

ST. LEGER HOMES OF DONCASTER LTD

Company limited by guarantee registered in England

Company Number 05564649

Joint Area Board Meeting

REPORT

Date : 10 November 2008

Item : 3

Subject : Decent Homes Programme
Progress Report

Presented by : Ken Hopkins
Interim Director of Property
Services

Prepared by : Paul Elliott
Assistant Director for Capital
Programmes

Purpose : Update board members on Decent Homes
Programme.

Recommendation :

Area Board discuss and note the contents of this report.

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**To the Chair and Members of the
ST LEGER HOMES OF DONCASTER
JOINT AREA BOARD**

**Agenda Item No. 3
Date: 10 November 2008**

1. Report Title

1.1 Decent Homes Programme Progress Report

2. Purpose

2.1 The purpose of this report is to: -

Update board members on progress of Decent Homes programme for period 1st April 2008 to 30th September 2008.

To provide an analysis of customer satisfaction feedback for period 1st April 2008 to 30th September 2008.

3. Recommendation

3.1 Board discuss and note the contents of this report.

4. Report Summary

4.1 This report provides an overview of progress for the Decent Homes Programme.

Section 9 provides a summary of customer satisfaction and customer complaints for 2008/09 programme as at 30th September 2008.

5. Background

5.1 The current Decent Homes programme commenced in November 2004, since this time a number of Decent Homes schemes across the borough have been delivered. This paper reports on progress of projects and customer satisfaction for the period 1st April 2008 to 30th September 2008.

5.2 The programme for the period 1st April 2008 to 30th September 2008 was delivering on average of approximately 95 completions per week across three programmes of one hits, windows & doors and externals.

6. Summary of 2008-09 Programme to 30th September 2008

6.1 This section provides a detailed overview of the works completed during period 1st April 2008 to 30th September 2008.

Contained in the table below is a summary position of the Decent Homes programme as at 30th September 2008.

Number of properties profiled to be completed – 30 th September 2008	Number of properties actually completed – 30 th September 2008	Number of properties in possession – 30 th September 2008
1,734 One Hit Programme	1,310 One Hit Programme	287 One Hit Programme
410 Window and Door Programme	111 Window and Door Programme	0 Window and Door Programme
0 - External Works Programme	53 - External Works Programme	0 - External Works Programme
2,835 linear metres - Environmental Works Programme	1,900 - linear metres- Environmental Works Programme	N/A

Profiled expenditure (cumulative) to the 30 th September 2008	Actual expenditure (cumulative) to the 30 th September 2008
£28,805,889	£22,879,715

6.2 Appendix A identifies the Decent Homes projects that have been, or are in, the process of being delivered. The projects are listed by location; with projects in the East listed first, followed by projects in the West.

7 Suspension of the programme

- 7.1 Following Health and Safety incidents at Woodlands and Balby Bridge, a joint decision was taken by St. Leger Homes and Doncaster MBC to suspend Decent Homes works on 22nd July 2008 until a thorough review of processes and procedures had been undertaken.

The priority within the review has been to ensure the Health and Safety of tenants during decent homes works. Following the review there have been a number of changes in working practices, these include:-

- 100% property inspections undertaken until confident that constructors are adhering to Health and Safety procedures.
- Review of staff training – all staff have now been assessed against revised competency criteria and additional training provided where appropriate.
- All constructors method statements are reviewed by St. Leger Homes Health and Safety consultant and Doncaster MBC prior to new works commencing on site.
- Local Type 3 archetype asbestos surveys undertaken on all properties receiving capital improvement works.
- Revised procedures to eliminate risk of works to property commencing without asbestos survey.

7.2 Re-mobilisation of constructors

One hit works re-commenced works on 13th August 2008 and were fully remobilised as of 8th September 2008. Both Henry Boot and Wates Living Space will still complete programmes within the current financial year. Bramall construction are now not anticipated to complete works for the current financial year until June 2009. Bramall construction are currently reviewing the re-mobilisation proposals to establish whether any parts of the programme can be accelerated to complete within current financial year so minimising any potential under spend within the current financial year that may result. A total of 418 properties were affected by the suspension of works (one hit and window and door programmes). Since mobilisation 252 properties have been handed over, with 166 properties affected by suspension remaining to be handed over.

Indicative programmes have been received for all window and door contractors. These programmes are now being mapped to produce a Type 3 archetype survey programme running ahead of the scheme.

Environmental works re-commenced beginning of October 2008. Ad hoc gas central heating programme re-commenced beginning of October 2008 and the electrical re-wire programme will re-commence November 2008.

Letters apologising for continued delays have been sent jointly by Doncaster MBC and St Leger Homes of Doncaster to all tenants affected by the stoppage. It is proposed that all properties in possession at the time of suspension will also receive a hamper as a goodwill gesture to apologise for inconvenience caused.

7.3 Costs of Suspension

Constructors have submitted claims to recoup losses which they incurred as a result of works being suspended. The claims are currently being examined by our cost consultants and will also be scrutinised by our legal advisors as they may become the subject of litigation before being settled. We therefore do not have specific figures relating to the cost of suspension

At this point therefore, we are unable to be specific about costs incurred due to the suspension

7.4 Quality of works

Henry Boot has experienced a number of quality issues particularly around mechanical and electrical (M&E) systems. This as resulted in 10 properties being rejected during the period 22nd September 2008 – 3rd October 2008.

Henry Boot have now recruited a finishing foreman with M&E knowledge which as so far reduced the number of properties being rejected.

7.5 Communication

We are have implemented the following improvements:-

- Introduction of site tours with ward councillors prior to commencement of each decency scheme
- Streamlining of communications pack, introducing invitation cards to launch and choice events
- Production of a new Tenants Choice Brochure
- Introduction of a mobile display trailer
- Weekly monitoring of customer satisfaction rates to improve response to complaints on particular schemes.
- Increasing number of Customer care officers employed by St Leger Homes on Decent Homes scheme to respond to customer complaints.
- Increased monitoring of contractor Tenant Liaison Officers ensuring daily visits are undertaken to all properties in possession.

7.6 Property Omissions from the programme

272 properties were omitted during the reporting period. Appendix B provides a full breakdown of omissions which include Right to Buy's, No Access and Declines.

8. Customer Satisfaction

As at the end of quarter 2 (30th September) 2008-09 there was a slight decrease in the Customer Satisfaction rating for the period 1st April to 30th September 2008 to 95% of customers satisfied or totally satisfied with works. The return rate across all schemes was 81%.

9. A total of 237 complaints were received on Decency during the reporting 1st April – 30th September 2008. The table below demonstrates how many of the complaints were upheld, not upheld, or partially upheld (where only part of the complaint is upheld).

Decent Homes Programme – 1st April 2008 to 30th September 2008: Complaints Analysis	
Number of complaints received	237
Number of complaints upheld	125
Number of complaints not upheld	61
Number of complaints partially upheld	44
Number of complaints outstanding	7

Comparatively, the number of complaints received in relation to the number of properties that have had decency works or are in progress during the period 1st April to 30th September 2008, amounts to 18% of customers. This is a noticeable increase of previous figure of 8%. Reasons for this are associated with increase in complaints due to suspension of works across the Decent Homes Programme during July 2008.

The majority of complaints relate to service provision. To enable us to reduce complaints, make the relevant improvements and expand on the services we provide, previously dissatisfied tenants will be invited to a workshop to assist us by sharing their experiences, views and opinions on how best we can make service improvements on decency, in particular whilst works are being undertaken.

The workshop will be facilitated as a partnership between SLHD, Bramall Construction, Henry Boot and Wates Living Space and will take place in November 2008 (exact date to be confirmed).

During the reporting period there has been an increase in the number of staff employed by SLHD and includes Customer Care officers. In addition, the monitoring of contractor Tenant Liaison Officer's has increased, ensuring daily visits are undertaken to all properties in possession and likewise Project Manager's who visit all properties daily.

The additional resource should have a profound impact on our communications with tenants, as well as access and the ability to deal with any issues or concerns raised, promptly and satisfactorily.

10. Consultation

Consultation on the Decent Homes programme, which is driven by the Investment Strategy, has been undertaken. Key groups consulted include SJC, DMBC, Contract Partners and local TARA's.

Consultation is also ongoing with staff and councillors. Throughout April and May 2008 a series of staff briefing sessions were held to raise awareness on the 2008-09 programme. We have also held a Councillor briefing session following the local elections and are now introducing site tours with ward councillors prior to commencement of each scheme.

The communications team are also organising a series of briefing sessions with local councillors in wards affected by suspension of works.

10.1 Legal Implications

Not applicable.

10.2 Financial Implications / Risk / Diversity

The major risk is associated with the future cost of the decency programme. This risk is mitigated by monthly financial reports that highlight any areas of overspend. This risk has been further mitigated by the employment of Turner Townsend who work as the Cost Consultants for Decent Homes schemes.

10.3 Value For Money

Turner Townsend are currently undertaking a review of scheme affordability, the outcome will be reported to SLHD Board in December 2008. Whilst it is anticipated there will be an affordability gap, it is anticipated that this will be able to be mitigated through a variety of measures including incentivisation arrangements with contractors, better programming of works to 2013-14, collective purchasing and review of specification items.

10.4 Diversity

Not Applicable.

10.5 Report Author

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10.6 Background Papers

Appendix A - Scheme breakdown
Appendix B - Property omission analysis