

REPORT TO:	COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM:	23
DATE OF MEETING:	29 AUGUST 2002	CATEGORY:	RECOMMENDED
REPORT FROM:	HEAD OF COMMUNITY SERVICES	EXEMPT PARAGRAPH NOS:	8 & 11
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	SANDRA WHILES (Ext 5712)	DOC:	
SUBJECT:	PROGRESS WITH THE CHANGE AND IMPROVEMENT MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME FOR HOUSING	REF:	s:\cent_serv\committee reports\community services\29 aug 2002\progresswithchange&improvement managementprogrammeforhousing. doc
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE:	CS01

#### 1.0 Reason For Exempt

1.1 The report includes information on staffing and contractual issues.

#### 2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members note the progress achieved through the Housing Change and Improvement Programme as detailed in the report.
- 2.2 That the proposals for meeting the costs of further implementing the programme up until December 2002 as detailed in the report at 4.12 are approved.
- 2.3 That the situation is reviewed in December and a further report considering any further financial implications is considered by Members at this time. <sup>4.11</sup>

#### 3.0 Purpose of Report

3.1 The report sets out progress made by the Housing service in implementing significant changes in accordance with the change and improvement programme previously reported to Members and considers the detail and costs of further implementing the programme.

#### 4.0 Detail

- 4.1 Members received a report at their last meeting detailing progress on the Housing Change and Improvement Programme. An update on the current position is provided later in this report.
- 4.2 Pennington were commissioned to provide interim management support to the council to support the delivery of the first stage of the programme in a way which built the confidence and skills of staff across the Housing Division.

4.3 This work has delivered the following outputs:

- 2002 Housing Revenue Account Business plan
- outline project plan for an integrated IT housing system to support rent restructuring
- finalising Supporting People budget disaggregation and progressing Supporting People preparations
- contribution to the 2002 Housing Investment Programme and "fit for purpose" review of the 2002 housing strategy
- an Asset Management strategy
- Customer Charter and performance management framework
- option appraisal reports for three Sheltered Housing schemes
- a framework for Sheltered Housing scheme audits
- environmental improvements to the offices

4.4 During the three month contract Pennington also provided senior management support and technical advice to the Council on housing issues, Committee reporting, day to day support and directions to housing staff and significant work on staffing investigations.

4.5 Pennington have worked with Managers in the Housing Division to review and deal with sickness absence and to support recruitment to vacant posts. This has resulted in two members of staff returning to work from long-term sickness absence and the recruitment of a new Tenancy Liaison Officer, a Homelessness Officer and two DSO tradesmen.

4.6 The ongoing absence of the Housing Services Manager and the absence of front line staff, particularly in the Building Maintenance Unit, will require further external support and expenditure in order to maintain the significant progress that has been achieved so far. The table below summarises the current position on staffing absences in the Civic Office based staff in the Housing Division. These absences include vacant posts, sickness absence, maternity absence and suspended staff.

	<b>Absent staff</b>	
Management level	3	
	<b>Building Mtce Unit</b>	<b>A,L &amp; SH and Resources Unit</b>
Operational Level	3	3

It is therefore proposed to extend the contract with Pennington until the end of December 2002 to concentrate on accelerating and supporting progress and improvements within the repairs and maintenance service.

4.7 Pennington will lead a mini "Best Value" review in repairs and maintenance and provide monitoring and mentoring of maintenance staff up until the end of December 2002

4.8 The will deliver the following outputs by the December 2002:

- Improved management controls in place with regular reporting and an audit framework
- Appointments for all works/surveys available for tenants
- Review of key policies and procedures including staff training
- Application of void procedures to reduce void turnover by 10 days

- Agreed new structure for the repairs and maintenance service and review of all job descriptions and competencies with staff tested against these
- Surveys of tenants operating with 5% increase in satisfaction achieved in three months
- Auditable tendering procedures and reporting as appropriate
- Review of efficiency of DSO in comparison to alternative providers
- Mini review and challenge of existing service provision, costs and practices

4.9 If Members approve this report the Change and Improvement Programme will be updated to include these more detailed improvement areas for repairs and maintenance.

4.10 Members will recall that the Change and Improvement Programme already includes an objective of agreeing a new structure, including defining area inspectors roles, within twelve months. Pennington's further work with the council will support this. The restructure will extend beyond repairs and maintenance so that a clear focus for Tenant Services is built into the structure of the Housing Division. It is intended to progress the restructuring in September in order to achieve stability as soon as possible. Consultation on any structure proposal will be carried out before bringing recommendations to Members to consider.

4.11 It is anticipated that to address these issues until December the Council will need to commit the additional spending estimated as follows:

<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Likely Costs</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Proposed Funding</b>
Staffing to cover long term absences and vacant posts (agency staff)	£30,385	To December	Mainly by salary savings
Management support and direction to Building Maintenance Unit and project management of specialist areas change and improvement programme (Pennington)	£12,000	To December	Efficiency savings across HRA
IT Project Management support to start implementing proposals for integrated computer system	Estimated £5,000 to December	To September 2003	Ring fenced HRA reserve and SP disaggregation windfall
Support presentation of disciplinary hearing (Pennington)	Estimate £1800	As required	Efficiency savings across HRA
External challenge to SH Best Value preparations	Estimate £2,000	By November 2002	Efficiency savings across HRA

In June 2002 this Committee agreed changes to the HRA to cover the costs of implementing and supporting the Change and Improvement Programme until the end of July 2002. They asked that the situation be reviewed in July with a further report considering any further financial implications being brought back to Members for consideration.

The additional work detailed above will require further expenditure which is not contained within the budget. The following table shows the recommendations for meeting these costs in 2002/3

HRA Commuted Sum Reserve	HRA Staffing Savings	Efficiency Savings on Responsive Repairs
£5000	£27,000	£19,185

## 5.0 Change and Improvement Programme

5.1 The table below sets out the actions identified for the first six months of the programme, and progress made during the first three months:

	Within 1 month	Within 3 months	Within 6 months	Target achieved? Comments
<b>Improved management and information</b>				
Set up interim management support	√			√
Member enquiry central service set up	√			√
Set up performance monitoring	√			√
Regular team meetings for all staff		√		√
Improvement task teams established for IT, housing services and asset management		√		√
Review the complaints procedure and set up a database		√		In progress – completion mid Sept
Arrange access to staff diaries for appointments		√		√
Set interim service standards and customer charter		√		√
Service policies and procedures review process		√		Timetable agreed and reviews being progressed
Finalise supporting people budget issues		√		√
Written procedures for all areas of work			√	Will follow work on policies
Devolved budgets to officers			√	Being piloted with maintenance staff
<b>Developing a clear vision for housing in the district</b>				
Set up a housing strategy and partnership group to develop 2002 strategy		√		√
Cross departmental working group to develop housing strategy		√		√
Plans for surveys 2003/4 in housing needs, demand and private sector stock condition				Demand and housing needs brief in draft
Submit HRA business plan and Housing Strategy/HIP return		√		√
Area tenants meetings to consider stock options		√		Meetings programmed for September, to be held with tenants after Working Group recommendations

	Within 1 month	Within 3 months	Within 6 months	Target achieved? Comments
Formal independent external challenge of the housing strategy best value review			√	
<b>Keeping the housing stock in good condition</b>				
Set up dedicated voids and allocations team	√			√
Review voids procedures	√			√
Regular budget briefings and monitoring		√		√
Improved reception services		√		√
Review long term sheltered voids and lettings incentive		√		√
Assess decent homes standard		√		√
Option appraisal for Basses, Smallthorn and Pine Grove		√		√
Draw up procurement policy and tendering procedures		√		Being prepared by Improvement Task Team – not yet completed
Review/improve information to tenants on repairs and planned works		√		In asset management strategy
Pilot multi-skilling of inspectors and clerk of works			√	
All repairs to be logged and more accurate diagnosis		√		√
Review DSO scheduling of works		√		√
Review role of inspectors and check variation orders		√		√
Water testing programme established		√		√
Develop asset management strategy			√	At Aug Cmtee
Review planned works programmes in light of stock survey			√	To consider in September 2002
Area tenants meetings to consult on repair issues			√	September tenants meetings to be used for rent restructuring and options information
Review gas safety audit contract			√	In progress
Cost benefit analysis of increasing DSO skills base			√	
<b>Rent collection and control</b>				
IT system identified to implement rent restructuring		√		Rent increases likely to be calculated outside system next year and input.
Rent restructuring implementation options considered		√		√
Review and update arrears policy			√	
Risk appraisal on supporting people arrangements on Council			√	

	Within 1 month	Within 3 months	Within 6 months	Target achieved? Comments
<b>Human resources</b>				
Arrange cover for vacant posts	√			√
Monitor adherence to absence policy	√			√
Complete PDR's and training plans for staff	√			√
Staff training and development programme running		√		√
Monthly updates to all stakeholders on progress		√		√
Fill vacant posts (TLO and homelessness officer)		√		√
Set up area teams			√	√
Agree new staff structure			√	To commence consultation in Sept 2002
Research work related stress issues			√	
<b>Listening to our customers</b>				
Set up customer panels and reality checks		√		Customer panel established (94 households)
Promote the funding and support to resident groups			√	Ongoing
Local action plans to support TP compact and increase involvement			√	
Decision on tenants voting rights			√	Issues paper to be prepared for Committee autumn 2002
<b>Allocations and demand</b>				
Review allocations policy and existing IT system		√		Revised policy to go to Oct cmtee
Marketing strategy for allocations		√		To follow review of allocations policy
<b>Sheltered Housing</b>				
Monthly scheme repairs/audits		√		√
H&S notices fitted		√		√
Agree liaison arrangements with Social Services regarding tenant support		√		Ongoing discussions
Regular H&S checks (emergency lighting, alarm testing)		√		√
Programme of regular tests for emergency alarms		√		√
Door entry system/suiting improvement programme		√		Resources agreed. Programme being drawn up
Programme of improvements for communal areas (decorations and furnishings)		√		Resources agreed. Programme being drawn up

	Within 1 month	Within 3 months	Within 6 months	Target achieved? Comments
Audit of Tunstall equipment and programme of updating		√		Orders placed and work now started on programme
Review service charges			√	
Identify and plan to meet gaps in service in context of Supporting People			√	

Members agreed a funding package in June 2002 to deliver specific programmes of improvement. Progress on these is detailed below.

<b>Programme</b>	<b>Current Position</b>
Lock replacement programme	Programme being finalised. Likely start date end October 2002
Pilot SH improvements	Scheme audits of all communal schemes completed. Programme being drawn up
Printing/signing	Improvements to signage completed
Pilot letting incentives	Scheme approved by Committee in July. Procedures written and scheme being targeted to people on waiting list
Water testing	Programme requirements identified. Negotiations with existing specialist provider ongoing for start in September

## 6.0 Financial Implications

6.1 The financial implications of this report are detailed in the body of the report.

## 7.0 Corporate Implications

7.1 The change management work assists the Council in delivering its corporate objectives and policies, and minimises the potential risks faced by the Council as a result of failing to address issues within the Housing service.

## 8.0 Community Implications

8.1 The change management programme seeks to ensure a consistent service to tenants that is more accessible and appropriate to their needs, it involves tenants, Members and staff in decisions and reality checks.

## 9.0 Background Papers

9.1 Committee report on Change Management Programme June 2002.



South Derbyshire  
District Council

ANNEXE B  
**Housing Services**  
**October 2002 Update**  
**Change & Improvement Programme**



This second issue shows progress against our first targets and updates the targets for the Housing Change & Improvement Programme

Pennington Consultancy worked closely with the Council during May, June and July to support the delivery of the programme. They continue to work with Building Maintenance staff to provide direction and support in this area.

What are we aiming to do?

- Provide a better service to all customers (both external & internal)
- Help staff to fulfil the requirements of their job.
- Create a more positive, changing working environment for us all.

How can we do this?

Staff have played an important part in the achievements and changes so far and continue to have a critical part in improving services to tenants. The approach will continue to be "task based" this means that we will be looking at real areas of work, not just theory, reviewing how we get things done and how we can improve.

There are 8 areas in the Change & Improvement Programme that we are looking at in particular. More actions have been added based on the experience of the first stage of the programme and more will be sure to emerge.

The co-operation of all staff and members in achieving these targets is essential. Many thanks for your input.

*Sandra Whiles*

October 2002

For more information or to give feedback you are welcome to contact your manager or phone/ e mail-

- Sandra Whiles 595712



(✓ Shows target)

1. Improved management and better information on what we do and how we do it

What we are going to do	Within 1 month	Within 3 months	Within 6 months	Within 1 Year
Set up interim housing management cover (Pennington)	Done			
Member enquiries to be properly routed and responses monitored	Done			
Set up monthly performance monitoring	Done			
Regular team meetings for all staff		Done		
Improvement task teams to be set up for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management</li> <li>• Maintenance</li> <li>• I.T.</li> </ul>		Done		
Review the Complaints procedure, and set up a database record.		Done		
Arrange access to staff diaries for appointments		Done		
Set interim service standards & customer charter		Done		
Service policies & procedures review process (management & maintenance)		Some slippage	✓	
Finalise Supporting People budget issues		Done		
Written procedures for all areas of work			✓	
Devolved budgets to officers		Pilot stage	✓	
Specify & identify supplier for new Integrated IT system.				✓
Feasibility study of central call centre				✓
Best Value review of landlord housing services				✓
<b>New targets</b>				
Set up management support for Building Mtce function			Done	
Carry out "light touch" review of Bldg Mtce in advance of BV review			✓	
Consider the efficiency of the Housing DSO in comparison with alternative providers			✓	

2. Developing a clear vision for Social housing in the district

What we are going to do	Within 1 month	Within 3 months	Within 6 months	Within 1 Year
Set up Housing Strategy & partnership group to develop 2002 strategy		Done		
Cross departmental working group to develop housing strategy		Done		
Plan for surveys (2003/4) in housing needs, demand & private sector stock condition.			✓	
Submit Housing Revenue Account (HRA) business plan and Housing Investment Programme (HIP)		Done		
Area tenant meetings to look at stock options.		Done		
Formal independent external challenge of the Housing BV review			✓	
Work with partner organisations to develop a housing strategy for older people, vulnerable & young people and black & minority residents.				✓
<b>New targets</b>				
Co-ordinate the work of the Housing Strategy and Partnership Group to deliver the 2002 Housing Strategy			✓	

### 3. Keeping the housing stock in good condition

What we are going to do	Within 1 month	Within 3 months	Within 6 months	Within 1 Year
Set up dedicated voids/allocations team	Done			
Review voids procedures		Done		
Regular budget briefings and monitoring		Done		
Improved reception service		Done		
Review long term sheltered voids & where lettings incentives would help		Done		
Assess "decent homes" standard			✓	
Option appraisal for Bass's & Smallthorn sheltered schemes.			✓	
Draw up procurement policy & tendering procedures			✓	
Review/improve information to tenants on repairs targets and planned works		Partly by Customer Charter		
Pilot multi-skilling of day-to-day & planned works inspection/ COW works in one role			✓	
All repairs to be logged and more accurate diagnosis		Done		
Review DSO scheduling of works		Done		
Review role of inspections & checking variation orders		Done		
Water testing programme established		Done		
Develop asset management strategy with scope for involving residents/members in local decisions			Done	
Review planned works programmes in the light of stock condition information			✓	
Area tenants meetings to consult/ inform on day-to-day and planned works issues			Done	
Option appraisal of low demand sheltered schemes			✓	
Review gas safety audit contract			✓	
Cost Benefit analysis of increasing DSO skill base.			✓	
Planned improvements scheduled for all sheltered schemes				✓
Set up repairs contrast area to enable comparison between DSO & contractor				✓

### 4. Rent collection & control

What we are going to do	Within 1 month	Within 3 months	Within 6 months	Within 1 year
IT system identified to cope with rent restructuring & funding for rents module secured			✓	
Rent restructuring implementation options considered		Done		
Review & update arrears policy			✓	
Risk appraisal of long-term effects of Supporting People agenda on SDDC			✓	

### 5. Human Resources

What we are going to do	Within 1 month	Within 3 months	Within 6 months	Within 1 year
Arrange cover for vacant posts	Done			
Monitor adherence to absence procedure	Done			
Planning exercise for managers on the improvement agenda		Done		
Complete PDR's and annual training plans for all staff	Done			
Staff training & development programme running		Done		
Performance based supervision programme for all staff			✓	
Monthly update news sheet on Improvements for staff/members/tenants		Done		
Fill vacant post (TLO & Homelessness Officer)		Done		
Set up area teams (TLO/Building Inspector)		Done		

What we are going to do	Within 1 month	Within 3 months	Within 6 months	Within 1 year
Agree new structure including defining area Inspectors roles			✓	
Research causes of work – related stress in SDDC			✓	
Programme of office improvements beginning with housing reception		Started	✓	

#### 6. Listening to our customers

What we are going to do	Within 1 month	Within 3 months	Within 6 months	Within 1 year
Improved housing reception service		Done		
Produce first Customer Charter		Done		
Set up customer panels/reality checks			Done	
Promote the presence of funding and support to residents groups			Done	
Local action plans to support TP Compact & increase involvement			✓	
Decision on tenants voting rights				✓

#### 7. Allocations & demand

What we are going to do	Within 1 month	Within 3 months	Within 6 months	Within 1 Year
Review allocation policy & existing IT system			✓	
Review low demand schemes and options		In progress		
Marketing strategy for allocations			✓	
New Target				
Consult with residents on "Choice-based" allocations				✓

#### 8. Sheltered Housing

What we are going to do	Within 1 month	Within 3 months	Within 6 months	Within 1 Year
Monthly scheme repairs/H&S audits		Done		
H&S notices fitted		Done		
Agree liaison arrangements with social services regarding tenant support		?		
Regular health & safety checks (emergency lighting, alarm testing)		Done		
Programme of regular tests for emergency alarms		Done		
Door entry system/suiting improvement programme		Ongoing		
Establish hospital discharge protocol (Queen's hospital)			✓	
Programme of improvements for communal areas (decorations & furnishings)		£ secured	✓	
Audit of Tunstall equipment & programme of updating		✓		
Review service charges			✓	
Identify & plan to meet gaps in service in context of Supporting People			✓	
New Targets				
Set up improved grounds maintenance and cleaning service				✓
Establish dedicated SH Maintenance Inspector			✓	

