

IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN 2002/03 PROGRESS REPORT SEPTEMBER 2002

IAP16 - Implement/Evaluate Derby Homefinder

With effect from April 2003 the Derby Homefinder scheme will be rolled out city-wide. Initially the scheme will be administered from Housing Options with an agreement secured for Derby Homes to prepare a proposal to operate the scheme. Derby Homes Senior Officers are involved in the steering group and operational group planning the extension of the scheme.

IAP17 - Reduce the time taken to relet properties

1. Fast Track Void Procedure - implemented City Wide.
2. Hand-held computers for Maintenance Surveyors will be introduced within the next 6 months – this will effectively remove the administrative function of inputting void repairs and reduce turnover by 1-2 working days per property.
3. Review Allocations procedures - this is being dealt with by the Process Improvement Team - due to report with proposals January 2003 - looking to reduce time within the offer process.

IAP18 - Ensure maximum investment from all funding opportunities

Two half day Partner Workshops (13 September 2002 and 3 October 2002) to maximise the impact of Homes Pride Capital Investment.

Workshop at Tenants Conference - 25 September 2002. Regeneration Officers working with Derwent NDC 2/3 days per week.

IAP19 - Priority Estates - Cowsley, Osmaston, Old Sinfen

A 'Futures' study will be carried out on each of the above estates commencing with Cowsley. The Housing Strategy and Development Section with the Policy Department of the City Council will carry out the studies. The studies will analyse localised issues of supply/demand and may make recommendation for redesign, selective demolition, environmental restructuring aimed at improving the future sustainability of these estates. Derby Homes expects to participate fully in these studies.

Empty Properties on estates remain a key concern, local office managers refer 'blight' properties to the City Council's Empty Properties Officer for actioning. Initial discussions have been held regarding the possibility of using the Homes Pride Capital programme to bring empty private properties up to a lettable standard to use these properties for decants during large-scale improvements. When no longer required the properties would be returned in an improved condition.

IAP20 - Forums/Conference/Housing Boards

It is intended to deliver the capital improvements through the local office network. Central teams currently based within the areas will be relocated at Cardinal Square from November 2002. The freed-up space will enable liaison staff from both Derby Homes and Partners to operate on a local basis. The first tranche of appointments to the liaison team was made in August 2002, this team are now carrying out preparatory work from Cardinal Square.

The first of two planned conferences was held on 19 March 2002, over 100 tenants, staff and proposed partner representatives attended this. A second conference is planned for late November to inform tenants and leaseholders how partnering will deliver the programme of works.

As part of the ALMO process Derby Homes will be creating two Housing Boards. The remit of these Boards is contained in Board Reports at Appendix 4.

IAP21 - Improve the level of service offered to Leaseholders

The Leaseholder Process Improvement Team are continuing to meet on a bi-monthly basis and are reviewing areas which include standards of grounds maintenance. A work programme has been drawn up for Officers to examine the current contractual requirements and housing staff and grounds maintenance supervisors now carry out joint estate inspections. We also plan to involve customers in monitoring of grounds maintenance, initially this will be piloted in two areas of the City.

In addition to the Process Improvement Team the Leaseholder forum continues to be held each 6 months, the Chair of Derby Homes Board and Director of Derby Homes both attend this meeting.

Service charges are to be estimated for the year (from end October 2002), leaseholders will receive one invoice based on this estimate with actual account sent after the end of the financial year. We will be offering improved payment facilities with the option of up to 12 months to pay.

Our plans for future improvements include the introduction of a leaseholders database, which will provide improved access to information and also the facility to log receipt of enquiries from leaseholders.

We now ensure that leaseholders are included in any consultation regarding future improvement works and we intend to extend choice by offering competitive home improvements to leaseholders, current examples include safety checks, new heating systems, burglar alarms.

The training programme has been redesigned and the course planned for December 2002 will incorporate all of the new processes and procedures.

IAP24 - Review all tenant participation information and opportunities for involvement

We have been working with PEP to update our existing Compact "Making Involvement Easy". A steering group made up of tenants/leaseholders and PEP have been meeting regularly over the last 6 months. The first draft of the revised Compact is due in October 2002.

The DACP Equalities forum and Derby Minority Ethnic Housing Group (DMHEG) have used the Equality Survey results to produce the draft Action Plan. The plan is currently being ratified to agree actions and resources.

Again working with PEP, a major review of the Panel structure is taking place. Existing leaflets are currently being amended to reflect the changes proposed. When the new structures are finally agreed the new documentation will be produced. This is still on schedule for completion March 2003.

IAP27 - Sheltered Housing Review

Progress reports to the Board of Derby Homes are attached at Appendix 5.

IAP28 - Improve our use of information technology

Derby Homes have purchased software to provide the smooth distribution of on-line management information, a project manager has been appointed and the project is moving forward with the aim of phased implementation starting by the end of December 2002.

In August 2002 Academy Information Systems, at the request of Derby Homes carried out an audit of ongoing software projects. A report has been produced and is attached at Appendix 6.. Senior Management will be assessing the report and developing an action plan with key staff from the IT team.

The City Council is currently examining the best options for future IT facilities management. Following the publication of their recommendations Derby Homes will assess the best course of action. It looks likely at the present time that an agreed extension to the current contract will be negotiated.

IAP29 - Implement Improvements to Derby Homes Training Programme

Frontline customer care training is ongoing for all new starters, dates booked through to March 2003.

Derby Homes has taken a wider view on training rather than simply developing a skills matrix as was the originally intended action. Working with Neil Potentier from Corporate Employee Development a draft Derby Homes Training and Development Policy has been prepared for consideration by the Board of Derby Homes. The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate commitment to developing [Page 1 of 6](#) employees and linking T&D to the attainment of Derby Homes business objectives. A copy of the draft report is attached at Appendix 7.

Around 35 staff have volunteered to receive First Aid training – a course is planned for initially around 20 people in November/December 2002.

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IAP2 - Introduce 'gold standard' service initiative for 'good' tenants

Consultants met with key officers in July 2002. A report has now been received at Derby Homes and will form the basis of our work to introduce reward initiatives.

IAP11 - Introduction of repairs enquiry centre

See project plan attached at Appendix 8.

IAP13 - Continue to improve disabled person adaptations processes

This is the subject of a Topic Review to be undertaken by the Social Care, Health & Housing Overview and Scrutiny Commission in October 2002. A Copy of our report is attached at Appendix 9.

IAP22 - Build on and develop the concept of the service user review group

This year SURG has been reintroduced with some new tenant members on the team. At the first meeting in July 2002 it was agreed to concentrate the SURG 'inspection' on the repairs and maintenance service. However the standards of service and appearance of reception areas will be included again to monitor the programme of access improvements/refurbishment.

The team have agreed to inspect the service by:

- Testing the minimum lettable standard by visiting a selection of properties, firstly when they are returned from the contractor and then by interviewing tenants about their views after they have moved in
- Conducting reality checks for a selection of repairs by visiting properties with Area Property Surveyors as part of the 'one day hit' exercise. This will take place in October 2002
- Interviewing tenants who have made requests for repairs to assess their views on the repair appointment service
- Visiting each local office reception area and assessing them against the same set of criteria used last year by SURG.
- Conducting a mystery customer telephone exercise to assess performance

The results of the mystery customer exercise and the local office reception inspection will be used to identify the Local Office of the Year award for 2002. The staff in the successful office will receive a cash reward.

To develop the SURG idea further a visit is arranged with Sandwell Residents to identify further improvements to the initiative.

IAP23 – Review of Tenant Participation Resources

Review of Tenant Participation Staffing Resources. The Tenant Participation Officers have formed a new team, the Community Initiatives Team which includes Regeneration Officers. This has encouraged greater partnership working and closer links between management and regeneration issues for tenants involved in the Panel movement.

Two new Tenant Participation Officers are to be appointed to continue to improve communication links between the panel movement, local office staff and the Homes Pride Programme. These posts will be based in the Local Offices which will allow them to provide much more face to face support for both current and prospective panel members.

We are currently working with the DACP Management Committee to identify new premises for the organisation. At present two potential sites are being considered.

The review of the annual funding agreement for DACP will take place before the end of 2002 after the current application for funding has been appraised.