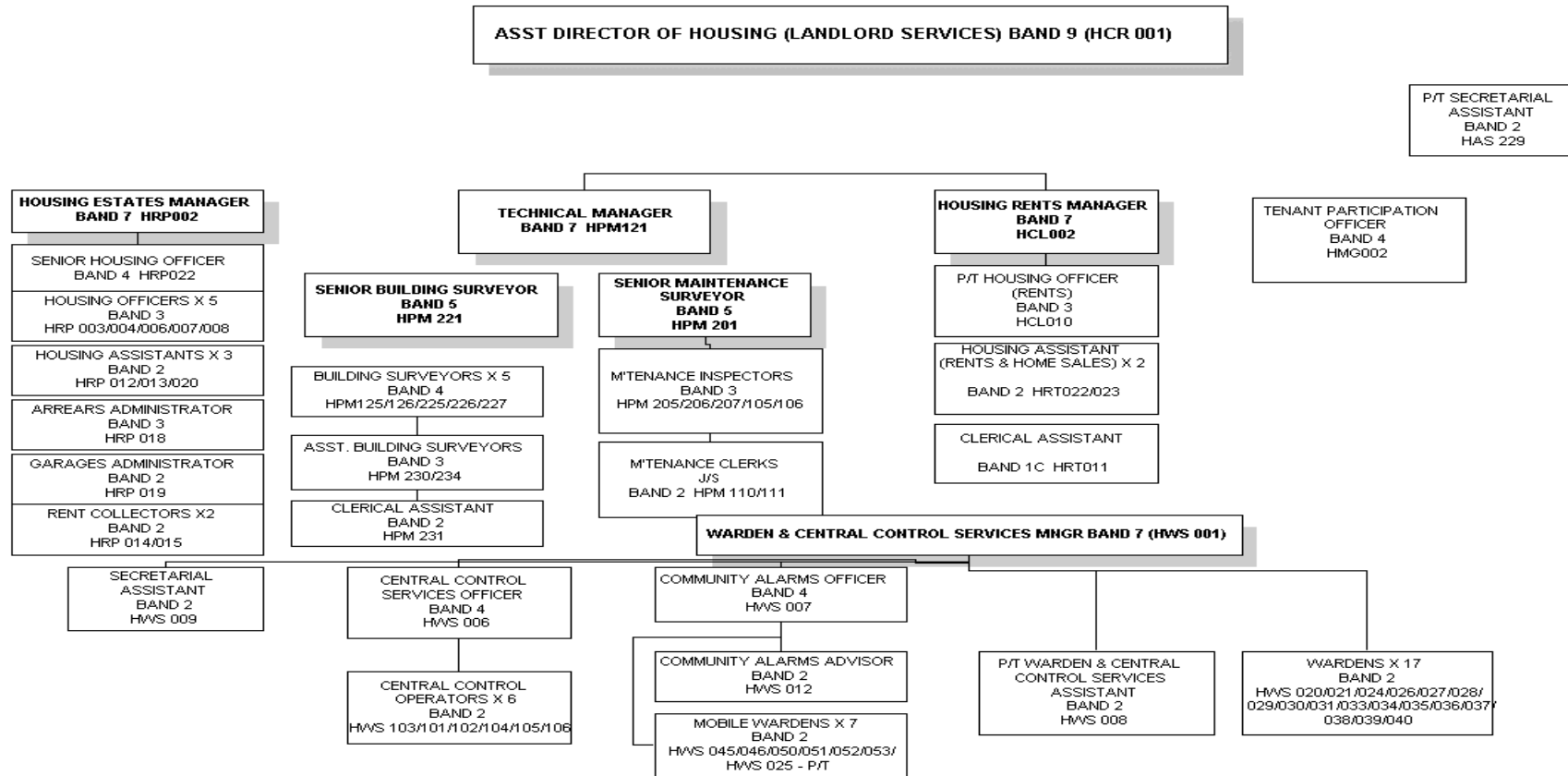
9.1 A Compact Committee was set up in September 1999 to review tenant participation and to draft the initial district wide Tenant Participation Compact for consultation.

9.2 THE AGREED COMPACT HAS BEEN DEVELOPED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH TENANTS, STAFF AND MEMBERS. THE COMMITTEE HAS AGREED CORE STANDARDS IN RELATION TO THE PROVISION OF HOUSING SERVICES AND THESE HAVE BEEN ENSHRINED WITHIN THE COMPACT. THESE CORE STANDARDS HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AS FOLLOWS: -

- Standards for Tenants' and Residents' Groups
- Standards for Monitoring and Measuring Performance
- How tenants can participate in the provision of Housing Management services and whether the current way that the Council consults is acceptable.
- Standards of Resources for Tenant Participation.
- Standards for Meetings.
- Standards for Information.
- Standards for Housing Services.

STAFFING STRUCTURE

COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTORATE - HOUSING CONTRACT SERVICES
JUNE 2001



SWOT ANALYSIS

1 Strengths

- Experienced and well-qualified staff.
- Good systems and procedures for all aspects of the service.
- Target orientated with good monitoring and feedback systems.
- A well maintained stock with no significant backlogs of work.
- A strong demand for its properties.
- Low levels of rent arrears

2 Weaknesses

- Lack of opportunity to easily expand the business.
- Lack of flexibility.
- Lack of development land and a lack of investment in new council owned social housing.
- Difficulty in encouraging a wide range of tenants of varying age ranges to participate.

3 Opportunities

- Changes in legislation that could affect the business in a positive way.
- Stock transfer, (local housing companies, arms length companies)
- Call centres and further computerisation (home working etc.).
- Take firmer action on void turnaround times and rent arrears to reduce loss of income.
- Partnering with contractors to reduce costs and improve value for money.
- Developing the Tenant Compact.

4 Threats

- Right to Buy sales leading to losses of properties and revenue.
- *Changes in legislation that could affect the business to a detrimental effect.*
- Changes in demand for social housing or for types of property (e.g. difficult to let)
- Difficult to let properties remaining vacant for long periods of time.
- Lack of up to date housing needs information. (will be resolved when the results of the housing needs survey are established in July 2001)
- Non-traditional housing repair costs in the future
- Controls and or changes on rental income and benefit payments.
- Changing local political priorities.
- Future funding changes.

THE OPTION FOR STOCK TRANSFER

Many authorities have over the past few years taken the decision to transfer the stock, in whole or part, to enable the future provision of a housing service.

IN SEPTEMBER 1998 CHAPMAN HENDY ASSOCIATES COMPLETED A HOUSING STOCK OPTIONS APPRAISAL FOR NEW FOREST.

The main objectives of the Council at that time were:

- Rent increases close to the rate of inflation
- The maintenance of Tenants' rights and security
- The provision of new social housing
- Home improvements and modernisations
- Tenant participation

There were broader objectives, which the Council needed to bear in mind, the most important of which was the impact on the General Fund (and, therefore, Council Tax payers).

At the time of the report there were 5,792 rented properties in the Council's ownership with average rents of £50.99. The HRA debt was £27.0m and there was a repairs and improvement backlog of £18 million.

Chapman Hendy produced a detailed report based on three options:-

Option 1 – the Council's major repairs spend remains in line with current expenditure levels.

Option 2 – major repairs expenditure reflects the estimates prepared by Council officers.

Option 3 – repairs expenditure reflects the Council plans with HRA balances reduced to £750,000 over three years.

Broadly, the results showed that – based on certain assumptions – there is a critical relationship between rent levels and the amount of repair and improvement work which the Council would have been able to carry out.

The results are shown in the tables below:

Option 1 – The table below summarises the average rent levels and projected capital investment in repairs and improvements under this option and the real (i.e. above the rate of inflation) rent increase is required.

HRA FORECAST – OPTION 1 – In Outturn Prices			
YEAR	MAJOR REPAIRS & IMPROVEMENTS £000	AVERAGE RENTS (52 WEEKS) £	REAL INCREASE ON PREVIOUS YEAR %
1998/99	2,448	50.99	-
1999/00	2,542	53.67	2.2
2000/01	2,638	58.14	5.2
2001/02	2,734	62.60	4.5
2002/03	2,832	66.28	2.8
2003/04	2,931	70.63	3.5

Option 2 – The table below summarises the position if revenue contributions are increased to support the level of works identified by the Council

HRA FORECAST – OPTION 2 – In Outturn Prices			
YEAR	MAJOR REPAIRS & IMPROVEMENTS £000	AVERAGE RENTS (52 WEEKS) £	REAL INCREASE ON PREVIOUS YEAR %
1998/99	2,448	50.99	-
1999/00	3,497	63.54	21.0
2000/01	3,609	68.31	4.4
2001/02	4,085	76.92	9.3
2002/03	4,205	81.03	2.3
2003/04	4,326	85.82	2.8

Option 3 – The table here shows the position with working balances being reduced over three years to £750,000.

HRA FORECAST – OPTION 3 – In Outturn Prices			
YEAR	MAJOR REPAIRS & IMPROVEMENTS £000	AVERAGE RENTS (52 WEEKS) £	REAL INCREASE ON PREVIOUS YEAR %
1998/99	2,448	50.99	-
1999/00	2,985	53.85	2.5
2000/01	3,082	58.90	6.2
2001/02	3,178	63.84	5.2
2002/03	2,832	67.51	2.7
2003/04	2,931	71.90	3.4

The report then considered the financial impact of LSVT and estimated the following.

Application of Capital Receipt

	Based on Valuation Without levy £M	Based on Valuation With levy £M
Total Receipt	70.3	70.3
Setting up costs	5.0	5.0
HRA debt	26.7	26.7
Surplus set aside	22.3	16.5
DETR levy	-	7.7
Usable receipt	16.3	14.4

The table below indicates the then potential impact of transfer on the Council's General Fund in the first year after transfer.

GENERAL FUND COST ANALYSIS (WITH LEVY POST TRANSFER)		
	Year 1 £000	Year 5 £000

Expenditure		
Rent allowances (net cost)	510	574
Residual corporate costs	*500	*563
Loss of VAT recovery	130	146
*£500,000 is estimate based on total Corporate costs of about £1M		
Income		
Interest on capital receipt	(1,854)	(1,854)
Mortgage interest	(70)	(70)
Revenue Support Grant	-	(525)
Net costs/(savings)	(784)	(1166)

The table above assumed that the capital receipt would be used entirely for Social Housing, that the Council's Standard Spending Assessment and Revenue Support Grant would increase after 3 years and that 350 new homes would be provided per year over and above the normal programme.

Chapman Hendy concluded that there would be the following advantages with stock transfer: -

- Rent increases could be guaranteed at close to inflation
- There would be an additional programme of major repairs
- There would be additional resources for new homes
- And savings to the general fund.

8.15 In June 1999 in the light of changing financial circumstances the Council reworked Chapman Hendy's findings. The two tables at Appendix 7 show the results of this analysis.

APPENDIX 6

EFFECT OF LARGE SCALE VOLUNTARY TRANSFER ON THE GENERAL FUND

	2000/01 £000	2001/2 £000	2002/3 £000	2003/4 £000	2004/5 £000	2005/6 £000	2006/7 £000	2007/8 £000	2008/9 £000	2009/10 £000
EXPENDITURE										
Rent Allowances	558	580	604	628	653	679	706	734	764	794
Residual Corporate Costs	659	573	536	549	563	577	591	606	621	637
Loss of discount utilities contract	51	53	54	56	57	59	61	63	65	67
VAT	100	103	106	109	113	116	119	123	127	130
Redundancy Provision	300	100	100							
Enhancement	180	90	90							
Added Years contribution	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25
DSO loss of contribution			250							
Benefit Administration	37	38	39	40	42	43	44	46	47	48
ESTIMATED TOTAL EXPENDITURE	1910	1562	1804	1407	1453	1499	1546	1597	1649	1701
INCOME										
Net Interest Gain on Investment	-822	-919	-1012	-1054	-1140	-1229	-1526	-1658	-1718	-1796
Revenue Support Grant				-628	-653	-679	-706	-734	-764	-794
Mortgage Interest	-55	-50	-50	-45	-45	-40	-40	-35	-35	-30
Homelessness (savings)	-100	-103	-106	-109	-113	-116	-119	-123	-127	-130
ESTIMATED TOTAL INCOME	-977	-1072	-1168	-1836	-1951	-2064	-2391	-2550	-2644	-2750
NET ADDITIONAL	933	490	636	-429	-498	-565	-845	-953	-995	-1049

COST/SURPLUS(-)										
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EFFECT OF LARGE SCALE VOLUNTARY TRANSFER ON THE CAPITAL EXPENDITURE PROGRAMME

	2000/01 £000	2001/2 £000	2002/3 £000	2003/4 £000	2004/5 £000	2005/6 £000	2006/7 £000	2007/8 £000	2008/9 £000	2009/10 £000
INCOME										
Capital Financing from Revenue (General Fund)	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250
Disabled Facilities Grants – Specific Capital Grants	220	220	220	220	220	220	220	220	220	220
Assuming Maximum Council Tax Levy										
Surplus generated from transfer at £7.2M	0	0	0	429	498	565	845	953	995	1049
Additional Valuation +£15m	0	0	0	480	480	480	480	480	480	480
Use of General Reserve	1003	888	542	514	350	350	350	350	240	0
Use of Housing Revenue Account Balance	441	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Usable Capital Receipts	88	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

TOTALS	2002	1358	1012	1893	1798	1865	2145	2253	2185	1999
CAPITAL EXPENDITURE										
Identified Capital Programme	1472	1269	923	164	?	?	?	?	?	?
Capital Maintenance of Assets	0	0	0	600	600	600	600	600	600	600
Private Sector Housing Renewal (Discretionary)	835	835	835	835	835	835	835	835	835	835
Disabled Facilities Grants (Mandatory)	370	370	370	370	370	370	370	370	370	370
TOTALS	2677	2474	2128	1969	1805	1805	1805	1805	1805	1805
SPENDING POWER GAP	675	1116	1116	76	7	-60	-340	-448	-380	-194

LANDLORD SERVICE PERFORMANCE TARGETS AND RESULTS AGAINST THOSE TARGETS 2000/2001

	Target	Result
Insurance Claims		
Process all insurance claims within 10 days of receiving them	100%	100%
Emergencies		
Attend to 80% of all emergency calls within 30 minutes of receipt of the call:		
Other	80%	100%
Warden Standby	80%	86%
Attend to all emergency calls within 90 minutes of receipt of the call:		
Other	100%	100%
Warden Standby	100%	100%
Members Enquiries		
All Members' enquiries answered within 5 working days of receiving enquiry	100%	97.9%
Information, Advice & Enquiries		
All written enquiries will be answered within 7 working days.	100%	99.4%
Any request for a private interview will be granted and arranged within 7 working days	100%	100%
Tenants Newsletters		
Newsletters delivered to all tenants within 3 days of receipt.	100%	100%
Complaints Procedure		
Respond in writing to all written complaints within 5 working days	100%	92%
Respond to all other complaints within 5 working days	100%	100%
Vacant Properties		
The annual average time between a property becoming vacant and it being ready to let shall be less than 3 weeks:		
Landlord	Under 3 wks	2.1 wks
Total (including Housing Needs)	Under 3 wks	2.5 wks

		Yearly Total	Target	Result
Total number of properties re-let		412		
Total number of refusals		22		
The maintenance cost incurred in re-letting a vacant property shall not exceed an annual average of £1,000.00 per property:			£1,000	£1,117.19
Under £1,000	24	297		
£1,001-£2,999	12	163		
Over £3,000	2	18		
Void redecoration vouchers issued	15	173		
Value	£2,390	£21,082		
Over £200	3	26		
90% of tenants shall be satisfied with the condition of the properties that are let and the way the letting took place			90%	98.3%
Assignment by way of Mutual Exchange				
Tenants to be given decisions on Mutual Exchanges within 42 days of the correctly completed application forms being received.			100%	100%
Rubbish				
90% of rubbish shall be collected within 7 days of notification.			90%	100%
All rubbish shall be collected within 14 days of notification.			100%	100%
Abandoned Cars				
95% of all reported vehicles shall be inspected within 5 days of notification.			95%	99.7%
All reported vehicles shall be re-inspected before arranging their removal.			100%	100%
90% of all abandoned vehicles are removed within 14 days of the expiry of the warning notice.			90%	98.3%
All Council estates and garages sites shall be inspected at least once per month.			100%	100%
Fire Equipment				
All fire equipment shall be inspected at least twice per year.			100%	100%
All defects found shall be reported to the service contractor within 24 hours of the defect being found.			100%	100%

	Target	Result
Garages		
Rent arrears shall not exceed 2% of the annual gross rent due.	2%	1%
No more than 20% of the total garage stock to be vacant at any one time.	Under 20%	6%
Rent collected as a percentage of rent due.	100%	99.9%
Door to Door Rent Collection		
All cash will be collected from the coin-operated laundry machine and telephones once every two weeks or within 24 hours of an emergency call to say the coin mechanism is jammed.	100%	100%
Recovery of Rent Arrears		
Rent arrears shall not exceed 2% of the annual gross rent due.	2%	1.35%
No more than 78 tenants shall owe more than £500 in rent arrears.	78	84
No more than 1.8% of tenants shall owe over 13 weeks rents excluding those owing less than £250.	1.8%	1.76%
Rent collected as a percentage of rent due.	100%	98.4%
Notification of Rent Increases		
All tenants shall be given the statutory 28 days notice of a rent increase within 2 working days of the Contract Administrator Advising the Contractor.	100%	100%
All tenants shall be given the statutory 28 days notice of a rent increase within 21 days of improvements being completed at their home where improvements result in a rent increase.	100%	100%
Notifications Received	100%	
Target Missed	0%	0%
Target Met	100%	100%
Health & Safety Annual Inspects		
All hostels and sheltered schemes to be inspected annually and the Contract Administrator advised in writing of the result within 14 days of each inspection	100%	100%

	Targets	Results
Leasehold Management		
All service charges for sold flats to be reviewed every 5 years.	100%	100%
All works carried out to sold flats in accordance with the service charge calculations within the relevant 5 year period.	100%	100%
Improvements by Tenants		
All applications from tenants wishing to carry out their own improvements shall be processed and tenants advised within 28 days of receiving request.	100%	100%
Reactive Maintenance		
Pre-inspect a minimum of 25% of all works (excluding vacant properties).	25%	46%
Total number of category E,1 and 2 works shall not exceed 50% of the total number of annual repairs.	50%	40%
Completion of works shall be as follows:		
Category E - 3 hours response	95%	97%
Category 1 - Within 24 hours	95%	98%
Category 2 - Within 7 days	85%	92%
Category 3 - Within 28 days	75%	88%
Randomly post-inspect a minimum of 10% of works up to £250 in value.	10%	10%
90% of inspections requested by tenants shall be carried out within 14 days of that request	90%	97%
Customer Care		
Ensure that tenant complaints against any one contractor must not exceed 5% of the total repairs undertaken.	5%	0.74%
Ensure 95% tenant satisfaction of the reactive maintenance service.	95%	98.1%
Visit all dissatisfied tenants within 14 days of receipt of the card.	100%	100%
Gas Servicing of Council Appliances		
All fixed Gas appliances in residential Council owned property to be serviced at a maximum of 12 month intervals.	100%	93.1%
Tenant Satisfaction	100%	99.7%

	Target	Results
Servicing of Solid Fuel		
Ensure all solid fuel central heating appliances are serviced annually.	100%	100%
Stock Condition Survey		
Update 20% of the housing stock database each year.	20%	15%
Update the housing stock database within one month of practical completion of each planned maintenance contract.	100%	100%
Resident Warden Services		
All new tenants information to be given to Central Control within 3 hours and confirmed in writing within 7 days.	100%	100%
Daily contact made with all tenants (not weekends and bank holidays, except at Gore Grange and Winfrid House), each tenant in a scheme is visited at least 3 times per week, and each tenant linked to a scheme visited at least once a week.	100%	100%
At least 2 social events each week shall be arranged in schemes with Resident Wardens.	2	100%
All fire alarm systems tested weekly.	100%	99.2%
All new tenants information to be given to Central Control within 3 hours and confirmed in writing within 7 days.	100%	100%
All tenants at Willow Tree, Pennington and Rivers Reach, Lymington visited weekly and all tenants at Champion House, Lymington visited twice weekly.	100%	100%
All other tenants in Mobile Warden Schemes contacted daily (except at weekend and bank holidays), and visited 3 times a week and all tenants linked to schemes visited once a week.	100%	100%
Mobile Wardens on duty in schemes at least 3 hours per day Mondays to Fridays.	3 hours	99.9%
At least 2 social events arranged each week in schemes with a communal lounge. Champion House residents have requested only one social event a month	2	100%
All fire alarm systems tested weekly	100%	100%
Annual fire drill carried out at each scheme	100%	100%

APPENDIX 8

LIFELINE SERVICES - BENCHMARKING RESULTS

	New Forest	Organisation A	Organisation B	Organisation C	Organisation D	Organisation E	Organisation F	Organisation G	Organisation H
No of households	2108		729	2597	1045	2712	627	440	786
Additions in 1999/00	418		200	413	251	411	181	120	157
Terminations in 99/00	348		166	366	281	378	151	100	164
% Net growth	3.4		4.9	1.8	-2.8	1.2	5.0	4.8	-0.9
% Terminations	17.1		23.9	14.4	26.1	14.1	25.3	23.8	20.7
time order to install (dys)			5	1 if required	2-3 days	1-5 days	2	2	1-2 days
Installation charge			0	0	0	0	0	30	0
Rental per week(ex VAT)	2.47		3	3.3	3	4	2.87	3	3.1
Income supp chge	free		1.5	sponsored units	Donated unit	2	No rebate	Charity	1.1
FTE support	2		2	1.7 + out of hrs	1 + mobiles	5.69		1	2.7
Salary plus on-costs	29900		44236	65913	31624	90977		17700	49700
Cost per FTE	14950		22118	29066		15989		17700	18407
Salary/unit	14.2		60.7	25.4	30.3	33.5		40.2	63.2
Visits p.a.	1			2	1	3-4 p.a.	None		

PLANNED MAINTENANCE - BENCHMARKING RESULTS

	New Forest	Organisation A	Organisation B	Organisation C	Organisation D	Organisation E	Organisation F	Organisation G	Organisation H
Recent condition survey	Yes	Yes	No	In plan	No	No	In plan		
Asbestos and SAP details	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	In plan	In plan	In plan		
Consultation with tenants on programme	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	In plan		
Consultation with tenants on specification	No	No	In part	No	Yes	No	No		
Post inspection involving tenants	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No		

REACTIVE MAINTENANCE - BENCHMARKING RESULTS

	New Forest	Highest	Average	Lowest
Average cost per house	428	428	365	276
% Void	9.7	11	8.9	5.7
Cost per void	1684	1684	1222	808
Day-to-day per house	227	279	221	175
Jobs per house	2.9	4.5	3.54	2.9
Cost per job	80	80	64	39

RENT ARREARS - BENCHMARKING RESULTS

	New Forest	Organisation A	Organisation B	Organisation C	Organisation D	Organisation E	Organisation F	Organisation G	Organisation H
Number of staff employed on rent accounting/rent arrears recovery	8.5	4.84	6.57	10.1	6.7	7.9	7.37		
Annual unit cost per dwelling for rent accounting/arrears recovery	35.0	-	38.8	50.2	43.4	39.1	37.5		
Number of Notices Seeking Possession served	617	400	341	465	323	550	559		
Number of suspended possession orders obtained	61	?	117	?	124	154	58		
Number of evictions carried out during	22	15	8	27	4	20	7		
Current arrears @ 31/3/99	257,706	213,019	215,461	382,081	450,128	134,743	158,043		
Current arrears @ 31/3/00	242,091	313,497	246,027	397,561	476,887	149,315	169,586		
Increase in year	- 15,615	100,478	30,566	15,480	26,579	14,572	11,543		
Rent Collected as % of rent due	99.4	?	97.6	98.3	99	99.9	99.8		
% of tenants owing over 13 weeks rent @ 31/3/00	1.87	?	?	1.94	?	0.84	1.9		
Number of tenants owing more than £500 @ 31/3/00	86	181	114	243	215	?	84		

WARDEN SERVICE - CATEGORY TWO SCHEMES - BENCHMARKING RESULTS.

	New Forest	Organisation A	Organisation B	Organisation C	Organisation D	Organisation E	Organisation F	Organisation G	Organisation H
No. of units	412		827	194	256	381	774	201	
Rent	46		49	38	47	59	49	72	
Service Charge	26		25	43	26	NIL	15	16	
Warden element	19			19	10		9	9	
Other elements	24			24	15	10	6	8	
Total Charge	80		74	80	73	59	64	88	
Units per FTE	29		32	16	18	10	27	25	

TENANT PARTICIPATION - BENCHMARKING RESULTS

	New Forest	Organisation A	Organisation B	Organisation C	Organisation D	Organisation E	Organisation F	Organisation G	Organisation H
Published TP strategy	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Under consideration		
Tenant involvement in policy development?	14 TAs. Tens & res J'nt C'ttee. Tenants co-opted onto Hsing & Perf review sub-committees.	Tenants forum. Local panels. 2 members of Community Policy C'ttee	Tenant Bd. Members but not on housing Cttee Tenants conference. . TP seminar	Tenants fed. but ltd. Support Also focus gps.	6 tenant advisory gps. Tenants Forum and 3 tenants on Housing C'ttee	Tenants panel drew up policy. Tenants' panel & 2 TAs	Initiated by HMCCT TAs, Tenants forum. Tenants co-opted onto Housing Cttee		
FTE in support of TP	1.6	1.3	4.4	1.5	2	1.3	4		
Dedicated lead officer?	Yes	No	No. 50% of policy & Performance officer	Yes	No	Almost (90%)	Yes		
Advice to tenants on TMOs	Tenants preferred LSVT	PCHA training. PEP discusses with local panel	Tenants not interested	Tenants not interested	Tenants preferred LSVT	TPAS, conferences, literature	Raised in 98 consult. over LSVT. No interest		

	New Forest	Organisation A	Organisation B	Organisation C	Organisation D	Organisation E	Organisation F	Organisation G	Organisation H
How are tenants involved in decisions?	See below	See below	Tenants Liaison Group. 4 local estate groups	Public meetings, letters and individual visits	See below	See below	See below		
Housing man.	Involved in preparing spec for HMCCT	3 service review dys. Ideas inc. more generic & no door-to-door	focus gps and survey leading to spec. for pilot contract cleaning	Public meetings, letters and individual visits	Involved in preparing spec for HMCCT	Sub C'ttee of housing has equal no.s of tenants & C'ncillors.	Tenants Forum		
Budgets	Jnt Cttee consulted	Planned maintenance/rent trade-off	discussed with tenant gps	Not	TAs have given their priorities	As above	Tenants forum		
rents	Liaison Cttee consulted before increases agreed.	See above	discussed at tenant & liaison gp. Chair spoke @ h'sing Cttee	Not	TAs discuss arrears recovery	Not	TAs can ask for additional services @ extra cost		
environment improvement	Liaison Cttee consulted on choice	Tenants' forum prioritises	Each estate gp. Has an env. budget	Public meetings, letters and individual visits	Individual tenants & £2.5k budget to each TA	Sub-C'ttee			

	New Forest	Organisation A	Organisation B	Organisation C	Organisation D	Organisation E	Organisation F	Organisation G	Organisation H
Developing housing strategy	Annual Housing Forum	Consulted on TP section	Tenant Conf. And ten liaison Gp.	Public meetings, letters and visits	Annual strategy seminar & TAs	Indirectly			
Capital & Renov'n progs	After budget set, liaison ctee consulted on choice	Tenants input into creation & monitoring of PM prog.	Consult individual tens over improvements	Public meetings, letters and individual visits	TAs	Not			
Rent setting	postponed because of LSVT	See <i>budgets</i> above	Tenants consulted over policy	Not	Tenants say stick to guidelines	Not			
Anti-social behaviour	Working party of officers & tenants	Working party on neighbour nuisance	Consult liaison gp over tenancy conditions. SLA with police	Not	Discussed @ forum prior to Housing C'ttee	Sub-C'ttee	Info. leaflet for tenants		
Reg'nerat'n		Orlit regeneration project	consult local gps	Not	TAs discuss community safety				

Means of informing and consulting	Newspapers, TAs, Joint C'ttee. contract monitoring	Newsletters & local panels	Estate meetings Newsletters and Liaison gp.	Letters, magazines & annual report. Exhibits & visits	Newspaper, TAs, forum & ten conferences	Newspapers, Tenant panel, workshops, Sub-c'ttee,	Newspaper, TAs, forum, conferences Telephone surveys		
Resources for TP	£14k	£20k plus	£9.5k plus 1£18k capital	None	£19.5k	£7.1	£38k		
Of which ? for training	£3k	£3.9k	£2k	None	£0.8k	£1.5	?		
% tenants in TAs	14 TAs representing 54% of stock	20%	19%	5%	2.55% (see text above)	15%	13%		
Tenant sat. survey?	100% TPAS survey in 94	Currently being undertaken	Survey in 98. 30% response. 92% satisfied	99 postal survey. "Are you interested in being consulted?"	100% postal survey in 99. Also 10% MORI survey in 94	None but tenants' panel survey on participation & of new tenants	Resident survey in 97 included 3% (160) tenants		

APPENDIX 9

Tenants and Residents' Associations

There are currently four associations operating within the District

New Forest Tenant and Resident Consultative Group.

This group meets monthly to provide a central forum for New Forest tenants, leaseholders and residents.

Tenants Contract Monitoring Committee.

This committee meets quarterly to monitor the performance of the Housing Management Contract, the Grounds Maintenance and Cleaning contracts. In addition two nominated tenant representatives meet monthly with Officers to monitor the performance of the Housing Management Service.

Compact Committee.

This committee was set up in September 1999 to review tenant participation arrangements and to draft the District wide Tenant Participation Compact. The committee has initiated Best Practice meetings with other housing organisations to assist their review and to consider good practice.

Tenant and Resident Panels.

Following a review of tenant participation arrangements by the Compact Committee, panels were introduced. These meetings are open to residents in a specific area and provide an opportunity for those attending to air their views and to ask specific questions on issues that were identified at initial planning meetings. There are currently two panels that have been set up within the District.

Special Tenant Working Groups

These have been used in the past to consider specific issues such as voids, neighbour nuisance and rent assessment. Currently tenant representatives are working with Officers considering the Grounds Maintenance Contract, abandoned cars and partnering arrangements with contractors.

Editorial Team

The Tenants newsletter "Round the Houses" is produced quarterly. Six tenant representative's form the editorial team together with five Officers and the producer of the paper.

Heather Road Residents Action

This group was set up following consultation with residents and other landlords on a multi-landlord estate to obtain improvements in the management and conditions on the estate.

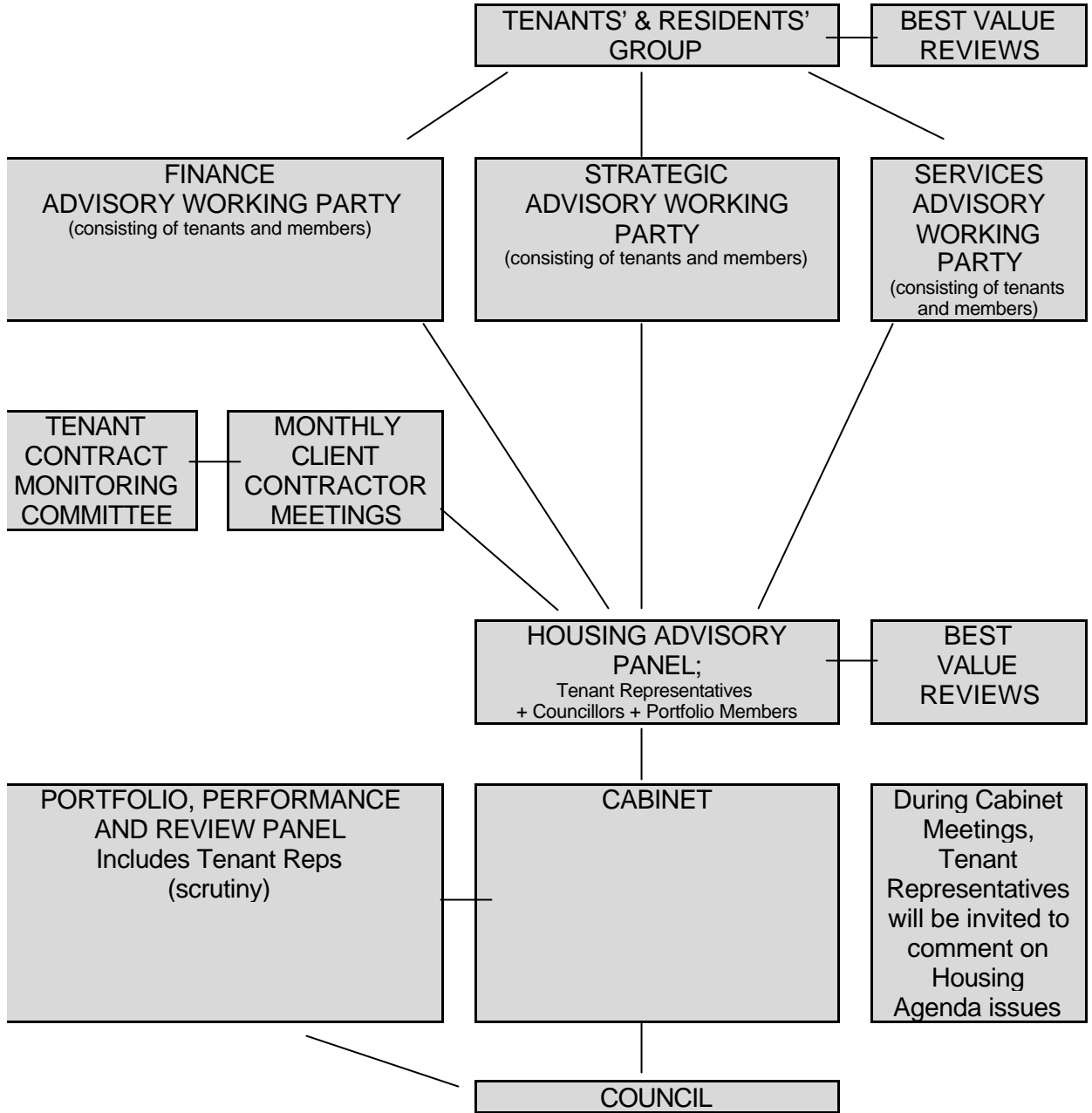
Following modernisation of the Council's structure, two representatives from the Consultative Group now attend Cabinet meetings. Six other tenant representatives attend the Housing Review Panel. In addition to this, three other working groups of tenants, officers and Councillors have been introduced. These are: -

Finance Working Group - This group considers and is involved in the overall housing budget, the rent setting process, options relating to the transfer of the stock and to review the overall housing finances.

Services Working Group - This group is reviewing aspects of housing and general services that are provided to tenants and leaseholders.

Strategic Working Group - This group is involved in on the review of all policies and the preparation of the overall Housing Strategy, allocations policies and the HRA Business Plan.

TENANT CONSULTATION PROCESS



APPENDIX 11

REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE STRATEGY

1 ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

- 1.1 *In common with the Council's overall asset management strategy the aim of the housing asset strategy is to make the best and most economic use of all land and buildings.*
- 1.2 The use of land and the existing stock is and will be based upon the demand for accommodation and the financial return that can be achieved by the letting of such property and land. The aim will be to achieve the best possible return on the investment.
- 1.3 Existing land holdings are small and generally of a type and location that does not lend itself to practical development. These small areas of land are generally given over to leisure and open space usage by estate residents.
- 1.4 However, a view is always taken that where existing small land holdings could be combined with other housing land that is currently under-developed to form a new site that could provide a better return (i.e. higher density housing) then future development would be seriously considered (if achievable). The issue to be overcome are the associated costs involved in demolishing existing accommodation and the difficulties in gaining vacant possession. In addition as a result of the Right to Buy actions over the past 15 years there are many privately owned homes scattered amongst council owned dwellings which, again, causes serious difficulties in freeing up land for further development.
- 1.5 The possibilities for future development depend primarily on the demand for housing in any particular area and the feasibility of obtaining vacant possession of land. These issues are always considered and a balanced view taken as to the practicalities of any proposals.
- 1.6 Garage sites have traditionally been used as sites for redevelopment particularly where existing garages are underused. The Council continue to regularly review garage sites and the vacancy rates to ensure that the best use of land is being achieved.
- 1.7 The Council have a number of non-traditional housing sites and these are considered possible development opportunities in the future. Many of the PRC homes are considered to have a limited life and will at some point in the future become either uneconomic to maintain or structurally unsound. The opportunity will then arise for the sites upon which these properties are to be redeveloped to a high density. Specialist consultants have been appointed and are currently carrying out a full structural investigation of all the Council's non-traditional stock. The results of these investigations will dictate the route that the Council will take in dealing with these properties.
- 1.8 The opportunity will also be taken to ensure that existing properties meet the current and future housing needs. This will include possible conversion and/or adaptation of existing properties to meet those needs, e.g. existing family units converted to single person accommodation.

2 Repairs And Maintenance Strategy

2.1 THE ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY IS A MAJOR PART OF THE BUSINESS PLAN FOR NEW FOREST HOUSING LANDLORD SERVICES AND IS ESSENTIAL TO THE OVERALL SUCCESS OF ANY BUSINESS PLAN. THE STRATEGY IS NEEDED TO ENSURE THE PROTECTION OF THE STOCK TO ENSURE THAT THE MAXIMUM USE CAN BE OBTAINED OVER THE LONGEST POSSIBLE PERIOD AT THE MOST EFFECTIVE COSTS. WITHOUT THE PROPERTY BEING IN GOOD CONDITION MEETING THE NEEDS OF TENANTS OVER THE FULL PERIOD OF THE 30-YEAR BUSINESS PLAN THE RENTAL STREAM COULD BE SERIOUSLY AFFECTED AND BUSINESS PLAN FORECASTS FOUND TO BE DEFICIENT. IT IS

THEREFORE ESSENTIAL THAT SUFFICIENT RESOURCES ARE MADE AVAILABLE TO FUND THE REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE OF THE STOCK. THE MAJOR REPAIRS ALLOWANCE WILL BE USED EFFECTIVELY TO MEET THE NEEDS OF REPAIR, MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENT.

2.2 IN TERMS OF THE REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE OF THE HOUSING STOCK THE NECESSARY EXPENDITURE REQUIREMENTS CAN BE SPLIT INTO TWO MAIN AREAS. THESE ARE:

- Maintenance expenditure
- Renewal Expenditure

Maintenance Expenditure

Maintenance expenditure can be split between three main areas, i.e. reactive maintenance, cyclical maintenance and planned maintenance.

Renewal Expenditure

Expenditure in this area includes the complete renewal of building elements that can no longer be maintained by any of the various heads of expenditure mentioned above. The strategy employed by New Forest Housing Landlord services ensures that renewal expenditure is only undertaken when the costs of maintenance expenditure is no longer effective or can be economically be justified. The strategy aims to ensure that the decision to renew is taken at the most economically justified time. In this way scarce resources can be used to greatest effect.

2.3 Detailed Strategy

2.4 AS PREVIOUSLY MENTIONED THE COUNCIL'S STOCK IS PRIMARILY OF LOW RISE TRADITIONALLY BUILT PROPERTIES. IT IS IN GOOD CONDITION AS FAR AS THE FABRIC OF THE BUILDING ARE CONCERNED AND THERE ARE NO SIGNIFICANT IDENTIFIED BACKLOGS IN TERMS OF THE PLANNED MAINTENANCE REQUIREMENTS FOR EXTERNAL REPAIRS OR REPLACEMENTS. THIS SITUATION IS NOT TRUE FOR INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS TO THE PROPERTIES. THIS POSITION IN RESPECT OF THE IMPORTANT EXTERNAL CONDITION OF OUR STOCK HAS BEEN ACHIEVED BY THE JUDICIOUS USE OF SCARCE RESOURCES OVER THE PAST 13 YEARS (SINCE EFFECTIVE PLANNED PROGRAMMES COMMENCED IN 1987) AND THE EFFECTIVE PRIORITISATION OF THESE SCARCE RESOURCES. THIS OVERARCHING STRATEGY WILL BE CONTINUED FOR THE PERIOD OF THE BUSINESS PLAN. THE STRATEGY WILL ALSO MAKE DUE ALLOWANCE FOR THE CONTINUED LOSS OF DWELLINGS THROUGH THE RIGHT TO BUY.

2.5 THE STRATEGY USED BY NEW FOREST HOUSING LANDLORD SERVICES IS A "JUST IN TIME" STRATEGY. THIS MEANS THAT ALTHOUGH INITIAL PROGRAMMES ARE PREPARED BASED PRIMARILY ON THE LIFE CYCLE APPROACH TO THE RENEWAL OF BUILDING ELEMENTS AND COMPONENTS NO WORK IS UNDERTAKEN UNTIL AND UNLESS THAT PARTICULAR ELEMENT OR COMPONENT ACTUALLY NEEDS RENEWAL AT THAT TIME. THIS IS ACHIEVED BY PRE-INSPECTION OF THOSE ELEMENTS AND TECHNICAL DECISIONS TAKEN BY STAFF FOLLOWING THAT INSPECTION. THERE ARE EXCEPTIONS TO THIS RULE WHERE MAJOR RENEWAL PROGRAMMES NEED TO BE SPREAD OVER A NUMBER OF YEARS TO AVOID IMPOSSIBLE WORK PROGRAMMES. FOR EXAMPLE, SINCE MANY OF THE COUNCIL'S PROPERTIES WERE BUILT IN THE SAME PERIOD (IN THE 1950'S) AND THEREFORE MANY MAJOR ELEMENTS LIKE ROOF COVERINGS ARE EXPECTED TO NEED RENEWAL OVER A RELATIVELY SHORT TIME SPAN, THE DECISION HAS BEEN TAKEN TO SPREAD THESE RENEWALS OVER A SLIGHTLY LONGER PERIOD TO ENSURE A MORE BALANCED SPREAD OF EXPENDITURE. THIS WILL INEVITABLY LEAD TO SOME ROOF COVERINGS BEING REPLACED IN ADVANCE OF NEED AND SOME LATER THAN REQUIRED.

2.6 NEW FOREST HOUSING LANDLORD SERVICES HAVE ACCURATE AND AVAILABLE DATA ON THE STATE OF ITS STOCK. THIS HAS BEEN OBTAINED FROM A SERIES OF STOCK CONDITION SURVEYS FIRST COMMENCED IN 1989/90. THIS FIRST SURVEY COMPRISED A 100% INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL INSPECTION OF ALL PROPERTIES AND WAS SUPPLEMENTED BY A 10% SURVEY UNDERTAKEN IN 1995/96. A FURTHER 100% INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL SURVEY WAS UNDERTAKEN DURING 1998/99 AND SINCE THAT TIME A TARGET OF 20% OF THE STOCK BEING SURVEYED EACH YEAR HAS BEEN SET AND ACHIEVED. THEREFORE, INFORMATION ON THE CURRENT STATE OF THE STOCK IS CONSIDERED ACCURATE AND UP TO DATE. ALL INFORMATION IS HELD ON A COMPUTERISED DATABASE. WE HAVE CONTINUED WITH THE 20% SURVEY THROUGHOUT 2000/2001. THE SURVEY FORMS USED HAVE BEEN UPDATED TO CAPTURE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE GENERAL CONDITION OF THE PROPERTY BOTH INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY TO ENSURE THAT TENANTS ARE SEEN TO BE FULFILLING THEIR TENANCY CONDITIONS. THIS WAS INSTIGATED DURING 1999/2000 FOLLOWING DISCUSSION BETWEEN TENANT REPRESENTATIVES AND OFFICERS.

2.7 THE INFORMATION HELD ON THE CONDITION OF OUR STOCK HAS BEEN USED TO DEVISE A 10 YEAR PROGRAMME OF PLANNED MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENTS. (SEE APPENDIX 12) THIS PROGRAMME OF WORK HAS BEEN PRIORITISED ACCORDING TO TECHNICAL NEED AND TAKING ACCOUNT OF THE LIKELY LEVEL OF RESOURCES AVAILABLE. PRIOR TO THE INTRODUCTION OF THE MAJOR REPAIRS ALLOWANCE RESOURCES WERE NOT AVAILABLE TO MEET THE FULL REQUIREMENTS PARTICULARLY IN THE AREA OF INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS TO OUR STOCK. THEREFORE THE PROGRAMME CONCENTRATES ON ENSURING THAT THE EXTERNAL FABRIC OF OUR PROPERTIES IS MAINTAINED. THIS STRATEGY HAS CREATED A BACKLOG OF WORK. WITH THE ADVENT OF THE MRA WE NOW INTEND TO TACKLE THIS BACKLOG AND AT THE SAME TIME CONTINUE WITH THE NECESSARY NORMAL PLANNED MAINTENANCE PROGRAMMES. A NEW TEN-YEAR WILL BE PREPARED TO REFLECT THIS.

2.8 IN THE PAST INVESTIGATIONS INTO THE MOST EFFECTIVE MEANS OF GAINING INFORMATION ON THE COUNCIL'S STOCK HAVE BEEN UNDERTAKEN, IN PARTICULAR ON THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY OF USING SURVEYING RESOURCES. COSTS OF USING CONSULTANTS WERE EXAMINED AND BESIDES BEING MORE EXPENSIVE IT WAS CONSIDERED THAT THEIR LACK OF KNOWLEDGE OF OUR STOCK WOULD NOT ACHIEVE THE ACCURATE DATA CAPTURE THAT WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ACHIEVE USING IN HOUSE RESOURCES.

2.9 ALL PROPERTY DATA IS HELD ON A CENTRAL DATABASE WITHIN THE INTEGRATED HOUSING MANAGEMENT COMPUTER SYSTEM.

MAINTENANCE EXPENDITURE IS SPLIT BETWEEN THREE HEADS, THESE ARE

REACTIVE MAINTENANCE (INCLUDING VOID WORKS)

CYCLICAL MAINTENANCE

PLANNED MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENTS.

2.10 EXPENDITURE IS INITIALLY TARGETED AT REACTIVE EXPENDITURE WHICH IS DEMAND LED FROM TENANTS REQUESTS FOR REPAIRS. OUR STRATEGY AIMS TO ENSURE THAT THE LEVEL OF REACTIVE REPAIRS IS MINIMISED SINCE IT IS THE MOST COSTLY MEANS OF UNDERTAKING REPAIRS. IT IS FAR MORE EFFECTIVE TO CARRY OUT ALL REPAIRS IN A PLANNED WAY USING ECONOMIES OF SCALE WHEREVER POSSIBLE TO GROUP AREAS OF LIKE WORK TOGETHER IN LARGER CONTRACTS. OUR STRATEGY AIMS TO ENSURE THAT REACTIVE MAINTENANCE EXPENDITURE DOES NOT EXCEED 40% OF THE TOTAL OF ALL MAINTENANCE EXPENDITURE ON OUR STOCK.

- 2.11 The next call on resources is for cyclical maintenance. This is regular maintenance and servicing that occurs at regular intervals, often annually. Examples of work in this category are external decorations, annual gas appliance servicing, smoke detector servicing, electrical test and inspection programmes etc. All these areas of work are designed to obtain the maximum life of components or appliances.
- 2.12 The third major area of work that resources are targeted at is that of planned maintenance and improvements. In accordance with the recommendations of District Audit the aim is to ensure that 70% of all available expenditure on maintenance and repair is spent on this area of work.
- 2.13 Reactive expenditure is recognised as the most expensive form of maintenance expenditure and this area of work is carefully controlled by monitoring a number of crucial targets and by the deliberate investment in planned and cyclical expenditure.
- 2.14 The need to carry out improvements to our properties is also recognised as important in terms of improving the quality of life for our tenants and to meet the DETR's targets for the provision of decent homes. Our planned improvement programmes will ensure this target is achieved by the provision of suitable investment levels each year.
- 2.15 It is essential with all aspects of our maintenance strategy that the tenants' view is listened to and that wherever possible our programmes of work meet their aspirations. However, the need for meeting tenants requirements must, and will, be balanced against the technical need and our responsibilities to ensure that the stock is properly and effectively maintained.
- 2.16 Our strategy for the commissioning and implementation of the maintenance, repair and improvement programmes will encompass the principles of the Egan Report, "Rethinking Construction". This will mean that wherever possible we will ensure a partnering approach is taken and we will work closely with tenants, contractors and suppliers to achieve this aim. This approach will ensure we achieve maximum value for money.
- 2.17 The Landlord Service has an energy efficiency strategy linked and incorporated with the Council's HECA strategy. This aims to ensure that the Council's housing stock is repaired and improved and at the same time the energy efficiency is improved. Where necessary separate identifiable energy efficiency schemes will be carried out to improve individual property energy ratings.
- 2.18 The energy efficiency strategy for Council homes which is linked to the overall HECA strategy aims to:-
- Provide comfortable and healthy living conditions for tenants.
 - Save energy and conserve fossil fuels.
 - Make Council homes more energy efficient.
 - Allow tenants a choice of heating system whenever possible.
 - Raise the energy efficiency awareness of new and existing tenants.

THE LANDLORD SERVICE ENSURES ENERGY COSTS ARE KEPT TO A MINIMUM BY INCORPORATING THE FOLLOWING WORKS IN ALL NEW PLANNED MAINTENANCE SCHEMES:

- Additional loft insulation to current Building Regulation Standards.

- Double-glazing in all window replacements.
- Condensing boilers in all new heating systems.
- Cavity wall insulation when new or replacement heating is installed.

2.19 To ensure the maintenance service provides best possible value we will continue to benchmark all areas of our work with both the public and private sector whenever possible. From these benchmarking exercises we will ensure that best practice is identified and will adapt and alter our service where necessary to achieve high standards in quality and service in all areas of our work.

2.20 In order to ensure a professional approach to achieving our maintenance strategy we will endeavour to recruit technical and professional staff of the highest calibre. We will set both quality and quantity targets to ensure that we meet the targets in our maintenance strategy and that we achieve the programmes of work that are needed and as detailed in our 10 year maintenance and improvement programme.

APPENDIX 12

10 YEAR PLANNED MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME

Type of Work (Revenue and capital work)	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Pitched roof replacement	£345,000	£345,000	£345,000	£345,000	£345,000	£345,000	£345,000	£345,000	£345,000	£345,000
Window replacement	£225,000	£225,000	£225,000	£225,000	£225,000	£225,000	£225,000	£225,000	£225,000	£225,000
Kitchen modernisation	£444,400	£444,400	£444,400	£444,400	£444,400	£444,400	£444,400	£444,400	£444,400	£444,400
Bathroom modernisation	£267,850	£267,850	£267,850	£267,850	£267,850	£267,850	£267,850	£267,850	£267,850	£267,850
New central heating	£61,250	£61,250	£61,250	£61,250	£61,250	£61,250	£61,250	£61,250	£61,250	£61,250
Electrical wiring upgrades	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000
Low maintenance eaves	£92,800	£92,800	£92,800	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Repointing/rerendering	£300,000	£300,000	£300,000	£300,000	£300,000	£300,000	£300,000	£300,000	£300,000	£300,000
Door replacement	£348,000	£348,000	£348,000	£348,000	£348,000	£348,000	£348,000	£348,000	£348,000	£348,000
Replacement heating	£347,200	£347,200	£347,200	£347,200	£347,200	£347,200	£347,200	£347,200	£347,200	£347,200
Major sheltered works	£170,000	£170,000	£170,000	£170,000	£170,000	£170,000	£170,000	£170,000	£170,000	£170,000
Conversion of bedsits(sheltered)	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000	£125,000	£125,000	£125,000
Car parking improvements	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000
Environmental Imps	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000
Fencing	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000
Garage block refurbishment	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000
Asbestos Removal	£40,000	£40,000	£40,000	£40,000	£40,000	£40,000	£40,000	£40,000	£40,000	£40,000
Miscellaneous	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000
Total carried forward	£3,321,500	£3,321,500	£3,321,500	£3,228,700	£3,228,700	£3,228,700	£3,228,700	£3,203,700	£3,203,700	£3,203,700

Total brought forward	£3,321,500	£3,321,500	£3,321,500	£3,228,700	£3,228,700	£3,228,700	£3,228,700	£3,203,700	£3,203,700	£3,203,700
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Cyclical

PVCu window servicing	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000
Smoke detector servicing	£60,000	£60,000	£60,000	£60,000	£60,000	£60,000	£60,000	£60,000	£60,000	£60,000
External decoration	£245,000	£240,000	£235,000	£230,000	£225,000	£220,000	£215,000	£210,000	£205,000	£200,000
Lift Servicing	£35,000	£35,000	£35,000	£35,000	£35,000	£35,000	£35,000	£35,000	£35,000	£35,000
Fire alarm servicing	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000
Internal decoration	£70,000	£70,000	£70,000	£70,000	£70,000	£70,000	£70,000	£70,000	£70,000	£70,000
Gas central heating servicing	£250,000	£250,000	£250,000	£250,000	£250,000	£250,000	£250,000	£250,000	£250,000	£250,000

Grand Total	£4,031,500	£4,026,500	£4,021,500	£3,923,700	£3,918,700	£3,913,700	£3,908,700	£3,878,700	£3,873,700	£3,868,700
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Total Planned & Cyclical Costs £39,365,400

ACTION PLANS

APPENDIX 13

ACTION PLAN FOR RENT ACCOUNTING

No.	Objective	Activity	Target Date	Lead Officer
1.	Rent assessment	Agree IT solution in principle for implementation of new rent structure	September 2001	Gordon Ballantyne
		Calculate draft target rents for each property.	July 2001	Gordon Ballantyne
		Produce revised policy for rent setting, including scope for local discretion, effect of improvements, and valuation disputes, consulting with tenants as necessary.	December 2001	Gordon Ballantyne
		Prepare implementation plan, including phasing-in arrangements.	February 2002	Gordon Ballantyne
	Rent Payment Methods		Continuous	
2		Promote take up of direct debit payments	Continuous	Gordon Ballantyne
		Investigate and implement alternatives ways for tenants to pay rent.		Gordon Ballantyne
	Former Tenant Balances		Continuous	
	Rent Accounting			Gordon Ballantyne
3	Right to Buy	Maximise the effectiveness of monitoring and recovery procedures for former tenant balances.	Continuous	
		Provide and efficient and effective rent accounting service.	Continuous	Gordon Ballantyne
5		Administer the RTB scheme in accordance with statutory guidance and in accordance with Council policy		Gordon Ballantyne

ACTION PLAN FOR CENTRAL CONTROL AND LIFELINE SERVICE

Number	Objective	Activity	Target	Officer
1	Undertake satisfaction surveys in connection with the central control and lifeline service	Establish customer's views on the service provision	Dec 31 2001	Steve Aplin Jane Wheeler
2	User group for lifeline customers	Develop and improve, relationships with customers and at the same time measure their satisfaction	March 31 2002	Jane Wheeler
3	Comparisons with others	Carry our Bench Marking Exercises with other CCLL service providers	March 31 2002	Sue Reynolds Steve Aplin Jane Wheeler
4	Business Plan	Up date the plan including a demographic projection of the elderly and vulnerable clients within the NF	March 31 2003	Sue Reynolds
5	ISO9002	Consider the value of the Quality System	March 31 2002	Sue Reynolds
6	Partnership	Consider the value of working in partnership with other emergency alarm providers as part of the Best Value Process	March 31 2002	Sue Reynolds

7	Power to Promote Well Being	Examine the possibility of expanding the service whilst remaining within the constraints of the LGA 2000	March 2001	Dave Brown Sue Reynolds
8	Future of the service	Considering all the above draw up an action plan looking at all the future options for the service	March 31 2001	Dave Brown Sue Reynolds Steve Aplin Jane Wheeler
9	Service Charge	Compare the service charge payable by NFDC tenants with that of other landlords		
10	Surplus	Consider the possibility of reducing the CC service charge element paid by the tenants, by using the surplus made by the service		

ACTION PLAN FOR SHELTERED HOUSING SERVICES

No	Objective	Activity	Target Date	Lead Officer
1	Undertake a tenant satisfaction survey.	Establish the customers opinions and views on the current and future services	Evaluate the responses by and draw up action plan based on the results 31 June 2001.	Sue Reynolds Focus Group
2	Warden service review	To meet the new trends in the service which will reflect the changes in modern working practices.	March 2003	Sue Reynolds
		In conjunction with the focus group and other employees re-write the job description and consider a change in name for wardens.	31 December 2001	Sue Reynolds Jane Wheeler Focus Group
		Consider resident warden living off site	31 March 2002	
		Promote the value of the service to SSD and Health		
		In conjunction with the above activities write Code of Practice for the service.		
		Re-write wardens handbook	Sue Reynolds	

<u>No</u>	<u>Objective</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Target Date</u>	<u>Lead Officer</u>
3	Effective long term planning for sheltered housing	Review Cat 2 ½ schemes; consider reducing the warden service provision.	31 December 2001	
4	Equity in priority for housing elderly.	Review the categories of sheltered housing including criteria/ priority of applicants on waiting list.		Sue Reynolds
		Consider national standards for sheltered housing		
		Older persons strategy		Simon Maggs
		Survey all schemes re the frailty of the tenants to enable us to plan the future service provider		Sue Reynolds
5	Improve the quality of sheltered housing	Produce and implement planned maintenance programme for upgrading schemes, ensuring they meet modern standards and accessibility.	On going	Graham Prentice Sue Reynolds
		Produce and implement programme for upgrading emergency alarm equipment in schemes.		Graham Prentice Sue Reynolds Steve Aplin

No	Objective	Activity	Target Date	Lead Officer
		Explore the potential of remodelling less popular difficult to let schemes for alternative use.		
		Compare our sheltered housing with that of RSLs to ensure are we the best providers of the service.		
6	Changing needs of the elderly	To meet the changing needs of the older persons, as more people are staying in their own homes, consider offering the warden service to non-sheltered council tenants.		Sue Reynolds
7	Employee and Training and Development	Draw up a training plan for all staff, including all wardens attaining NVQ Level 3 – Promoting Independence within 5 years.		Sue Reynolds
8	Promotional Literature	Update Sheltered Housing leaflet in consultation with Housing Management.		Sue Reynolds
		Produce scheme brochures/users guides for all sheltered housing schemes.		Sue Reynolds Wardens

ACTION PLAN FOR ESTATE MANAGEMENT SERVICES

No.	Item	Activity	Target Date	Lead Officer
1.	Estate management	<p>Increase housing officer presence and proactivity on estates by :</p> <p>Submitting report to Members for the approval of two additional admin support posts</p> <p>Write job descriptions and assess grades through the Councils imbucon(grading) system</p> <p>Advertise and recruit new members of staff</p> <p>Establish new performance indicators for monitoring estate conditions and set up system to record information</p> <p>Using information from the Tenants Survey set up an ongoing programme of joint estate walkabouts with tenants on larger estates</p> <p>Investigate Locality based working</p>	<p>June 2001</p> <p>July 2001</p> <p>September 2001</p> <p>?</p> <p>October 2001</p> <p>March 31 2002</p>	<p>Dave Brown</p> <p>Tracy Smythe</p> <p>Tracy Smythe</p> <p>Tracy Smythe</p> <p>Tracy Smythe</p> <p>Dave Brown</p>
2.	Home working	Undertake 6 month trial of one housing officer homeworking to assess the efficiency of service delivery in this way	June 2001 – November 2001	Tracy Smythe
3.	Rent arrears	<p>Continue to provide an effective rent arrears recovery service through the consistent achievement of the agreed performance indicators and by continual improvement through the identification of best practice</p> <p>Evaluate the response from the tenants survey to the implementation of rent free weeks</p>	<p>continuous</p> <p>?</p>	<p>Tracy Smythe</p> <p>?</p>
4.	Information technology	Evaluate the Orchard software for operating a computerised mutual exchange register	?	Chris Haws/Tracy Smythe

		Implement the computerised mutual exchange register	?	Tracy Smythe
		Evaluate computer software for the case management of tenancy breaches	?	Chris Haws/Tracy Smythe
		Implement a suitable computerised system for the case management and statistical monitoring of tenancy breaches	?	Tracy Smythe
5.	Tenancy conditions	Conduct a full review of the existing tenancy conditions to ensure that they are clear, robust and realistic.	by April 2003	Tracy Smythe
		Review and reprint all information leaflets contained in the tenants handbook	December 2001	Tracy Smythe
6.	Void management	Investigate proposals to reduce void times including mid week lettings and reducing pre occupation works	?	Dave Brown
		Evaluate the benefits of new tenant follow up property inspections to ascertain the cost effectiveness in continuing them	October 2001	Dave Brown
		Complete the review of the tenancy sign up procedure including the feasibility of on site sign ups	December 2001	Julie Lelean
7.	Introductory tenancies	Investigate the implementation of an introductory tenancy regime	?	?
8.	Staff training	Produce individual and team training plans to ensure a competent and quality workforce is maintained	continuous	Tracy Smythe
9.	Abandoned vehicles	Complete the review of the procedure for dealing with abandoned vehicles on housing estates with the aim of reducing our costs in this area	March 2002	Tracy Smythe
10.	Grounds maintenance	A working group including officers and tenants to review the specification for grounds maintenance for the next contract commencing in January 2002	January 2002	Dave Brown
		Identify non developable areas of housing land which	continuous	

		can be used for environmental improvements to enhance the appearance of estates		
11.	Cleaning of communal areas	Review the cleaning service/charging arrangements for blocks of general needs flats	March 2003	
12.	Policy and procedures	Update the section policy and procedure manual in accordance with emerging changes due to legislation and best practice	continuous	Tracy Smythe
13.	Joint working	Continue to work closely with all of our stakeholders and other agencies both internal and external i.e. Tenants & Residents, Community Safety Officer, Divided We Fall partners, Floating Support to maintain our estates and the quality of life for the residents on those estates to a high standard	continuous	Tracy Smythe

ACTION PLAN FOR REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE SERVICES

No.	Service	Activity	Target Date	Lead Officer
1	Reactive Maintenance	To ensure that we continue to provide a reactive maintenance service to a high standard, with high customers standards and within budget	Continuous	Roger Stockley
		Develop partnering agreements for day to day maintenance with in-house and external contractors	June 2003	Graham Prentice
		Agree IT solutions to allow electronic connection to external contractors	November 2002	Graham Prentice
		Ensure urgent category orders are kept to 20%	Continuous	Roger Stockley
2	Planned Maintenance	Continue to ensure that the planned maintenance programmes are carried out in a professional manner, to a good standard and with high customer standards	Continuous	Kevin Gould
		Introduce the new planned maintenance staffing structure and ensure resources are maintained at a sufficient level to complete the programme	Continuous	Kevin Gould
		Develop partnering agreements with external contractors	Continuous	Graham Prentice
		Continue with the pilot partnering projects with New Forest Commercial Services	March 2002	Graham Prentice
		Evaluate new planned maintenance software package	November 2001	Graham Prentice
3	Leasehold Flats	Develop a comprehensive leasehold manual	May 2002	Graham Prentice
4	Programme development	Continue to test and implement the new codeman package		Graham Prentice
		Produce a new 10 year programme with the latest available	April 2002	Graham Prentice

		information from codeman Redesign our budget information to reflect the new categories of work		Graham Prentice
5	Garages	Maintain regular inspections of all garage sites and review the programme of improvements	Continuous	Roger Stockley
6	Stock Condition Surveys	Develop a survey form to hold block details	November 2001	Graham Prentice
		Re-design stock condition survey form to incorporate additional information required for the MRA	March 2002	Graham Prentice
7	Asbestos	Ensure that the asbestos register is kept up to date	Continuous	Kevin Gould
		Start a programme of asbestos sampling to void properties	Continuous	Kevin Gould
8	Party Wall	Develop the party surveyor role to possibly generate an income for the section	Continuous	Kevin Gould

ACTION PLAN FOR THE TENANT PARTICIPATION DISTRICT COMPACT

ITEM	DETAIL	AGREED OUTCOME	DATE FOR COMPLETION	PROJECT LEADER	OTHERS INVOLVED	COMMENTS
To review the Housing Committee Budget.	To inform tenants and seek their views.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enable tenants to influence the budget. 	By December each year.	Kathy Blatchford	Kevin Green	The Finance Working Group met in October (training) and December (rent setting)
Review the Housing Strategy	To seek tenant views during the course of preparation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tenants are informed about the strategy and able to influence its preparation. 	By July each year.	Nick Cross.	Kathy Blatchford and Development team.	Housing Strategy Working Group meeting 6/3/01 to discuss next years Housing Strategy
Consult	Seek views of tenants and residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All tenants given time to comment and comments considered by Compact Committee (along with residents) 	30 November 2000	Kathy Blatchford	Tenant reps Housing employees Housing Committee	4 page article printed in Autumn edition of Round The Houses
Implement and monitor	Sign compact and review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All views considered following consultation. Monitor and review following consultation. 	31 Dec 2000.	Kathy Blatchford	Tenant reps Housing Committee Compact Committee	
Minimum requirements	Prepare the 2 statements and action plan required by the DETR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Council statement outlining review of tenant participation arrangements. A joint statement on the expected outcomes of the Compact. A jointly agreed action plan to meet these outcomes . 	31 March 2000	Kathy Blatchford	Housing employees Tenant reps. Compact Committee.	Report to March Housing Committee and Tenant Liaison meeting to discuss on 7.3.00. Completed.
Survey	A survey of all tenants	Analysis of tenants views and encouraging more tenants to get involved.	30 December 2000	Kathy Blatchford	Housing employees Compact Committee.	Consider resources available i.e. financial, staff/IT for collating. Editorial team nominated as a sub group. Survey sent out November 2000. Reminders sent. Currently cleansing and inputting data before analysing.
Best Practice	Examples of Best Practice from around the Country	Discussion of examples with Compact Committee Implement agreed examples	Ongoing. Initial discussion by 30 April 2000	Kathy Blatchford	Housing employees Compact Committee.	Consider resources, realistic implementation. 1066, Weymouth & Portland and Eastleigh have attended. Contact Testway.
Role of Tenant Participation Officer	How best to use TPO's time	TPO focused on major issues and guided by customers.	31 March 2001	Nick Cross/ Kathy Blatchford	Tenant reps	Additional resources requested.

<i>ITEM</i>	<i>DETAIL</i>	<i>AGREED OUTCOME</i>	<i>DATE FOR COMPLETION</i>	<i>PROJECT LEADER</i>	<i>OTHERS INVOLVED</i>	<i>COMMENTS</i>
<i>Room for representatives</i>	<i>To provide a room at Appletree Court to hold meetings, base TPO, and use as a resource room.</i>	<i>Cllr Droogleever to raise the issue of room space.</i>	<i>30 December 2000.</i>	<i>Nick Cross Kathy Blatchford</i>	<i>Cllr Droogleever</i>	<i>Reply received from Cllr Greenfield</i>
<i>Review TP policies and procedures</i>	<i>Draft a Tenant Participation Strategy.</i>	<i>Policies and procedures deliver customer expectations</i>	<i>31 March 2001</i>	<i>Kathy Blatchford</i>	<i>Tenant reps Housing employees Housing Committee</i>	
<i>Review budget and resources for tenant participation</i>	<i>Seek views of tenant representatives.</i>	<i>Resources guided by customers.</i>	<i>31 March 2001</i>	<i>Kathy Blatchford</i>	<i>Tenant reps Compact Committee</i>	

HOUSING - NATIONAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Appendix 14

Description	Ref	NFDC 2000/1 At a glance	NFDC Actual 1999/00
HOUSING			
Satisfaction of tenants of council housing with the overall service provided by their landlord	BV 74		
The sample size was 1970, with a confidence interval of + or - 1.38%			
Satisfaction of tenants of council housing with opportunities for participation in management and decision making in relation to housing services provided by their landlord	BV75		
The sample size was 1645, with a confidence interval of + or - 2.11%			
HOUSING NEEDS			
Does the authority follow the Commission for Racial Equality's Code of Practice in rented housing?	AC D1 (AC B4)	☺	YES
The average time taken to relet dwellings available for letting or awaiting minor repairs	BV 68 (AC B3)	☺	
Well within Government's target of 25 days for 204/05. Continually looking to improve performance			
The percentage of lettings to new tenants arranged by the council to homeless households	(AC B1a)		26%
The percentage of dwellings that are empty and available for letting or awaiting minor repairs	(AC B2a)		0.6%
The percentage of dwellings that are empty but not available for letting	(AC B2b)	☺	0.04%
HOUSING DEVELOPMENT			
Energy Efficiency - the average annual change in the average SAP rating of local authority owned dwellings	BV 70		
HOUSING MAINTENANCE			
The number of local authority dwellings receiving renovation work during 2000/01 as a proportion of the number needing renovation work at 1 April 2000.	BV71		
Major future investment into repairs of council homes. Significantly improve the quality of homes.			
a) less than £5000			
b) There are no renovation works greater than £5000 undertaken in 2000/01 or planned in 2001/02			
The percentage of relevant repairs completed within government time limits	BV 72 (AC B5)	☺	94%
The average time taken to complete non-urgent responsive repairs	BV 73		
The percentage of repair jobs for which an appointment was both made and kept by the authority	AC D2 (AC B6)	☺	8.2%
HOUSING RENT			
The percentage of all current tenants owing over 13 weeks' rent at 31 March 2000, excluding those owing less than £250	AC D3 (AC B8)		
NFDC figures do not include the recovery of benefit overpayments.			
The average weekly costs per dwelling for Management	BV 65a (AC B9a)	☺	£12.36
The average weekly costs per dwelling for repairs	BV 65b (AC B9b)	☺	£17.03
The average weekly costs per dwelling for rent rebates	(AC B9c)		£31.84
The average weekly costs per dwelling, for capital charges and other items, net	(AC B9d)		£4.63
The average weekly costs per dwelling of Government subsidy	(AC B9a)		-£12.74
Average rent per dwelling	(AC B9f)	☹	£53.12
The rent collected as a percentage of the rent due	BV 66a (AC B7)	☹	99.4%
Reduction results from change in method of calculation. No reduction in performance has occurred since 1999/00			
Rent arrears of current tenants as a proportion of the authority's rent roll	BV 66b		
Rent written off as not collectable as a proportion of the authority's rent roll	BV 66c		
The percentage of rent lost through properties being empty	BV 69 (AC B11)	☺	1.1%

National District Quartile Range 1999/00	National District Average 1999/00	National District Median 1999/00	NFDC Target 2000/01	NFDC Forecast 2000/01	NFDC Target 2001/020
				89%	Next survey in 2003/04
				74%	Next survey in 2003/04
	YES = 52%	YES	YES	YES	YES
27 - 47 days	39 days	37 days	21 days	19 days	20 days
9 - 34%	23%	20%			
0.6 - 1.6%	1.2%	1.1%			
0.1 - 0.6%	0.5%	0.3%			
				-0.03	Maintain existing levels
			6.07%	6.07% a)6.07 b)0	17.24% a)17.24% b)0
84% - 96%	89%	92%	95%	95%	96%
			28 days	23 days	< 28 days
0 - 8%	14%	0%	7%	7%	
1.9 - 4.4%	3.3%	3.1%	1.8%	1.8%	Less than 1.8%
£7.31 - £10.44	£9.04		£13.39	£13.33	£14.04
9.69 - £13.02	£11.55		£17.95	£18.97	£25.65
19.04 - £25.47	£22.17				
£2.07 - £9.64	£5.69				
-£11.07 - £1.41	- £6.46				
£36.82 - £46.30	£41.73				
97.7 - 99.8%	98.6%	99%	100%	97.5%	97.5%
The NFDC figures do not include the recovery of benefit overpayments					
			< 2%	1.3%	< 1.5%
			0.4%	0.3%	0.4%
1.1 - 2.1%	1.8%	1.6%	1.1%	0.7%	1%

APPENDIX 15

New Forest District Council Housing Revenue Account - Financial Forecasting Model

	2000/01 ESTIMATE £	2000/01 REVISED £	2001/02 ESTIMATE £	2002/03 ESTIMATE £	2003/04 ESTIMATE £	2004/05 ESTIMATE £	2005/06 ESTIMATE £
Income							
Dwelling Rents	16,062,000	15,989,000	16,234,430	16,962,160	18,013,520	19,105,440	21,437,890
Non Dwelling Rents							
- Garages	375,000	385,270	394,670	403,810	412,960	422,080	431,200
- Land and Buildings	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,750	31,519	32,307	33,115
Charges for Services & Facilities	1,046,000	1,054,040	1,078,670	1,107,070	1,136,350	1,164,960	1,194,840
Contributions towards Expenditure	221,270	226,080	235,280	241,162	247,191	253,371	259,705
Other							
- Sales Administration Recharge	104,890	110,360	112,670	117,331	122,187	127,247	132,520
- Shared Amenities Contribution	76,000	84,000	84,000	86,663	89,143	91,701	94,339
Government Subsidies							
- Rent Rebates	9,343,860	9,047,620	9,281,800	9,582,190	9,727,140	10,264,650	10,704,210
- Housing	(5,999,846)	(5,877,638)	(6,672,397)	(7,571,737)	(8,360,390)	(9,228,104)	(10,059,748)
- Major Repairs Allowance	0	0	3,091,145	3,002,221	2,917,471	2,834,140	2,752,212
- Housing Benefit Transfers	70,973	67,425	69,785	73,578	77,577	84,481	95,763
Total Income	21,330,147	21,116,157	23,940,053	24,035,198	24,414,668	25,152,273	27,076,046
Expenditure							
Supervision & Management							
- General Management	2,830,330	2,746,160	2,934,720	3,027,759	3,114,411	3,203,764	3,295,911
- Special Services	907,050	900,530	897,620	925,138	953,562	982,925	1,013,258
- Homeless Assistance	71,920	61,900	71,720	73,520	75,366	77,258	79,198
- Sale of Council Properties	105,760	111,660	113,540	118,237	123,130	128,229	133,543
Repairs and Maintenance							
- Contribution to Major Repairs	0	0	2,311,000	2,368,775	2,427,994	2,488,694	2,550,911
- Planned / Cyclical	2,557,000	2,557,000	722,000	740,050	758,551	777,515	796,953
- Disabled Facilities	320,000	235,000	328,000	336,200	344,605	353,220	362,051
- Reactive	2,269,000	2,119,000	2,172,000	2,226,300	2,281,958	2,339,007	2,397,482
Rents, Rates and Taxes	22,160	21,900	22,490	23,839	25,269	26,785	28,392
Rent Rebates							

- General	10,112,080	9,737,330	9,875,120	10,411,840	10,981,720	11,965,640	13,573,480
- Local Scheme	70,973	67,425	69,785	73,578	77,577	84,481	95,763
Capital Charges							
- Interest	0	0	5,032,200	5,032,200	5,032,200	5,032,200	5,032,200
- Depreciation	0	0	3,091,145	3,002,221	2,917,471	2,834,140	2,752,212
- Debt Management Expenses	53,612	58,360	53,070	55,352	57,732	60,215	62,804
Provision for Bad Debt	30,000	30,000	30,000	31,345	33,288	35,306	39,616
Total Expenditure	19,349,885	18,646,265	27,724,410	28,446,354	29,204,834	30,389,379	32,213,774
Net Cost of Services	(1,980,262)	(2,469,892)	3,784,357	4,411,156	4,790,166	5,237,106	5,137,728
Capital Charges - Interest	0	0	(5,032,200)	(5,032,200)	(5,032,200)	(5,032,200)	(5,032,200)
Loan Charges - Interest	1,324,343	1,329,143	1,047,549	762,175	502,312	212,434	(32,822)
Amortised Premiums and Discounts	326,673	326,673	326,673	326,673	326,673	326,673	296,875
Interest Receivable							
- Mortgage Interest	(36,260)	(45,972)	(35,794)	(26,234)	(18,759)	(13,042)	(9,172)
- Balances Interest	(107,881)	(146,055)	(179,421)	(302,947)	(365,386)	(421,765)	(503,491)
Net Operating Expenditure	(473,387)	(1,006,103)	(88,836)	138,623	202,806	309,206	(143,082)
Appropriations							
Appropriation relevant to depreciation and MRA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Housing Set Aside	378,835	361,111	286,462	217,773	150,873	85,788	22,321
Revenue Contribution to Capital	500,000	500,000	100,000	102,500	105,063	107,690	110,382
(Surplus) / Deficit	405,448	(144,992)	297,626	458,896	458,742	502,684	(10,379)
General Reserves as at 31 March	2,321,125	1,744,326	2,466,117	2,168,491	1,709,595	1,250,853	748,169
							758,548

New Forest District Council

Business Plan Assumptions

Operating Account

(expressed in money terms)

		Income					Expenditure							
Year	Year	Net Rent Income £,000	Other Income £,000	Misc Income £,000	HRA Subsidy £,000	Total Income £,000	Managt. £,000	Deprec'n £,000	Maint. £,000	Cost of Capital £,000	Other Expenses £,000	Cost of Rent Rebates £,000	Misc Expenses £,000	Surplus to be Redistrib. £,000
1	2001.02	17,309	476	640	0	18,424	(3,419)	(3,091)	(2,922)	(4,400)	(362)	(593)	(153)	(3,568)
2	2002.03	18,006	488	656	0	19,150	(3,504)	(3,101)	(2,930)	(4,420)	(372)	(643)	(157)	(4,532)
3	2003.04	18,748	500	672	0	19,920	(3,592)	(3,109)	(2,939)	(4,438)	(381)	(694)	(160)	(5,688)
4	2004.05	20,116	512	689	0	21,317	(3,682)	(3,121)	(2,947)	(4,455)	(390)	(968)	(165)	(6,731)
5	2005.06	20,556	525	706	0	21,787	(3,709)	(3,133)	(2,954)	(4,470)	(400)	(893)	(169)	(7,776)

A BLACK AND MINORITY ETHNIC HOUSING STRATEGY

INTRODUCTION

New Forest District Council has a minority ethnic population, of 0.7% according to 1991 census statistics, compared with an average of 1.72% across Hampshire. Statistics from the same source indicate that people from minority ethnic backgrounds in Hampshire are more likely to be unemployed or long term sick, and more likely to be at the lower end of the wage scale if employed.

The purpose of this strategy is to ensure that New Forest as a landlord, as a provider of services and as an enabler of new housing, recognises the need to ensure that all its policies reflect this local need and promote race equality and equal opportunities. The fact that the minority ethnic population is so small highlights the need for the Council to be aware of the need not to isolate this part of the community by ignoring the fact that it exists.

RELATED STRATEGIES

It is important that this strategy is placed in context. The Minority Ethnic Housing strategy is part of the overall Housing Strategy. As with most of the documents relating to the Housing Strategy, the Minority Ethnic Housing Strategy has key links with the following documents

- **The Social Inclusion Strategy**
- **The Health Strategy**
- **The Crime and Disorder Strategy**
- **The Best Value Framework**
- **The Customer Consultation Strategy**
- **The Older Persons Strategy**
- **The Single Persons Strategy**

OBJECTIVES

New Forest has identified the following objectives

- **To promote race equality in access to housing**
- **To promote race equality in service delivery and access to services in social housing**
- **To promote equal opportunities as part of the Best Value service reviews**
- **To use the Housing Partnership Agreement and the Joint Housing Register to collate data to monitor Registered Social Landlord RSL allocations and service delivery**
- **To work with RSLs to develop joint working arrangements to achieve the objectives of this strategy**

Details of how these objectives are to be met follows.

IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGY

ACCESS TO HOUSING

The Council adheres to the Commission for Racial Equality's guidance, 'Code of Practice for Rented Housing'. Analysis of the Joint Housing Register is undertaken annually and reported to the Housing Portfolio Performance and Review panel. The analysis looks at data concerning the waiting, transfer and homelessness lists. It also looks at allocations to the Councils own stock, and at nominations to RSL stock and the results from Best Value performance indicator 164.

PROMOTING RACE EQUALITY IN SERVICE DELIVERY AND ACCESS TO SERVICES

In terms of ensuring that applicants can access the Joint Housing Register, the Council will translate into any language on request. This service is also available for all key Housing Services documents, forms and strategies. 'Language Line', a simultaneous telephone translation service, is available on demand to all housing services customers.

Equal opportunities are a high priority for the Council. All Council staff receive training in equal opportunities. As part of this training awareness is raised and any issues arising dealt with.

Tenant representatives have all received equal opportunities training. In addition to this all Tenant associations and consultative groups have a commitment to equal opportunities written into their constitutions.

The Macpherson Inquiry highlighted the need for support for vulnerable victims and the need to include strategies for dealing with racial harassment. In terms of delivering public housing services, race equality is promoted in the Equal Opportunities Policy (appendix) and the Racial Harassment Policy (appendix), the latter being a key objective of the Crime and Disorder Strategy.

The private sector housing service covering areas such as the allocation of Home improvement and Disabled Facilities Grants, does not currently collect data on ethnicity linked to unfitness or grant applications. The next comprehensive survey of stock in the private sector is not expected to be before 2003, however minority ethnic monitoring will be included at that time. The Housing Needs and Market Assessment, which will be completed in 2001, will collect data on ethnicity, racial harassment and the housing needs of the New Forest's BME communities. This assessment will help inform future Housing Strategies. In the mean time to ensure that grants are allocated fairly, the Housing Services will introduce monitoring along similar lines to that currently used on the Joint Housing Register.

TO PROMOTE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AS PART OF THE BEST VALUE SERVICE REVIEWS

The key to Best Value is fundamental service reviews. Key to the success of the service reviews is the Council's commitment to actively seeking customer involvement. In terms of equal opportunities the Council is keen to ensure that focus groups customer panels and Tenant associations are truly representative of the communities we serve.

The Council will ensure that all groups are represented in the Best Value service reviews by profiling all customer groups.

In terms of the Tenant Compact, the Council will be adhering to the Department of the Environment's guidance on the development of Compacts as detailed in appendix F Good Practice Indicator 6 in terms of

- Encouraging involvement and representation by all groups
- Training to raise awareness of race equality
- Monitoring levels of involvement
- Involving Tenants in reviewing equality strategies.

TO USE THE HOUSING PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT AND THE JOINT HOUSING REGISTER TO COLLATE DATA TO MONITOR REGISTERED SOCIAL LANDLORD (RSL) ALLOCATIONS AND SERVICE DELIVERY

Commitment to equal opportunities is one of the essential components of the Housing Partnership Agreement. In addition to the monitoring undertaken with the Joint Housing Register, the Council will ask RSLs for this type of information on all lettings. The Council will also ask RSLs

- To monitor incidences of racial harassment, in line with our own policies.
- To take positive action to support victims of racial harassment
- To ensure that their key documents and forms are available in a number of languages on request
- To ensure that relevant surveys and questionnaires have questions on race and ethnicity to assess whether some groups are receiving a less satisfactory service than others
- To actively seek the views of all groups in the community on whether the service is meeting their needs and asking how they feel the service can be improved
- To work in partnership with the Council in developing the above

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

'The Council is positively committed to equal opportunities in service delivery. To uphold this commitment housing services will...

- **Ensure that relevant surveys and questionnaires have questions on race and ethnicity to assess whether some groups are receiving a less satisfactory service than others**
- **Remove racist graffiti within 24 hours**
- **Pursue eviction of Tenants who breach their tenancy agreement by racially harassing their neighbours**
- **Supporting the victims of racial harassment by a range of measures including the provision of additional security measures and re-housing if necessary**
- **Actively seeking the views of all groups in the community on whether the service is meeting their needs and asking how they feel the service can be improved**

RACIAL HARASSMENT POLICY

New Forest's policy is to always ensure that both employees and the public are treated fairly irrespective of their colour, race, sex, sexual, orientation, age or youth, religion, political beliefs, trade union membership or non-membership, marital, physical and mental status or any other factors including pregnancy and maternity.

- **Objective – to provide relevant support to the victim of racial harassment and, where possible, take action against the perpetrators**
- **The Council is committed to monitoring all incidences of racial harassment, the definition of a racist incident being any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victims or any other person.**

Implementation Plan

Aim	Objective	Comment
To Consult on the BME strategy	To ensure that all relevant groups are given the opportunity to be involved with the overall formulation of the strategy including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Housing Corporation • The Government Offices for the South East • Local RSLs • Social Services • The Police • The Health Authority and Health Care Trust • Tenants groups • The Council for Racial Equality • Neighbouring Local Authorities 	This is to be achieved by the end of December 2001.
To ensure equality of opportunity in access to housing	To monitor applications on the Joint Housing Register	At the end of the financial year
	To monitor the types and areas of housing allocated to BME applicants	At the end of the financial year
To promote race equality in access to services	To ensure all staff receive regular training on equal opportunities and are sensitive to BME issues	On going
	To continue to promote the Language Line Service	On going
To Promote Race Equality in Service Delivery	To consult on and publish the Housing Equal Opportunities Policy	
	To consult on and publish the Racial Harassment Policy	

Aim	Objective	Target
To promote race equality in service		On going

delivery (cont).		
	To ensure commitment to equal opportunities in Tenant associations and consultative groups	On going
	To introduce monitoring for private sector grant applications	Ongoing
To promote race equality as part of the Best Value Service Reviews	To ensure focus groups and customer panels are representative in terms of ethnicity, age gender etc.	On going
To promote race equality in terms of Tenant Compacts	To encourage involvement and representation by all groups	Ongoing
	To monitor levels of BME involvement	Ongoing
	To involve Tenants in reviewing equality strategies	Ongoing
To use the Housing Partnership Agreement and the JOINT HOUSING REGISTER to monitor RSL allocations and service delivery	To monitor incidences of racial harassment and actions taken To monitor access to housing To monitor access to services To monitor customer involvement	

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES STATEMENT FOR THE PROVISION OF ALL SERVICES

The Council is committed to equality of opportunity for all and to removing barriers to equal opportunity. The Council fully recognises and accepts its responsibility to ensure that there is no discrimination. All individuals will be treated fairly and equally on the grounds of gender, marital status, race, religion, colour, age, disability or sexual orientation.

Relevant legislation will be complied with, in the provision of its services, and in arrangements for access to facilities and information.

The Council will ensure that:

- **All staff are trained to provide an appropriate and informed response to all service users without unlawful discrimination.**
- **Recruitment and selection methods are free from bias and applied fairly.**
- **Any complaints of discrimination are dealt with speedily and fairly.**
- **Confidentiality of information is maintained at all times**

To uphold this commitment, Housing Services staff will

- Ensure that confidential interviewing facilities are available on request
- Treat confidential information such as medical details with the utmost sensitivity
- Make available a translation service through 'Language Line', immediately on the phone.
- Make sure that disabled residents are told about our ability to make home visits.
- Be aware that some people have reading and writing difficulties. We will always be willing to read documents to residents and to complete forms so that they only have to sign them.
- Make available key documents on tape.
- **Ensure relevant surveys and questionnaires have questions on race, sex and disability in order to assess whether some groups are receiving a less satisfactory service than others.**
- **Remove racist or sexist graffiti within 24 hours from our properties.**
- **Pursue the eviction of Tenants who breach their tenancy agreement by racially or sexually harassing their neighbours.**
- **Support the victims of racial or sexual harassment and domestic violence by a range of measures including provision of additional security measures and re-housing if necessary.**

- **Actively seek the views of all groups in the community on whether the service is meeting their needs and asking how they feel the service can be improved.**

If you feel that you have been treated unfairly or suffered harassment because of your gender, marital status, race, religion, colour, age, disability or sexual orientation, you are urged to report this to us.

Any such complaints will be fully investigated as speedily as possible, and you will be kept advised of action taken.

If you are dissatisfied with any decision, you have the right to use the Council's formal Complaints Procedure (see details below), and to take the matter up with the appropriate external body.

NEW FOREST HOUSING SERVICES

See also Allocations, Homelessness, Nuisance and Harassment and the Tenancy Agreement

DEFINITION OF A RACIAL INCIDENT

A racist incident is any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person".'

GENERAL

This Racial Harassment Policy applies to racial harassment involving the Council's Tenants and/or any members of their household.

The objective is to provide relevant support for the victim of racial harassment and, where possible, to take action against the perpetrators. To achieve this objective there is regular liaison with the Police, other agencies (as appropriate) and representatives of minority ethnic groups.

The Council's overriding consideration when dealing with cases of racial harassment is the safety and peace of mind of the victim and the victim's household.

It is Council policy to encourage victims of racial harassment to remain in their own homes with a package of supportive measures. A transfer on racial harassment grounds can be requested. Alternatively, victims of racial harassment can apply for assistance under the homelessness provisions of the 1996 Housing Act.

The decision as to whether a case is one of racial harassment rests in the first instance with the victim. This however does not preclude the evidence of 3rd parties in that assessment.

The Council is committed to the monitoring of all incidences of racial harassment.

SUPPORT FOR THE VICTIM

Every effort will be made to substantiate the victims account of racial harassment independently, whilst recognising that the absence of evidence should not preclude either the provision of temporary accommodation or permanent re-housing. Such decisions will be based on the balance of probability that the perpetrator(s) intended to act on racially motivated grounds.

Interviews will be confidential and conducted in private in a sympathetic manner and interpreting services will be made available where requested.

In response to a report of racial harassment, victims will be offered the option of a home visit

- **within 24 hours (or the first working day after the report where the report was made out of office hours) if the incident involves violence or threats of violence**
- **within 5 working days for other incidents**

All physical damage to Council property attributable to racial harassment (including racist graffiti) will be made good within 24 hours.

Where the victim wishes to remain in their own home, the Council will provide support and assistance. This could include the provision of security measures such as the installation of spy holes, secure letterboxes and window locks, and/or community alarm, or other measures as deemed appropriate.

Where a transfer on grounds of racial harassment is agreed it will be dealt with as a high priority.

ACTION AGAINST THE PERPETRATORS

When possible legal action will be taken against the perpetrator of racial harassment. This will only be done with the victim's agreement. To achieve this the Council will work closely with the Police.

The Council will give every possible support to the victim and witnesses.

Where the perpetrator of racial harassment is a Council Tenant or a member of a Tenant's household, the Council will use all legal remedies available to it to address the issue, including taking steps to regain possession of the perpetrators' home.

Applications from perpetrators on the Joint Housing Register will be suspended from the list for a minimum of one year in line with current procedures on the suspension of applicants from the Joint Housing Register for anti-social behaviour.

EMPTY PROPERTY AND PRIVATE SECTOR STRATEGY

INTRODUCTION

The 1999 Urban Task Force report *Towards and Urban Renaissance* brought into focus the challenges and opportunities presented by empty properties nationwide. The report recognised the importance of recycling existing buildings and proposed that every local authority maintain an empty property strategy.

The 2000 Urban White Paper re-emphasised the problems caused for the community by empty properties and also that they represent a wasted resource. As greenfield sites become more scarce, so the eye must turn to the possibilities presented by brownfield land that is poorly used.

New Forest District Council has had an empty property strategy since 1995, and employs a dedicated empty property officer. It is committed to maximising the number of properties brought back into beneficial use. Its strategy has resulted in almost 700 properties being re-used.

In recent years the benefits that re-used properties can offer in terms of providing shorter term accommodation for those in housing need, as an alternative to bed and breakfast, or other less suitable forms of accommodation, have been capitalised on and this revised strategy adopts this wider perspective.

The Strategy also now focuses more strongly than it has in the past at the opportunities that may be presented by empty commercial properties

This strategy outlines New Forest District Council's commitment to reducing the re-using existing empty properties, meeting local housing needs, maximising regeneration and community benefits, and reducing the demand for new building on greenfield sites. It aims to promote sustainable development and sustainable communities.

A range of organisations have been consulted on the production of this strategy

- The Empty Homes Agency
- Hampshire and Isle of Wight Empty Property forum
- Private landlords
- Planning and Economic Development
- Housing Needs
- Community Safety
- Data Protection

THE NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

The Empty Homes Agency is the National agency campaigning against the blight of Empty Property. It was launched in February 1992 and continues to maintain an increasingly high profile.

The map below shows just how successful this campaign has been – the white dots represent local authorities who operate an Empty Property Strategy.

MAP

Together with the Empty Homes Agency, New Forest District Council has been at the forefront promoting the re-use of empty property. We continue to contribute to the national perspective and promote the re-use of empty property by assisting other local authorities to set up their own strategies whilst continuing to develop our own.

The Government is promoting the re-use of property in many ways.

- Grants to improve or convert empty property
- Promoting sensible Planning through Guidance notes
- Making changes to Council Tax rules
- Capital allowances for “flats above shops”
- Reducing VAT for certain types of empty property
- Enforcement powers .

BACKGROUND

This strategy is firmly routed in the strategic aims of the over-arching Housing Strategy.

Our Empty Property and Private Sector Strategy’s objective is to make the best use of existing homes and reduce to an absolute minimum the number of empty properties and wasted spaces.

In September 1995 it was estimated that 3,800 properties were empty. In March 2001 there were 2200 properties that had been empty for 6 months or more. That is despite the large numbers of dwellings the Council has been instrumental in bringing back into use over the last 6 years.

The main reasons for properties being empty are:

- Concern about tenants and possible damage to property
- Lack of useful information re: grants etc
- Finances –either lack of money or need to keep property de-valued
- Personal desire to keep it empty

OPERATING THE EMPTY PROPERTY AND PRIVATE SECTOR STRATEGY

Our success depends on partnerships.

NATIONAL partnerships with

- **DETR** supports schemes with funding and expertise. New Forest District Council contributed in the production of a good practice guide “Wasted Rural Homes” which was funded and supported by the DETR. This guide was made available to all local authorities that were interested in rural housing.
- **Government Office for the South East.** Providing vital advice, support and information. Capital Receipts have provided funding for conversion schemes.
- **Housing Corporation.** Much of our funding is allocated by the Housing Corporation and their assistance is invaluable to our success. They advise on good practice and effective procedures. They monitor the operation of our partner Housing Associations. Our area representative attends regular meeting of the Hants and Isle of Wight Empty Property Forum to update us on important changes and consider our new ideas.
- **Empty Homes Agency.** Advises on alterations to current legislation and lobbies for changes to existing legislation or procedures. The Empty Homes Agency will listen to local authorities and bring their concerns to the attention of the Government. The Agency asks Local Authorities for specific advice. In recognition of New Forest District Council’s expertise in rural matters the Agency awarded us the “Best Rural Empty Homes Strategy “
- **National Association of Empty Property Practitioners.** This new association was launched in London on 18 May 2001. New Forest District Council’s Empty Homes Officer is a member of the Executive Committee and is deeply involved in the setting up of the Association that will promote the professionalism of those working to fill empty property. Membership of the association is open to anyone involved in empty property work – including Local Authorities, RSLs and the private sector. A comprehensive training scheme will eventually lead to recognised qualifications. An internet link will provide instant support and the ability to share skills and knowledge so encouraging Best Value.

LOCAL partnerships with

- **Private landlords and lettings agents.** We have an established Private Rented Forum that meets regularly to discuss issues affecting housing throughout the Forest.

Many private landlords and owners have used the Empty Property and Private Sector Strategy to bring their empty property back into use. Increasingly, they are finding that the schemes available through the Strategy can make the difference between the success or failure of their plans to re-use redundant property.

- **Registered Social Landlords. (RSLs)** We have partnership agreements with several local RSLs.
 - **Parish Councils** are vital to the success of the Strategy. Awareness and support are essential. Parish council members also provide local knowledge and advice on difficult schemes.

CORPORATE working is essential.

- **Members of the Council** are vital to the success of the Strategy. Council members provide local knowledge and advice on difficult schemes and their support is essential.
- **Planning Officers** provide advice and support for proposed projects and ongoing schemes. In depth local knowledge and a flexible application of planning standards in town centres have made an important contribution to the success of temporary social housing grant schemes.

Empty properties are now highlighted in the Urban Capacity study and annual retail study undertaken by the Planning Department. Co-operation between officers will present a better picture than that produced in the past.

The Local Plan also considers the Empty Property and Private Sector Strategy as a key player in the provision of housing in the New Forest.

- **Environmental Health Officers and Housing Improvement Officers** refer empty property and assist with grants to make schemes work .
- **Housing Needs** officers provide advice on local need. We work closely with each other as the Empty Property and Private Sector Strategy provides essential temporary accommodation to meet local housing need..
- **The HECA Officer** provides important information on local and national grants to provide measures to improve the level of energy efficiency.
- **The Public Relations Section** advises on publicity matters and press coverage.
- **The Benefits Section** provides assistance in promoting the Strategy and fulfilling our obligations within the various private sector schemes.
- **The Community Safety Officer** advises officers of their duty under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Void properties are a magnet for vandalism and graffiti. They can make an area feel less safe and encourage anti-social behaviour, which affects the quality of life of many.

CURRENT ACTION

Private sector

- As a direct result of information gathered from the Private Rented Forum and discussions with local agents, New Forest District Council has set up the “Access to the Private Rented Sector” scheme. This scheme provides the deposit, rent in advance and, when necessary, tops up the rent beyond housing benefit level for clients who would otherwise have been housed in bed and breakfast accommodation. An increasing number of families are making use of this scheme. As the cost of housing our clients in bed and breakfast is largely born by the Council Tax payer, the provision of good quality, alternative housing must be encouraged as this represents good value for money.

Registered Social Landlords

- We have developed very successful partnerships with local RSLs who are working to provide temporary accommodation.
- HAL – (Housing Association Leasing) is a leasing scheme which uses property in good repair. Guaranteed rent, condition and return of their property has encouraged many owners to take up the scheme.
- HAL TOP-UP. The buoyant housing market was making it difficult to increase the stock of HAL properties. Members endorsed the request to top-up the rents owners receive. This has proved to be successful and will be monitored regularly.
- Temporary Social Housing Grants are used to convert or up-grade empty property. These schemes are administered in a similar way to the HAL scheme but usually provide accommodation for a much longer period.
- RSL Purchase. A partner RSL has purchased properties for temporary accommodation. These good quality properties will be available to us long term for as long as we need them.

Energy efficiency

- The Empty Homes Officer works closely with the Council's HECA Officer in order to promote energy conservation issues. The HECA officer regularly attends the Private Rented Forum to give advice on grants and energy related matters.

Public Relations

- The Empty Homes Strategy now has a Web page on New Forest District Council's Internet site. The information will be regularly updated and reviewed as it is expected that this will become a vital tool for those requiring information on empty properties.
- A communication strategy will ensure constant promotion of the Empty Homes Campaign.
- Leaflets and posters are updated regularly to ensure up to the minute information is given.

Housing Improvement

- A scheme to upgrade poor property which has been let for many years to tenants who pay very low rent is currently under investigation. It is hoped that the tenants could be allocated suitable property using the Choice Based Lettings system. The vacant property would then be up-graded and let as Temporary accommodation to clients who would otherwise be housed in Bed and Breakfast.
- The community safety partnership can advise on crime concerns and trends and offer advice if a property is being targeted by the anti-social element.

FUTURE ACTION

The Council will continue to promote the re-use of empty or redundant property, and particularly focus on the need for temporary accommodation as a method to reduce the use of bed and breakfast accommodation.

ACTION PLAN

A statement of the action we intend to take over the coming years.

Strategy Development and Partnership

- To carry out further research into the numbers and location of empty properties and to investigate blockages to their re-use Dec 01
- To build on existing external partnerships and develop new ones Ongoing
- To research and investigate information held by directorates in respect of empty properties to increase co-operation Ongoing
- To maintain the high profile of the Strategy through the development of a communications strategy. Sept 01
- Hold a Private rented Forum twice a year. Ongoing
- Develop linkages with the private sector, including commercial owners and Chambers of Trade. In particular to promote the conversion of underused space above shops for residential purposes. Ongoing
- Review existing and investigate new initiatives for reducing homelessness, the use of bed and breakfast and the Housing Register through the use of empty and private sector properties. R
Sept 01
- Develop options for using empty properties for a range of tenures, including affordable rented, sub market rented, market rented, and ownership. Ongoing
- To contribute towards the development of best practice locally, through the Hampshire and Isle of White Empty Property Group and nationally through the NEAPP. Ongoing
- To lobby for a lifting of data protection restrictions that prevent ready access to Council Tax records by the Empty Homes Officer. Ongoing
- To research and investigate information held by directorates in respect of empty properties to see if there are opportunities for greater co-operation. Ongoing
- Take part in the Local Plan review with the aim of developing policies that assist in the conversion of under-used premises and the development of area based policies for town centres. Ongoing

- To consider the Urban Capacity Study and where possible take action to create homes out of vacant property. Dec 01
- To liaise with the Housing Needs section and target empty property for use by specific client groups. Ongoing

3 Organisational

- Develop further cross service links including with Planning, Housing Improvements and Economic Development. Dec 01
- Identify advertised private sector properties that may be suitable for homeless and Housing Register Applicants Ongoing.
- Monitor the success of streamlining Housing Benefit administration and make adjustments if necessary. Nov 01
- Assess the potential for the re-use of empty properties by studying planning applications from the weekly list Ongoing
- Promote the adoption of energy efficiency measures Ongoing

4 Fiscal

- Investigate the opportunities offered by the Urban White Paper and the Chancellors 2001 Budget, and ensure these initiatives are well publicised locally. Aug 01
- Assist the re-use of private sector empty properties through advice and grant assistance. Ongoing
- Maximise the funding available for new schemes, including Social Housing Grant, the Private Finance Initiative, and to funding streams such as the Safer Communities Fund and Starter Home Initiative. Ongoing
- To allocate local authority grants effectively in order to bring empty properties back into use. Ongoing

Enforcement

- Where appropriate, we have powers to take action against unfit empty homes. We are able to serve repairs notices, closing orders or demolition orders on owners who leave their properties in disrepair. New Forest District Council has

not used Compulsory Purchase Orders or Enforced Sale notices

Ongoing.

5 Targets

- To ensure that at least 200 dwellings are available for temporary use for applicants from the Council's Joint Housing Register.
- To fill 50 properties a year through the Empty Property and Private Sector Strategy
- To achieve our target required in BVPI64. We are required to fill 0.61% of properties empty for more than 6 months on 1st April each year.

Monitoring

- To review the success of new private sector initiatives launched in 2000/2001 such as TSH, the Rents in Advance Scheme, Leasing and Rent Top-Up.
- Monitor the success of the Strategy and review it annually including involving stakeholders in the exercise..

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Mary Rainbow, HECA Officer

Gregory Spawton, Housing Needs Manager

D r a f t

Housing Strategy Targets and Action Plan 2001

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PART 1

Introduction

Purpose of the Plan

This document develops the aims and objectives expressed in the Housing Strategy into specific targets, with measurable outputs and outcomes, for the coming years. It also provides a reflection on the way we performed in 2000/1. In addition to assessing our performance against the targets we set last year, this document also outlines the resource requirements we believe we need to meet our targets. The Sub-Strategy Monitoring Report (appended) sets out performance against other target areas with the Sub-Strategies themselves setting out specific targets for future years.

Links to the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan

Targets and resource implications relating to the Council's landlord role are contained within the HRA Business Plan.

PART 2

Performance Against Last Year's Targets

In this section of the Annual Plan, we look at our performance against the targets that we set last year.

Housing Needs

The ongoing targets for 2000/2001 included keeping the use of Bed & Breakfast accommodation to a minimum. This was to be achieved by the use of private sector housing, the use of other good quality temporary accommodation and by the provision of housing advice.

Increasing the availability of temporary accommodation has been a particular success this year due to the range of new initiatives that were introduced mid year as a response to the increasing homelessness problem. They have proved very successful in providing alternatives to Bed and Breakfast (B & B). The initiatives have reversed the decline in the availability of this type of property and resulted in an increase of around 15% on the mid year figure of properties controlled by Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) which are available in the long term for temporary accommodation. In addition the new initiatives, which have included close work with the private sector and Housing Benefits, have improved dramatically the number of private sector properties that are used.

More specific targets included the need to create and update protocols and strategies for joint working with other agencies, with the aim of providing a more integrated approach to meeting housing needs in the District. The need for the Council's housing allocation policy to focus on choice and the development of sustainable communities was also identified.

Target: Keep the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation to a minimum and use it only in emergency situations.

Performance: During 2000/2001 161 households were placed in bed and breakfast which is an increase on the previous two years. The greater use of B&B reflects the increasingly difficult housing situation in the New Forest. Had it not been for the new initiatives described above this figure would have been far higher.

Target: Maintain a portfolio of good quality temporary accommodation for use by homeless households.

Performance: The Council has a portfolio of more than 300 good quality temporary homes including Housing Association leased properties, hostels, permanent Council housing used as temporary accommodation and a women's refuge.

Target: Ensure that homeless applications are dealt with in the timescales and guidelines recommended in the Code of Guidance.

Performance: In 2000/2001, 94% of cases were resolved within the Best Value performance indicator of 30 days. The only cases that took longer to process were because of unusually complex enquiries, or where the applicant did not maintain contact with the Council.

Target: During 2000/2001, to review the Council's allocation policy to consider ways of improving the degree of choice offered to housing applicants and to promote sustainable communities.

Performance: A DETR funded pilot scheme for choice based lettings will commence operation in October 2001.

Target: Develop and implement the protocol on assessing housing applications from young people during 2000/2001.

Performance: The protocol has been developed and commenced operation in January 2001.

Target: Further develop the Housing Advice service to ensure the community has access to good quality housing advice.

Performance: The service is fully operational and delivering advice to local communities throughout the district.

Target: During 2000/2001, complete a strategy for reducing under-occupation in Council homes.

Performance: An ongoing under-occupation survey is underway. A leaflet advertising the Council's incentive scheme has been produced.

Enabling and Planning

The affordable housing development programme provided a total of 197 homes in 2000/1 in partnership with RSLs. The programme was made up of rented homes in towns and villages, supported housing projects, shared ownership and Homebuy. The housing and planning sections of the Council continued to work closely together, particularly in relation to PPG3 opportunities and urban and rural exceptions. The Housing Needs and Market Assessment was commissioned following the introduction of revised DETR guidance. This is the most comprehensive study of housing needs and preferences across all tenures that has ever been undertaken in the New Forest. It will inform the Local Plan review and the Housing Strategy.

Two new RSL liaison groups were launched, one focussing on development and aiming to improve deliverability has been particularly active, and has resulted in reduced scheme costs in a number of instances. The other aims to develop a sustainable development agenda for the New Forest and links closely with LA21 activity in the area.

In order to strengthen the enabling role the Council has 2 new RSL partners, now working alongside existing ones.

Cross boundary has become increasingly important, particularly with respect to Best Value and benchmarking. We are already reaping the rewards of this contact and have produced a series of action plans for several functions.

Target: Ensure that Housing Associations provide at least 200 affordable homes in the District in 2000/2001.

Performance: 197 dwellings were provided. Slow delivery by developers on several PPG3 sites prevented this figure being higher.

Target: Ensure that the supported housing needs of the District are met in terms of the priorities laid down through the New Forest Supported Housing Forum and Core Group and continue the strategic overview started in 1998/99.

Performance: A re-launched Supported Housing Forum ensured that there is a clear direction in assessing and meeting supported housing needs and a clear mechanism for prioritising resource allocation.

Target: Ensure that at least 10 *Lifetime homes* are provided by RSLs in 2000 / 2001.

Performance: 8 lifetime homes were provided.

Target: Ensure that at least 10 rural homes are developed by RSLs in 2000 / 2001 in a phased programme in accordance with the Council's Rural Development Strategy.

Performance: 8 rural homes were provided

Target: Bring at least 100 empty properties back into use during 2000 / 2001.

Performance: 93 were brought back into use.

Target: Ensure that at least 200 good quality leased properties are available at all times to meet the needs of those requiring temporary accommodation.

Performance: With new initiatives for providing good quality temporary accommodation introduced during 2000/1, 211 dwellings are available from RSLs through leases and other mechanisms which assure long term availability. This represents a 15% increase and has arrested what had been a downward trend in the availability of this type of accommodation.

Target: Assist in the identification and consideration of suitable sites for affordable housing, including urban and rural exceptions, and in the negotiation of an element of affordable housing on development sites in accordance with the Council's policies and Planning Policy Guidance Note 3.

Performance: Close working with Planning colleagues resulted in the provision of 81 dwellings.

Target: Prepare a District wide Housing Needs Survey during 2000 / 2001.

Performance: The results of a comprehensive Housing Needs and Market Assessment were published in July 2001. A summary is included with this submission.

Target: Review the New Forest Housing Partnership during 2000 / 2001.

Performance: Review completed.

Tenants and Resident's Issues

Target: Monitor the minimum standards of tenant participation within the New Forest area agreed with partner RSLs and continue to promote good practice and joint working initiatives.

Performance: There is regular liaison between RSL and Council Tenant Participation Officers. The minimum standards that have been agreed are being met and work is underway on mapping existing affordable housing and tenant and resident organisations. The results will form a basis for promoting networking and training opportunities for residents.

6 Private Sector Homes

Grants were paid in respect of a range of property in the private sector and the Council's Home Improvement Agency continued to provide an effective service to local people on a self-financing basis.

Target: Respond to complaints in respect of sub standard housing within the Council's policy.

Performance: All complaints about substandard housing were responded to within the Council's policy.

Target: Pay grants in respect of properties in line with the Council's policy.

Performance: All payments in respect of grants were paid in line with the Council's policy.

Target: Investigate the development of a Homecheck scheme in partnership with other agencies if the research indicates that there is a demand in 2000 / 2001.

Performance: An independent Care and Repair Agency was at the New Forest Voluntary Services Council. This has been as a result of a partnership between the Council and Social Services which has attracted new funding from the DETR.

Target: Continue to provide a Home Improvement Agency which is self-financing through fee income.

Performance: The Home Improvement Agency continued to be self-financing through fee income throughout the year.

Home Energy Conservation

The Council has a dedicated officer to co-ordinate a strategy in response to the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995. She takes forward advice and promotional activities to the wider community. Working with and developing effective partnerships

with other statutory and non-statutory agencies and the business and voluntary sectors enables the collection of data on energy efficiency improvements made by householders.

This Council has been involved in two successful HECAAction programmes with other Energy Conservation Authorities and partners including Do It Yourself stores and professionals in Social Services and Health Trusts.

An Energy Efficiency and Affordable Warmth Strategy, which has amongst its aims the reduction of fuel poverty, has been produced as part of the Housing Strategy. A copy is attached as an appendix to this submission. The document provides a basis for monitoring and evaluating current initiatives with a view to adding further initiatives as activities develop.

Target: Promote energy efficiency to three more primary schools and encourage children in those schools to carry out energy audits at home.

Performance: Three local schools have received energy efficiency presentations. Home Energy Survey forms have been issued to 500 households. Home Energy reports have been issued to each of them.

Target: Maintain communication with local residents through the regular issue of news and information to the editors of newsletters and magazines, to raise awareness of energy efficiency measures.

Performance: Four press releases have been issued to the 25 community editors in the past year.

Target: Arrange presentations to our partner landlords to ensure that they are aware of the direct financial and environmental rewards of home energy efficiency issues.

Performance: Presentations on Housewarmer training and energy efficiency have been made to our partner landlords.

Target: Design a simple referral system in partnership with health professionals and social services to promote health and safety benefits to the vulnerable.

Performance: Work is ongoing with the PCT and development of their HIMP. Professionals for both the Health Service and Social Services have attended Housewarmer training sessions.

Target: Actively pursue HECAAction funding. This valuable source of funding will continue to be sought and successful bids fully supported.

Performance: This initiative is being developed through the Shecane network and the Solent Energy Efficiency Advice Centre. Locally, funding and advice is being sought to progress a CHP initiative.

Target: Implement the Affordable Warmth Strategy (attached as an appendix to this document)

Performance: This Strategy continues to be implemented successfully, details can be found in the Sub-Strategy Monitoring Report which is included with this submission.

7 Key Linkages

One area of importance that has emerged in recent years has been the development of the key linkages and interaction between housing and related areas such as health, leisure, community safety and employment.

Target: Continue to provide support to ensure the success of the existing credit union and to support the development of a second credit union.

Performance: Ongoing support given, working with the Council of Voluntary Service. New collection points opened in Netley View and Blackfield. Work on further credit unions will need to be reviewed as part of The Council's overall approach to social exclusion.

Target: Ensure that the Social Inclusion Strategy issues paper is fully consulted on and developed into a Strategy during 2000 / 2001.

Performance: Consultation paper issued and responses analysed. Strategy to be developed during 2001/2002.

Target: Explore opportunities for an Older Persons' Healthy Living network. This network will attempt to link together resources for older people. A focus group will determine whether this proposal is taken forward.

Performance: Focus group formed which supported concept. The complexity of the issues and potential resources require further consideration.

PART 3

Targets for the coming years

This section of the Plan identifies the main targets for the Housing Service.

Housing Needs

The Council will give the highest priority to reducing homelessness and the use of B & B in the coming year and beyond. Particular attention will be paid to increasing in the provision of temporary accommodation that is available in the longer term, either due the acquisition of leases or freeholds by RSLs. Work will continue with the private sector to increase the availability of short-term accommodation in this sector. Proposals for a new lettings policy will be brought forward and work on a homelessness and advice strategy will commence.

- **Keep the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation to a minimum and use it only in emergency situations.**
- **Maintain a portfolio of good quality temporary accommodation for use by homeless households including at least 200 good quality properties made available by RSLs.** The supply of accommodation will be continually monitored and new initiatives developed to balance supply and demand.
- **Maintain an up to date knowledge of the housing needs of the District.** This will be done by establishing monitoring and review systems to allow the 2001 Housing Needs and Market Assessment to be kept up to date. Regular full assessments will be undertaken in accordance with DETR guidance.
- **Ensure that all homeless applications are dealt with within the timescales and guidelines recommended in the code of guidance.**
- **During 2001 to commence operation of a fully choice-based lettings pilot scheme.**
- **Commence preparation of a Homelessness and Housing Advice strategy.**
- **Work with Hampshire Probation on developing the role for local authority housing services on protecting the public from dangerous offenders.**

Enabling and Planning

The key objectives are to work with our partner RSLs to develop at least 200 affordable homes for people in priority housing need, and to work with a range of partners to ensure that

good quality temporary accommodation as an alternative to B & B is available (target set out above). The New Forest District Local Plan, the revised Empty Properties and Private Sector Strategy and a range of other initiatives will help achieve these core aims.

- **Ensure that RSLs provide at least 200 affordable homes a year in the District in order to meet the housing needs identified by the Council.** The majority of these will be for affordable rent. Resources will be made available through LASHG, and the Council will support RSLs in bidding for resources from the Housing Corporation. Every effort will be made to secure additional resources to ensure this target is met. There will be close liaison between Housing and Planning Departments to ensure deliverable schemes are brought forward.
- **Ensure that at least 10 rural homes are developed by RSLs each year.** The Council will ensure good information about housing needs at parish level is available and establish a dialogue with parish councils and local communities. It will also investigate with the Countryside Agency and the Hampshire Community Action Network the local potential of its Rural Enabler Initiative.
- **Bring at least 50 properties into use each year through the Empty Property and Private Sector Strategy.**
- **Ensure that the supported housing needs of the District are met in terms of the priorities laid down through the New Forest Supported Housing Forum its Core Group and the specific sub-groups that have been established. Action plans for each sub-group will be developed and agreed in 2001/2002, and the Supporting People Co-ordinator will take up post.**
- **Assist in the identification and consideration of suitable sites for affordable housing, including urban and rural exceptions, and in the negotiation of an element of affordable housing, to meet needs identified by the Council, in accordance with the Council's policies and Planning Policy Guidance Note 3.** The number of sites and dwellings brought forward through the application of planning policies will be monitored annually, as will the success in achieving Local Plan objectives in respect of the proportion of private development sites secured for affordable housing. The Council will also review its disposal policies for its own sites in 2001/2002, and monitor the number of sites brought forward by this route.
- **Produce a development guide for new affordable housing developments to assist RSLs and the private sector.** This is a document that will be added to and updated as part of a rolling programme. The first stage is timetabled for completion during 2001/2002.
- **Review the housing policies in the New Forest District Local Plan (2001) to allow it to be placed on deposit in 2001/2002.**
- **Complete the review of the Council's Lifetime Home Standards in 2001/2002 and ensure that these are applied to new houses and bungalows constructed once the standards have been adopted.**
- **Develop a definition of *keyworkers in housing need* in 2001/2002.**

- **Develop a housing sustainable development agenda for the New Forest.** The framework will be established in 2001/2002 and will include details of monitoring arrangements and a plan for future action.
- **Develop a communication strategy for affordable housing and publicise the results of the Housing Needs and Market Assessment in 2001/2002.** To continue to implement the strategy and disseminate information thereafter.

Resales of Council Housing

- **To investigate opportunities for ensuring that Council homes bought under Right to Buy are made available to meet local needs upon re-sale, and if considered desirable, to implement a scheme during 2001/2002.**

Tenants and Resident's Issues

- **Monitor the minimum standards of tenant participation within the New Forest area agreed with partner RSLs and continue to promote good practice and joint working initiatives.**
- **Ensure that tenants and residents have an opportunity to be involved in the review and production of the Housing Strategy each year.**

Private Sector Homes

DETR expects local authorities to have a healthy Improvement Grant system to encourage the upkeep of private sector housing.

Local authorities have a duty to investigate housing conditions in the private sector.

- **Aim to spend allocated improvement grant budgets during the financial year.**
- **Aim to process grant applications within the agreed performance targets.**
- **Aim to process complaints within the agreed performance targets.**
- **Successfully launch the new independent Care and Repair Agency in 2000/2001. The long term target is to ensure the Agency achieves its performance targets to continue to attract DETR matched funding up to 2004, and to bid successfully for new funding beyond 2004.**
- **Ensure that the cost of providing an in-house agency service is covered by fees.**
- **Introduce a shortened Renovation and Disabled Facilities grant form.**

- Introduce a quick guide to making a grant application.
- Achieve the 7 day target for responses to letters.
- Reinspect all known houses in multiple occupation
- Create a database of contacts and partners and communicate all related issues to ensure good levels of awareness of the service

Home Energy Efficiency

Targets are now contained in the reviewed Energy Efficiency and Affordable Warmth Housing Strategy which is appended.

Key Linkages

Of great importance in the coming year will be the development of a detailed understanding of the linkages between housing and other areas such as health, leisure, community safety and employment. Detailed investigations and joint working is well underway to tackle housing issues from these perspectives.

The targets are to:

- **Work with stakeholders as part of the community planning process to complete in 2001/2002 a mapping exercise of local strategies and activities in order to allow key linkages with other areas to be further investigated.**
- **Develop Opening Doors as a social exclusion strategy for the District in 2001/2.**
- **Complete the second Crime and Disorder Audit to assess the fear and incidence of crime in 2001/2.**
- **Work with Hampshire Probation on developing the role for local authority housing services on protecting the public from dangerous offenders.**
- **To implement a strategy for multi-agency training on anti-social behaviour and racial incident monitoring.**
- **Involve the Housing Service in the establishment of the Council's Health Group.**

PART 4

Financing Service Delivery

Programme Delivery - Expenditure, and Resource Prioritisation and Implications

The Council has developed close working relationships with both the Government Office for the South East and the Housing Corporation to ensure that all available resources are used to meet the District's housing needs in a co-ordinated way. It has become active in seeking out and securing new funding streams and will in future years work with stakeholders and new partners to investigate non-mainstream housing funding which can be used to achieve the Housing Strategy's wider objectives.

Capital Programme - Performance in 2000/2001

The table below demonstrates that the Council has spent 113% of the total resources available in 2000 / 2001 as well as 100% of resources allocated by the DETR.

Financial Year	% of DETR Resources	Actual Expenditure £m	% of Revised Capital Programme 2000/2001
2000/2001	100	5.2	113

Diagram.....Capital Expenditure 2000/2001

113% of the revised Capital Programme was spent due to the realisation of a major new development opportunity for new affordable housing that required prompt action at short notice in the last quarter of the year. The action taken was discussed with the Government Office for the South-East before being taken. The programme was funded by bringing forward funds originally allocated in 2001/2002.

As resources have been limited over recent years, it has not been possible to meet all housing needs. The money available has therefore been targeted to the most urgent needs and particularly to meeting the Council's statutory housing responsibilities. The Council's pattern of capital expenditure on housing schemes consistently meets the agreed priorities set out in the Housing Strategy. The position for 2000 / 2001 is set out in Diagram ...below.

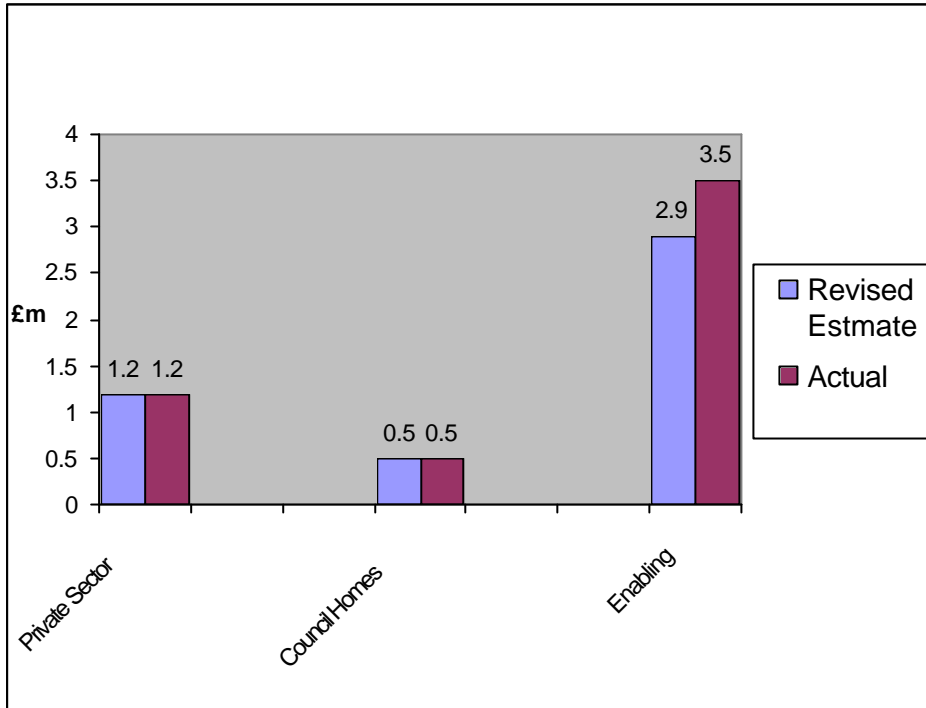


Diagram Capital Expenditure 2000/2001 by Target Area

Expenditure Profile

The size of the Housing Capital programme is constrained by the resources available, resulting in the Housing Capital Programme in 2001 / 2002 being less than half the size of the programme for 1993/94.

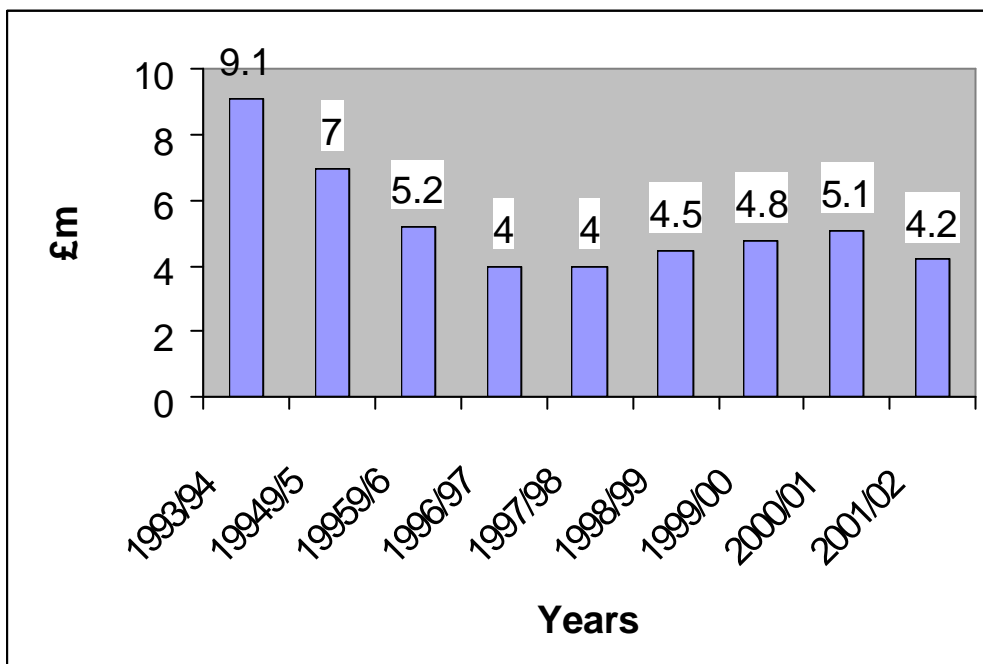


Diagram.....Housing Capital Programme Expenditure 1993/1994 to 2000/2001

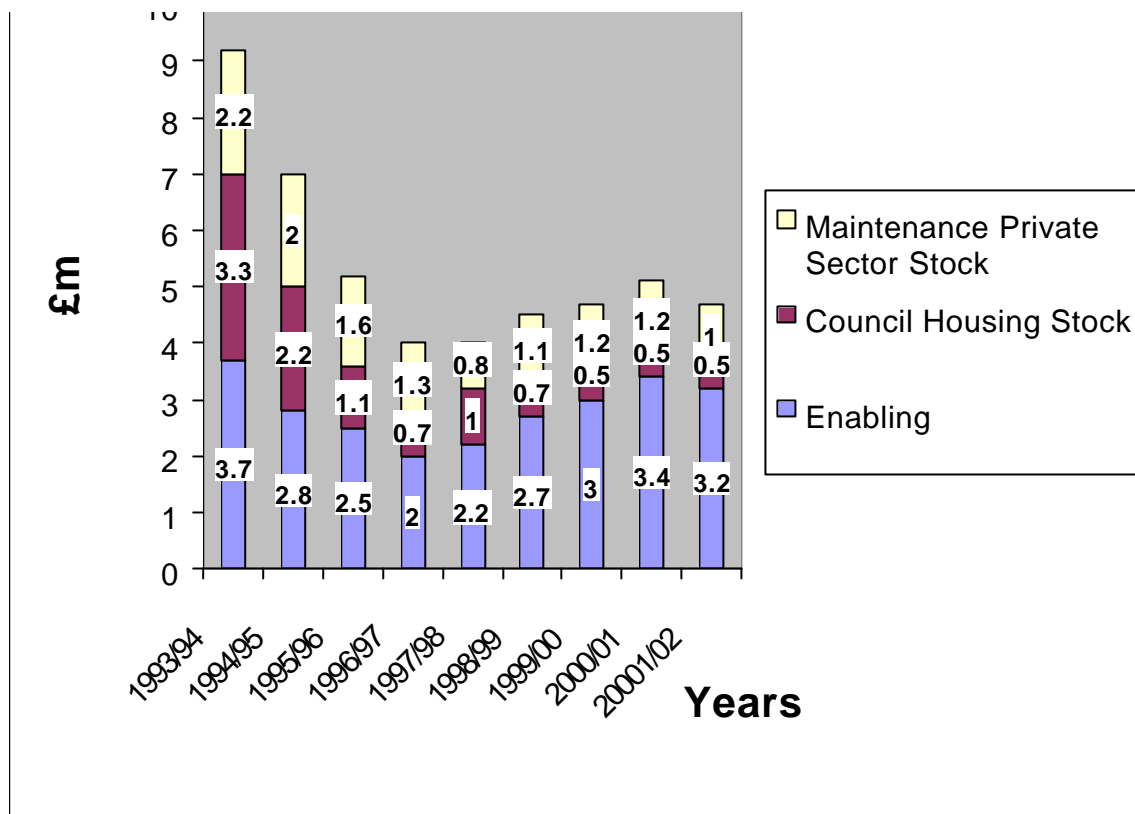


Diagram..... below demonstrates that the Council has consistently met spending targets in recent years.

Financial Year	% of DETR Resources	Actual Expenditure £m	% of Revised Capital Programme 2000/2001
1993/94	100	9.2	103
1994/95	100	7.0	94
1995/96	100	5.2	96
1996/97	95	4.0	93
1997/98	98	4.0	95
1998/99	97	4.5	100
1999/00	97	4.8	90
2000/2001	100	5.2	113

Diagram.....Capital Expenditure 1993/1994 to 2000/2001

Diagram...below indicates how expenditure has been apportioned, illustrating how spending reflects the priorities established in the Housing Strategy.

Diagram.....Expenditure Profile 1993/1994 to 2000/2001

Funding Future Activity

Corporate Decision Making Process for Resource Allocation

The process of allocating funding ensures a balanced capital programme is created within the limited resources available. In addition to the allocations received through the HIP Process the Council has traditionally allocated revenue contributions from the HRA Account and useable capital receipts generated from housing assets for reinvestment in Housing Services. The process for allocating the overall resources between the various housing services involves officers, tenants, Members of the Housing Review Panel, the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Members of the Policy and Resources Committee.

In terms of revenue expenditure, the Council operates a medium term planning process. All service areas are able to bid for resources for both existing services and new initiatives. Initial prioritisation of housing bids is made by the Members of the Housing Review Panel before being forwarded to Policy and Resources Committee to be considered alongside bids from other services.

It is likely that during 2001/2002 the Council will formally adopt a Cabinet style leadership and decision making structure. This will replace Policy and Resources Committee with the other elements of the decision making process remaining as at present.

Background

Having regard to limited financial resources in 1998/1999, the Council commissioned consultants to undertake a full, independent appraisal of all the options available for the future ownership of Council homes. While this matter is dealt with in more detail in the HRA Business Plan it is worthy of mention here in view of its strategic significance and as stock transfer would generate a substantial amount of finance to enable the provision of new affordable housing.

Since the introduction of the Major Repairs Allowance longer term investment in the Housing Stock is now possible. This has removed the advantage of stock transfer for tenants. At this stage there is no intention for the Council to make an application to the DETR for inclusion on a programme for the transfer of its housing stock to a Registered Housing Landlord. Furthermore, there is currently no intention for the creation of an Arms-length company for the management of the Council's housing stock. This matter will be kept under review.

In the light of this, it is necessary for the Council to consider other options for funding its wider housing programme.

In view of the methods used for centrally allocating funds for investment, for instance the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, the opportunities to access sources of funding other than allocated as part of the HIP process and Housing Corporation's Approved Development Programme are limited. The Council has been successful in tapping

into specialised sources of funding such as the Safer Communities Fund and Starter Homes Initiatives. It also focuses on ensuring that it has a “bank” of deliverable schemes that can be used to attract additional Housing Corporation funding which may become available during the year. It will continue to examine potential sources of national and European funding for which it and its partners may become eligible. The possibility of the Private Finance Initiative is now being investigated with two partner RSLs, and an RSL has already used private finance to provide temporary accommodation as an alternative to B & B.

The analysis of housing needs as set out in the *Housing Strategy* has provided a clear identification of priorities. The analysis has highlighted the current and anticipated extremely high need for affordable housing in the District, the increasing problem of homelessness, and the mismatch between supply of and the demand for affordable housing. A detailed option appraisal for the provision of temporary accommodation has been carried out. This has determined that a combination of options focussed on RSLs providing freehold and leased properties, and encouraging the private sector to increase supply as preferable, in social and economic terms, to the use as B & B. The use of B & B should be minimised. Offering revenue subsidies to RSLs to allow them to use private finance, while keeping rents at housing benefit levels, has proved to represent good value for money and has increased supply.

The Capital Programme

It is estimated that all available resources will be required to meet the 2002 / 2003 Housing Capital Programme. The Council aims to have a balanced Housing Capital Programme. There is a need to ensure that private sector housing is fit for habitation. In addition, the Strategy anticipates that over the coming years the Council will continue to need to fund RSLs to provide additional homes to meet identified needs.

Priority will be given to allocating capital funding to new affordable housing provision and to relieving pressure on revenue resources due to high levels of homelessness. There will also be particular attention paid to needs that arise as a result of the age structure of the population, levels of disability and the need for adaptations to existing dwellings.

Further details of option appraisals can be found in Part 3 of the main *Housing Strategy*.

It is anticipated that approximately £1.6 million per year can be raised from usable capital receipts and by making revenue contributions from the Housing Revenue Account. The figures below summarise the full range of urgent identified housing needs and indicates how resources would be apportioned in future years. A capital programme of £6.999 million would required credit approvals of £5.426 million.

Programme to Meet the Full Range of Identified Housing Needs			
	2002/3	Future Years	Outputs
	£000s	£000s	
Enabling initiatives			
Social Housing Grant	5,330	5,330	130 dwellings
Work on Council homes			
Maintenance and improvement of Council housing	<i>Data included in HRA Business Plan</i>		
Environmental improvements to Estates	500		
Grants in respect of private sector housing			
Disabled Facilities Grants	432	432	
Private Sector Housing Renewal	520	520	
Home Repairs Assistance	217	217	
Totals	6,999	6,999	

Diagram.....Programme to Meet the Full Range of Identified Housing Needs
(The diagram assumes that sufficient Housing Corporation will be available to fund 70 dwellings p.a. to allow the 200 dwelling p.a. target to be achieved.)

Expenditure bids have been prepared assuming different levels of resources of 10% above and below the target bid. The outputs that could be achieved with the same level of resources as 2001/2002 have also been considered. The options would require a capital programme based upon resources ranging between approximately £4.195m and £7.649m. The programme of schemes that would be included at each of these levels is summarised below:

	Programme based on Existing Level of Resources	Resource allocation should 10% below Bid level be available	Bid: Resources needed to meet housing needs	Resource allocation should 10% above Bid level be available
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Commitments from 2001/2				
Social Housing Grant	423	423	423	423
Private Sector Renewal Grants	217	217	217	217
Home Repairs Assistance	101	101	101	101
Disabled Facilities Grant	200	200	200	200
SUB TOTAL	941	941	941	941
Environmental Enhancements	500	500	500	500
Disabled Facilities Grants	200	232	232	232
Social Housing Grant	2,237	4,290	4,907	5,457
Private Sector Renewal Grants	217	303	303	403
Home Repairs Assistance	100	73	116	116
TOTAL	4,195	6,339	6,999	7,649
Resulting Outputs:				
Disabled Facilities Grants				
Affordable Dwellings	65	115	130	143
Private Sector Renewal Grants				
Home Repairs Assistance				

Diagram.....Alternative Scenarios based on Ranges of Resource Availability

(The bid assumes that sufficient Housing Corporation will be available to fund 70 dwellings p.a. to allow the 200 dwelling p.a. target to be achieved. They also take account of the levels of staff resources needed to deliver the programme and incorporate an inflationary allowance)

Revenue Spending

In addition to capital spending the Council has made a number of revenue spending commitments in order to help meet its objectives and targets.

Project	Aim	Partners	Council Contribution p.a.
Floating Support	To provide cross tenure support to help households maintain tenancies	Hyde HA, Western Challenge HA, Housing Corporation, Swaythling, Social Services, Primary Health Care Group,	£6000
Open Doors	Provide assistance for non-priority homeless households	Car Gomm Society	£11,750
Temporary Housing Provision:			£103,330
B&B	To provide emergency accommodation for homeless households	Private sector	

Lease Top Up	To provide temporary accommodation for homeless households by topping up rents/funding voids and diapidations on properties leased by RSLs	Twynham HA, Hyde HA	
RSL Owned top up	To provide temporary accommodation for homeless households by topping up rents /funding voids and diapidations on properties purchased using private finance	HVHS Housing Group	
Access to the Private Rented Sector (rent Deposit/top up)	To aid housing register applicants/home less households gain access to private sector accommodation	Private sector	
RSL Leases	To provide temporary accommodation for homeless households by funding voids and diapidations on properties leased by RSLs	Twynham HA, Hyde HA	£11,000

Diagram.....Revenue Expenditure

The Council will monitor and keep under review the success of these schemes in meeting housing needs and continue to investigate new opportunities.

Summary and Key Priority Areas

This Housing Strategy has highlighted the housing challenges and key priorities that the need to be tackled and these are:

- The need for the Council to adopt a strategic role, and corporate approach, to meeting local needs. It must link with other key local strategies and partnerships, and with co-ordinate action with neighbouring authorities, in order to meet the diverse needs of the community, promote the social, economic and environmental well being of that community. It must also ensure housing is provided in a way that promotes sustainable development, social inclusion and community safety.
- ? The need to continually assess the District's housing needs and ensure the Council's housing service is provided in a fair and equitable to all members of the community, including those with particular supported housing requirements. In particular the need, as a result of demographic trends and economic conditions, to address the requirements of the elderly and the young.
- ? The continuing high level of homelessness and the increasing dependence on Bed and Breakfast (B & B). The need to provide a high quality housing advice service in order to minimise homelessness and to minimize the need to use B & B accommodation, by providing alternative cheaper and more suitable forms of temporary accommodation.
- The need to promote sustainable communities and customer empowerment by providing a choice based lettings service.
- ? The need to address the shortage of affordable housing for local people who are unable to find a home in the private housing market. The greatest need is for additional general needs dwellings for rent at Housing Corporation rent cap level or below. There is a lesser need for shared ownership accommodation. There is also a need to provide housing and support for those with special needs. While the need for keyworker housing provision has been identified and the Council will aim to secure provision, a strategic response is needed and it is important that this provision is not at the expense of those who the Council may be considered to be in greater housing need.

- The need to ensure that new affordable housing development is well integrated with other housing in the interests of creating mixed and sustainable communities, and to ensure that the mix of affordable housing on new schemes also reflects this aim.
- ? The need to identify opportunities for new affordable housing development on Council owned land and release land on the most favourable terms in order meet the objectives of the Housing Strategy.
- The need to increase the supply of affordable housing in rural areas and engage communities.
- ? The need to ensure resources are available to assist RSLs in the provision of affordable housing through work with the Housing Corporation and the allocation of local authority social housing grant.
- The need to ensure that the balance of the housing stock (across sectors) meets the needs and preferences of the community.
- The need to make the best possible use of existing homes and reduce to an absolute minimum the number of empty properties.
- The need to manage, maintain, repair and improve Council homes
- The continuing high demand for grants to repair and improve the private sector homes and the need to meet the Council's statutory obligations to ensure that homes in the private sector are fit for habitation by working with landlords and owner occupiers, enforcement action and the payment of grants.
- Continuing need to improve home energy efficiency and ensure the availability of affordable warmth. Meet the Council's obligations as a Home Energy Conservation Authority to reduce CO₂ levels and encourage its partner RSLs to ensure that their homes are as energy efficient as possible.
- Meet the Council's statutory obligations to ensure that homes are adapted for people with disabilities by the payment of grants or taking appropriate enforcement action.
- Develop Tenant Participation Compacts reflecting tenants' needs and wishes, and to work with RSL tenants and the wider community, to build their capacity for involvement and to ensure that key strategies are developed and implemented to ensure the social, environmental and economic well being of local communities.
- Consult Council tenants about all aspects of the housing service and encourage tenant involvement in any changes that may affect them.
- The need to monitor and keep under review the performance of the Housing Service, and in particular to use Best Value as an opportunity to develop best practice and compare performance with other local authorities.

THE ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND **AFFORDABLE WARMTH STRATEGY**

Contents

1. The Need for a Strategy
2. Introduction
3. Fuel Poverty
4. Corporate Commitment and Partnership Working
5. Profile of the New Forest District Council Area
6. Energy Efficiency and Affordable Warmth in Action
7. The Strategy

Aim 1

<p>TO RAISE ENERGY AWARENESS AND PROMOTE CLEAR CONCISE ENERGY EFFICIENCY ADVICE TO ALL HOUSEHOLDERS</p>
--

8. The Strategy

Aim 2

To work with vulnerable householders to improve access to affordable warmth.

9. The Strategy

Develop effective partnerships to raise awareness of energy efficiency to the wider community to encourage behavioural change.

2

The Need for a Strategy

The Need for a Strategy

THE HOME ENERGY CONSERVATION ACT (HECA) PLACES A STATUTORY DUTY ON THIS COUNCIL AS AN ENERGY CONSERVATION AUTHORITY, TO INCREASE ENERGY EFFICIENCY. THE ACT HAS TWO STRANDS

❖ TO IMPROVE ENERGY EFFICIENCY BY 30% OVER THE NEXT 10 YEARS TO REDUCE CARBON DIOXIDE EMISSIONS AND HELP COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE

❖ TO ENSURE ALL HOUSEHOLDS HAVE ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE WARMTH TO REDUCE FUEL POVERTY

THIS STRATEGY WILL FORM AN INTRINSIC PART OF THIS COUNCIL'S CORPORATE STRATEGY 'CROSSING THE BRIDGE' TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY.

THE PRINCIPLE AIMS OF THE CORPORATE STRATEGY IS TO BRING TOGETHER ECONOMIC, ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL CONCERNS TO SUSTAIN AND IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF THE NEW FOREST COMMUNITY. THIS FORMS A NATURAL LINKAGE TO LOCAL AGENDA 21, A GLOBAL ACTION PLAN FOR THE 21ST CENTURY THAT MEETS THE NEEDS OF TODAY WITHOUT COMPROMISING THE LIFESTYLE OF FUTURE GENERATIONS.

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL RECOGNISE THAT WARM HOMES ARE A KEY FACTOR IN DETERMINING THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF LOCAL PEOPLE, TOGETHER WITH THE QUALITY AND COMFORT OF DAILY LIFE.

THE COUNCIL CAN INFLUENCE THE LEVEL OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY ACROSS ALL TENURES OF HOUSING. THIS CAN BE ACHIEVED BY CREATING PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER STATUTORY AND NON STATUTORY AGENCIES AND THE BUSINESS AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR BY RAISING AWARENESS AND GIVING ADVICE AND INFORMATION. WORKING TOGETHER WE CAN PROVIDE ADVICE AND PROMOTE SERVICES AND PRODUCTS TO RESIDENTS TO FACILITATE ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE WARMTH FOR VULNERABLE PEOPLE.

TO ENABLE ALL HOUSEHOLDS WITHIN THE DISTRICT TO AFFORD TO HEAT THEIR HOMES TO A REASONABLE LEVEL AND USE ENERGY EFFICIENTLY, THIS STRATEGY HAS BEEN DEVELOPED.

THERE ARE THREE MAIN AIMS TO THE STRATEGY:

1. TO INCREASE ENERGY AWARENESS AND PROMOTE CLEAR CONCISE ENERGY EFFICIENCY ADVICE TO ALL HOUSEHOLDERS.

2. TO WORK WITH VULNERABLE HOUSEHOLDERS TO IMPROVE THEIR ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE WARMTH.

3. DEVELOP EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS TO RAISE AWARENESS OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY TO THE WIDER COMMUNITY TO ENCOURAGE BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE.

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

THE HOME ENERGY CONSERVATION ACT 1995 (HECA) CAME INTO FORCE IN ENGLAND ON 1 APRIL 1996. THIS ACT MAKES NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL AN ENERGY CONSERVATION AUTHORITY (ECA). THE ACT REQUIRES ECA'S TO SUBMIT ANNUAL REPORTS TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE DETAILING HOW THEY WILL INCREASE DOMESTIC ENERGY EFFICIENCY BY 30% OVER THE NEXT 10-15 YEARS. TO OBJECTIVES OF THE ACT ARE:

1. TO REDUCE CARBON DIOXIDE EMISSIONS AND THEREFORE HELP TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE.

2. TO HELP HOUSEHOLDERS HAVE ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE WARMTH AND TO REDUCE FUEL POVERTY.

LEVELS OF NEED: STATISTICS

FUEL POVERTY

ENERGY IS USED IN THE HOME TO PROVIDE HEATING, LIGHTING AND FOR COOKING FOOD. FUEL POVERTY OCCURS WHEN A HOUSEHOLDER CANNOT AFFORD TO PROPERLY HEAT THEIR HOME TO KEEP WARM. THIS MAY BE DUE TO A COMBINATION OF AN ENERGY INEFFICIENT HOME, LOW INCOME OR AN EXPENSIVE FORM OF HEATING. THE RESULT IS HIGH FUEL BILLS AND FAMILIES SUFFERING FROM FUEL POVERTY. THESE FAMILIES ARE PRONE TO COLD RELATED ILLNESSES SUCH AS RESPIRATORY DISEASES, HEART AND CIRCULATION PROBLEMS. FUEL POVERTY MOST NOTABLE AFFECTS OLDER PEOPLE, LONE PARENTS (ESPECIALLY THOSE WITH YOUNG CHILDREN) PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND PEOPLE WHO ARE LONG TERM UNEMPLOYED. THE FOLLOWING SOCIAL AND PHYSICAL INDICATORS REVEAL THE EXTENT OF POTENTIAL PROBLEMS IN THE NEW FOREST.

- **21% OF HOUSEHOLDS IN THE NEW FOREST HAVE SOMEONE AGED OVER 65 YEARS.**
- **32% OF HOUSEHOLDS HAVE SOMEONE AGED OVER 55 YEARS.**
- **10% OF HOUSEHOLDS HAVE SOMEONE AGED OVER 75 YEARS.**
 - **32% OF HOUSEHOLDS ARE PENSIONER ONLY.**
 - **17% OF HOUSEHOLDS ARE SINGLE PENSIONER ONLY.**
- **59.2% OF COUNCIL TENANTS ARE IN RECEIPT OF HOUSING BENEFIT.**
- **8.6% OF ALL HOUSEHOLDS ARE IN RECEIPT OF HOUSING BENEFIT.**
 - **12% OF ALL HOUSEHOLDS ARE IN RECEIPT OF COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT.**
- **17.5% OF HOUSEHOLDS CONTAIN SOMEBODY WITH A DISABILITY.**

FUEL POVERTY

THE FOLLOWING INDICATORS REVEAL THE LACK OF ENERGY EFFICIENT MEASURES IN PLACE TO PREVENT HEAT LEAKING FROM THOSE HOMES:

- 11% OF HOMES DO NOT HAVE FULL CENTRAL HEATING

- 18% DO NOT HAVE THE HOT WATER TANK INSULATED

- 20% DO NOT HAVE LOFT INSULATION

- 64% DO NOT HAVE CAVITY WALL INSULATION

- 22% OF HOUSEHOLDS HAVE LONG TERM ILLNESSES

- 1.5% UNEMPLOYMENT RATE RANGING FROM 2.5%\$ ON THE WATERSIDE AND 0.03% IN FOREST SOUTH

- 2.3% OF POPULATION ARE LONE PARENTS WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

- 4.95% OF THE POPULATION ARE REGISTERED DISABLED

RESIDENTS LIVING IN ENERGY INEFFICIENT HOMES USE APPROXIMATELY TWICE AS MUCH FUEL AS THE AVERAGE HOUSEHOLDER. FAMILIES SUFFERING FUEL POVERTY SPEND MORE THAN 10% OF THEIR ANNUAL INCOME MAINTAINING A HEATING REGIME. THE EXTRA ENERGY THEY USE IN TRYING TO HEAT ENERGY INEFFICIENT PROPERTIES ALSO RESULTS IN GREATER EMISSIONS OF CARBON DIOXIDE, THE MAIN GREENHOUSE GAS. THIS ENTERS THE ATMOSPHERE AND CONTRIBUTES TOWARDS CLIMATE CHANGE. COLD HOMES ARE BELIEVED TO EXACERBATE EXISTING ILLNESSES, SUCH AS ASTHMA, AND REDUCE RESISTANCE TO RESPIRATORY INFECTIONS. HOUSEHOLDERS ALSO SUFFER FROM OPPORTUNITY LOSS CAUSED BY HAVING TO USE A LARGER PROPORTION OF INCOME TO KEEP WARM. THIS HAS ADVERSE EFFECTS ON THE SOCIAL WELL-BEING AND OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE FOR THE OCCUPANTS.

CORPORATE COMMITMENT AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING

CORPORATE COMMITMENT AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING

ENERGY EFFICIENCY IS NOT A SUBJECT WHICH IS CONTAINED WITHIN ONE COUNCIL SERVICE. TO IMPLEMENT A COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THERE IS CORPORATE WORKING. BY BRINGING TOGETHER ALL SERVICES INVOLVED IN HOUSING RELATED ISSUES. HOUSING, ENERGY MANAGEMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH WE CAN ACHIEVE INCREASED ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND WARM COMFORTABLE HOMES THROUGHOUT THE DISTRICT. THIS IS ACHIEVED THROUGH THE COUNCIL'S HECA WORKING PARTY. PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE STATUTORY AND NON STATUTORY BODIES, BUSINESS AND VOLUNTARY NETWORKS PLAY A VITAL ROLE IN THE PROCESS AND UNDERPIN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY. THE DISTRICT COUNCIL AS A HOUSING AUTHORITY WORKS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS TO PROVIDE AFFORDABLE RENTED HOUSING AND GIVES GRANTS TO HOME OWNERS TO IMPROVE THEIR PROPERTIES WHERE THERE ARE HOME ENERGY NEEDS. IMPROVING ENERGY EFFICIENCY IS A CRUCIAL ELEMENT IN TACKLING FUEL POVERTY.

THERE ARE IMPORTANT LINKS TO OTHER CORPORATE STRATEGIES SUCH AS:

- **GREENPRINT**

- **HOUSING STRATEGY**

- **UNDER OCCUPATION SURVEY**

- **OLDER PERSONS STRATEGY**

- **CROSSING THE BRIDGE**

- **SOCIAL EXCLUSION**

- **HEALTH STRATEGY**

OTHER OUTSIDE AGENCIES MOST LIKELY TO BE INVOLVED IN PARTNERSHIP WORKING WILL INCLUDE SOCIAL SERVICES, NHS TRUSTS,

THE HEALTH AUTHORITY AND THE PRIMARY CARE GROUPS. IMPORTANT STRATEGY DOCUMENTS WILL INCLUDE:

- **DISTRICT HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME (HIMP)**
- **COMMUNITY CARE PLAN**

PROFILE OF THE NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA

PROFILE OF THE NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA

1. THE AREA OF THE NEW FOREST COVERS 290 SQUARE MILES AND HAS A POPULATION OF OVER 171,000 AND 75,000 DWELLINGS. THE DISTRICT IS LOCATED BETWEEN THE MAJOR URBAN CONURBATIONS OF SOUTHAMPTON TO THE EAST WITH BOURNEMOUTH AND POOLE TO THE WEST.

2. THE NEW FOREST ITSELF IS THE JEWEL IN HAMPSHIRE'S CROWN AND HAS MANY FEATURES OF GREAT ENVIRONMENTAL VALUE. IN VIEW OF THE PARTICULAR ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE AREA MANY PEOPLE MOVE INTO THE DISTRICT FROM OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY.

3. THE NEW FOREST IS DIVIDED INTO 37 PARISHES WHICH VARY IN POPULATION SIZE FROM 166 IN EXBURY AND LEPE TO OVER 27,000 IN TOTTON AND ELING. THERE ARE SIX MAJOR TOWNS, RINGWOOD, NEW MILTON, LYMINGTON, HYTHE, FAWLEY AND TOTTON REPRESENTING 67% OF THE POPULATION (112,647 PEOPLE).

ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND AFFORDABLE WARMTH IN ACTION

ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND AFFORDABLE WARMTH IN ACTION

THE ATTACHED ANNUAL ACTION PLAN HAS BEEN DRAWN UP TO IDENTIFY SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES TO WORK WITH PARTNERS TO IMPROVE ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND REDUCE FUEL POVERTY WITHIN THE COMMUNITY. THESE ACTIVITIES WILL CONTINUE TO BE MONITORED AND REVIEWED QUARTERLY BY THE HECA OFFICER AND THE HECA WORKING PARTY.

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APPENDIX 2

Please see hard copy

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
EXPENDITURE PLANS BIDS AND SAVINGS FROM LAST YEAR'S REVIEW

PORTFOLIO/COMMITTEE	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06
	£000	£000	£000	£000
LEISURE SERVICES				
Discretionary / Uncommitted Bids				
Leasing - Revised Existing Programme	24	31	32	32
Totton Rec Centre - Extension to Fitness Suite	26	26	26	26
Leasing Costs For Replacement Equipment	5	6	9	9
Total Bids	55	63	67	67
Savings				
Totton Rec Centre - add. Income due to pool opening	-17	-17	-17	-17
Ringwood Rec Centre - add. income due to pool opening	-10	-10	-10	-10
Reduction in Catering Compensation - Pool Closures	-2	-8	-8	-8
Electrical Testing For Rec Centres & Dibden	-10	-10	-10	-10
Utilities / Energy Management	-7	-12	-12	-12
Applemore Rec - Refurb of Reflections Sauna-add. Inc.	-3	-3	-3	-3
Lymington Phase 2 - additional income	0	-60	-60	-60
Totton Rec Centre - Lifestyles additional income	-55	-68	-68	-68
Tourism Best Value Review	-3	-4	-4	-4
New Milton Rec - Water Recycling	-2	-2	-2	-2
Ringwood Rec - Water Recycling	0	0	-1	-1
Applemore Rec - Water Recycling	-1	-3	-3	-3
Ringwood Rec - Solar Heating Scheme	-1	-1	-1	-1
Lymington Rec - Solar Heating Scheme	0	-1	-1	-1
New Milton Rec - Solar Heating Scheme	0	-1	-1	-1
Totton Rec - Solar Heating Scheme	-1	-1	-1	-1
Totton Rec - Combined Heat & Power	0	-1	-3	-3
Sub Total Savings	-112	-202	-205	-205
Net Portfolio Savings	-57	-139	-138	-138
GENERAL PURPOSES & LICENSING COMMITTEE				
Mandatory / Committed Bids				
Quadrennial Election		80		
Net Portfolio Bids	0	80	0	0

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
EXPENDITURE PLANS BIDS AND SAVINGS FROM LAST YEAR'S REVIEW

PORTFOLIO/COMMITTEE	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06
	£000	£000	£000	£000
CRIME & DISORDER				
Discretionary / Uncommitted Bids				
CCTV Programme	240	240	240	240
Community Safety (3 year strategy)	10	0	0	0
Total Bids	250	240	240	240
ENVIRONMENT				
Discretionary / Uncommitted Bids				
Refuse Collection - Source Separated Collection Serv.	75	75	75	75
Special Transport Initiatives to Reduce Social Exclusion	6	12	12	12
Grounds Maintenance - Additional Costs	60	60	60	60
Total Bids	141	147	147	147
Savings				
Transport Links For Young People	-1	-1	-1	-1
Contaminated Land - Resources and Data	-12	-12	-12	-12
Refuse Collection-Reduce Resources For Special Coll.	-11	-11	-11	-11
Sub Total Savings	-24	-24	-24	-24
Net Portfolio Bids	117	123	123	123
HOUSING				
Mandatory / Committed Bids				
Shared Amenities Contribution	2	4	6	6
Discretionary / Uncommitted Bids				
Housing Needs - Open Doors Project	6	6	6	6
Total Bids	8	10	12	12
Savings				
Community Alarm Scheme	-8	-16	-24	-24
Housing Needs Survey	-25	-25	-25	-25
Sub Total Savings	-33	-41	-49	-49
Net Portfolio Savings	-25	-31	-37	-37
ECONOMY & PLANNING				
Mandatory / Committed Bids				
District Local Plan	200			
Additional Employees Dev & Build Control & PDI	13			
Sub Total Mandatory/Committed Bids	213	0	0	0
Discretionary / Uncommitted Bids				
Economic Development - Town Centre Initiatives	10	10	10	10
Total Bids	223	10	10	10
Savings				
Dibden Bay Project Co-ordinator	-26	-26	-26	-26
Net Portfolio Savings	197	-16	-16	-16

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
EXPENDITURE PLANS BIDS AND SAVINGS FROM LAST YEAR'S REVIEW

PORTFOLIO/COMMITTEE	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06
	£000	£000	£000	£000
CORPORATE AND FINANCE				
Mandatory / Committed Bids				
Grants - NACAB Contribution	16	16	16	16
Members IT - Training and Telephone	2	5	5	5
ICT	43	74	168	168
Vehicles and Plant - Replacement Programme	44	56	56	56
Reprographics - Leasing and Maintenance	1	5	9	9
Equipment and Machinery - Leasing and Maintenance	1	5	8	8
Offices and Depots - Increased Rates	20	20	20	20
Legal Services - Law Society Accreditation	0	1	1	1
Sub Total Mandatory/Committed Bids	127	182	283	283
Discretionary / Uncommitted Bids				
ICT	25	31	31	31
Information Services - Electronic Governance	20	-2	-2	-2
Vehicle Replacement Programme			31	31
Citizens' Panel - Surveys	1	1	1	1
Insurances	4	4	4	4
Vehicle Replacement Programme			31	31
Supplies & Services (re-instatement from 2001/02)	100	100	100	100
Sub Total Discretionary/Uncommitted Bids	150	134	196	196
Total Bids	277	316	479	479
Savings				
New Milton Offices - Furniture and Fittings	-2	-2	-2	-2
Fordingbridge Office - Furniture and Fittings	-2	-2	-2	-2
Single Status - Consultancy Support	-2	-7	-7	-7
Fordingbridge Information Office	-4	-4	-4	-4
Employee Structure Sub Committee Staff Savings	-83	-90	-90	-90
Finance Directorate - Staff Savings	-50	-50	-50	-50
Employees - Move All Staff to Monthly Pay	-20	-20	-20	-20
Water Recycling - Town Hall and Appletree Court	-1	-1	-1	-1
Town Hall - Photovoltaic Scheme			-2	-2
New Forest Industrial Association - Rental Income	-12	-12	-12	-12
Reduction in Contingency Fund	-200	-200	-200	-200
Sub Total Savings	-376	-388	-390	-390
Net Portfolio Bids	-99	-72	89	89

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY STATEMENT

1. DEFINITION OF THE APPROVED ACTIVITIES OF THE TREASURY MANAGEMENT OPERATION

- 1.1 Responsibility for the activities of the treasury management operation has been delegated to the Director of Finance.
- 1.2 The approved activities of the treasury management operation cover the following:
 - a. analysing internal and external information, cash flow management and methods of transmitting money, i.e. by cheques, bank transfers, Bank Automated clearing system (BACS), Clearing House Automated Payments System (CHAPS) and Direct Debit.
 - b. investing temporary surpluses in approved investments and financing capital expenditure by approved borrowing instruments.
 - c. ensuring that the repayment dates for the Council's borrowing are reasonably spread out. i.e. the borrowing profile.
 - d. dealing with other financial institutions such as brokers, banks, the Public Works Loan Board. (PWLB)
 - e. centralising the treasury management operation within the finance directorship.
 - f. reviewing and proposing strategies to Members on treasury management operations.
 - g. ensuring that effective security and controls are in place and an effective operation is reviewed and adhered to.
 - h. establishing and monitoring the performance of the treasury management operation.
 - i. ensuring that adequate banking arrangements are made and monitored for the Council.
 - j. selecting and appointing professional external investment fund managers and monitoring and reviewing the performance of the funds against agreed benchmarks.

2. FORMULATION OF TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

- 2.1 The Council will formulate a strategy that covers the raising of capital finance, investment of surplus money and managing cash flow both externally and between the Council's funds as appropriate. Treasury management activities in the year should be conducted in accordance with the strategy

3 APPROVED METHOD OF RAISING CAPITAL FINANCE

- 3.1 The following list specifies which borrowing instruments the Council may adopt:

PWLB
Money Market Loans - Long Term
Money Market Loans - Temporary (loans up to 364 days)
Local temporary borrowing
Local Bonds
Bank Overdraft
Negotiable Bonds
Stock Issues
Council's own internal funds (capital receipts and revenue balances)
Commercial paper
Medium term Notes
Leasing
Deferred Purchase
Bills

- 3.2 No other instrument other than those listed above may be used.

4. DEFINITION OF APPROVED SOURCES OF BORROWING

- 4.1 The following list specifies which borrowing instruments the Council will use:

PWLB	Council's own internal funds
Market long-term borrowing	Leasing
Market temporary borrowing	Charities or Individuals
Bank Overdraft	

- 4.2 Paragraph 12, Schedule 2 of the Banking Act 1987 exempts local authorities from the need for Bank of England authorisation to take deposits

5. APPROVED INSTRUMENTS FOR INVESTMENTS

- 5.1 The following instruments may be used for investments:

Externally Managed Funds	Internal Loans
Fixed Deposits	Gilts
Call/Notice Deposits	Certificates of Deposit

- 5.2 No other instruments other than those listed above may be used.

6. DEFINITION OF APPROVED ORGANISATIONS FOR INVESTMENTS

The following organisations constitute the counterparties with whom temporary investments will be made. These are in line with treasury consultant's recommendations and in most cases are more restrictive.

6.1 Banks incorporated within the United Kingdom

Banks which are UK clearing banks or which are incorporated in the UK and which have at least a short term credit rating of F1, according to FITCH The International Rating Agency, will be used for temporary investments

A short-term credit rating of F1 and a long-term credit rating of A can borrow up to £5M for 364 days

A short-term rating of F1 only can borrow up to £3m for 185 days

6.1.1 Examples of the banks that meet the above criteria are as follows: -

Abbey National PLC	HSBC
Alliance & Leicester PLC	Lloyds Bank PLC
Bank of Scotland PLC	National Westminster Bank PLC
Barclays Bank PLC	Northern Rock PLC
Bradford & Bingley PLC	Royal Bank of Scotland
Citibank International	Standard Chartered Bank PLC
HFC Bank PLC (GDS)	Sun Bank PLC
Halifax PLC	Woolwich PLC

6.2 Foreign Banks

Foreign Banks that have at least a short term credit rating of F1 and a long term credit rating of A+, according to FITCH The International Rating Agency, will be used for temporary investments of up to £3M for 185 days.

6.2.1 Examples of the banks that meet the above criteria are as follows: -

Allied Irish Banks	Dresdner Bank
Banco Bilbao Vizcaya	Hamburgische Landesbank
Bank of Ireland	Irish Intercontinental Bank
BHF Bank	KBC Bank
Banque Internationale a Luxembourg	Norddeutsche Landesbank Girozentrale
Bayerische Landesbank Giro.	National Bank of Canada
Credit Agricole Indosuez	National Australia Bank
Depfa Bank Europe	Svenska Handelsbanken
Deutsche Bank	Toronto Dominion Bank

6.3 Building Societies

The Council may invest in the top 40 Building Societies according to credit rating and asset size.

Building Societies with a short term rating of F1, according to FITCH The International Rating Agency, can borrow up to £5M for 364 days.

Other building societies in the top 25 by asset size can borrow up to £5M for 185 days.

Buildings Societies ranked 26 to 40 by asset size can borrow up to £3M for 95 days.

6.3.1 Examples of building societies that meet the above criteria are as follows:-

Britannia	Marsden
Cambridge	National Counties
Chelsea	Newcastle
Cheshire	Nationwide
Coventry	Newbury
Cumberland	Norwich & Peterborough
Darlington	Nottingham
Derbyshire	Portman
Dunfermline	Principality
EBS	Progressive
Furness	Saffron Walden
Hinckley & Rugby	Scarborough
ICS	Skipton
Kent Reliance	Staffordshire
Lambeth	Stroud & Swindon
Leeds & Holbeck	West Bromwich
Leek United	Universal
Market Harborough	Yorkshire

6.4 Other Merchant Banks

Merchant banks which have at least a short term credit rating of F1, according to FITCH The International Rating Agency, will be used for temporary investments of up to £3M for 185 days.

6.4.1 Examples of the banks that meet the above criteria are as follows: -

Lazard Brothers & Co.	Morgan Grenfell & Co. Ltd
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6.5 Other Local Authorities

The Council may invest temporarily with all other local authorities. The maximum each one may borrow is £5M for up to 364 days.

6.6 Nationalised Industries and Public Corporations

The Council may invest with all bodies within this category. The maximum each one may borrow is £5M for up to 364 days.

6.7 Subsidiaries

The Council may invest with the wholly owned subsidiaries of those UK Clearing banks that have a short term rating of at least F1 and a long term rating of at least A according to FITCH The International Rating Agency.

The Council may invest with the wholly owned subsidiaries of any building societies and as such is guaranteed by the parent company under section 22 of the Building Societies Act 1986.

The maximum each one may borrow is £3m for 185 days.

6.7.1 Examples of the banks that meet the above criteria are as follows: -

Bank of Wales	HSBC Asset Management
British Linen Bank Ltd	Royscot Trust
Capital Bank PLC	TSB Scotland PLC
Girobank	Ulster Bank
Hong Kong Investment Bank	

6.8 Maximum Investment

No more than 20% of the current total sum temporarily invested may be deposited with any one organisation at any one time, unless the total temporary invested is less than £2.5m in which case the maximum investment is £0.5m.

6.9 Accidental Breach of Limits

The Council will operate “daylight exposure”. This is a technique that ensures that in no circumstances can limits be exceeded. Normally, in calculating the amount of investment for each day, treasury staff are entitled to assume that a sum due back from an organisation will be received on the due date before making a further investment with that organisation. If for some technical reason the repayment does not arrive in the Council’s bank account it is possible that, after a new investment is made with the same organisation, limits will be exceeded.

7. POLICY ON INTEREST RATE EXPOSURE

7.1 Section 45 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 requires the Council to fix the maximum proportion of interest on borrowing which is subject to variable rate interest before the commencement of each financial year. This policy will be set in the light of current interest rate forecasts and the Treasury Management Strategy.

8. POLICY ON EXTERNAL MANAGERS

- 8.1 The Council's policy is to appoint full time professional external investment fund managers, if estimated interest earnings can be increased.
- 8.2 This Council has addressed the question of delegation given that the following steps have been taken:
- the contractual agreement and documentation has been agreed
 - a performance target has been set
 - the fee payment basis has been agreed
 - the investment counterparty constraints have been set
 - the asset allocation parameters have been set
 - performance is reported quarterly and valuations given monthly
 - meetings with investment managers are held every six months
- 8.3 The existing agreements are regularly assessed and it is expected that the arrangements will be reviewed annually.

9. POLICY ON DELEGATION

- 9.1 The Director of Finance is authorised by the Council to exercise the investment and borrowing powers of the Council in accordance with Council Policy, The CIPFA Standard of Professional Practice on Treasury Management and professional codes of practice.
- 9.2 The Director of Finance may delegate the operations of Treasury Management to the Assistant Director of Finance - Corporate & Client Services, and subordinate staff in connection with the approved activities of Treasury Management.
- 9.3 Any changes to delegated powers should be reported to Policy and Resources Committee and if necessary to full Council.

10. REVIEW REQUIREMENTS AND REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS

- 10.1 The Director of Finance will report to the Corporate & Finance Review Panel on Treasury Management as follows: -
- JUNE - for the annual report for the previous year.
 - DECEMBER - for the report for the first half year.
 - FEBRUARY - for the report for the first 9 months.

- 10.2 The Director of Finance will report to the Policy and Resources Committee (Cabinet) on Treasury Management as follows:
- FEBRUARY - for the strategy report for the next financial year.
- for the borrowing limits report for the next financial year.
- 10.3 The Director of Finance will report on the Treasury Management Code of Practice at the July Policy and Resources Committee (Cabinet) meeting each year.
- 10.4 Reporting requirements will need to be reviewed once the new democratic arrangements are formally adopted by the Council.

APPENDIX 5

Please see hard copy