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## HOUSING OPTIONS APPRAISAL

### 1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report informs the Council of the recommendations made to it by the Rochford Housing Options Appraisal Board on 5 April 2005 in relation to the Housing Options Appraisal and invites Members to endorse the Board's recommendations.

### 2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The Council has been required by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) to carry out a Housing Options Appraisal into the future ownership and management of its housing stock.
- 2.2 On 2 March 2004, the Community Services Committee adopted a timetable and action plan for the option appraisal exercise. Subsequently, the Rochford Housing Options Appraisal Board (RHOAB) was set up and specialist consultants engaged.
- 2.3 The RHOAB is due to complete its review of the available options at its meeting on 5 April 2005. A copy of the report of the Council's financial adviser to the RHOAB meeting on 5 April will be despatched to all Members under separate cover. RHOAB's recommendations as to the preferred option, together with its reasons, will be circulated to Members after 5 April.

### 3 ORDER OF BUSINESS

- 3.1 The Chairman of the Rochford Housing Options Appraisal Board, Mr Tom Childs (tenant representative), will attend tonight's meeting to introduce the Board's conclusions. There will then be a presentation on the consultation of tenants and leaseholders by the Independent Tenant Adviser, Mr Alan Townshend (Your Choice Housing Consultants) followed by a presentation on the key issues that have led the RHOAB to its conclusions by the Council's Financial Adviser, Dr Graham Moody (Graham Moody Associates).
- 3.2 Following questions, Members will then need to determine the Council's decision on the Board's recommendations.

### 4 SUMMARY OF THE OPTIONS APPRAISAL PROCESS IN ROCHFORD

- 4.1 The Council has specifically been required by the government to consider the costs and benefits of four options for the future management and ownership of its housing stock, namely stock retention; private finance initiative (PFI); arms length management organisation (ALMO) and stock transfer (LSVT). (Explanations of each of these and other terms are set out in a 'Jargon Buster' at Appendix 1).

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- 4.2 Council Members serving on the RHOAB circulated an interim progress report to all Members in October 2004. (A copy of this report is attached at Appendix 2 for ease of reference).
- 4.3 Subsequently the RHOAB has met on 17 occasions to consider current data on key issues, including:-
- An independent stock condition survey of 313 units (20%) by King Sturge, Chartered Surveyors.
  - A Housing Needs Survey covering Rochford and Thames Gateway South Essex Sub-Region by David Couttie Associates (DCA), referred to the RHOAB by the Community Services Committee .
  - A report on Housing Care and Support Strategy for Older People in Rochford by Nigel King of Housing and Support Partnerships, referred to the RHOAB by the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
  - A financial appraisal of the four available options by Graham Moody Associates (GMA).
- 4.4 Extensive local consultation has been undertaken by the RHOAB and the Independent Tenant Adviser in accordance with its communications and empowerment strategies which have been approved by the Government Office for the Eastern Region (GO-East). These included:-
- A series of newsletters to all tenants, leaseholders, and other stakeholders from April 2004 to date, issued by the Council's tenant participation officer and by the Independent Tenant Adviser (ITA), Your Choice Housing Consultants.
  - Face to face meetings with over 40% tenants and leaseholders.
  - An aspirations survey of tenants and leaseholders which achieved a 53% response used to formulate the Rochford 'bronze/silver/gold' standards.
  - A free phone enquiry facility managed by the ITA which elicited over 100 enquiries.
  - A second round of consultation currently in progress.
  - A telephone panel of over 130 volunteer tenants and leaseholders.
  - Briefings of council staff.
  - A meeting with a wide variety of local stakeholders.
  - Briefings of the Council's housing contractors.

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- 4.5 There has been endorsement by the Community Housing Task Force (ODPM) of two key documents:-
- Rochford communications strategy.
  - Rochford tenant empowerment strategy.
- 4.6 A survey of the aspirations of tenants and leaseholders was undertaken in November 2004. (The results are set out in Appendix 3). These were subject to priority assessment by the RHOAB, styled as the Rochford 'bronze', 'silver' and 'gold' standards. (See Appendix 4).
- 4.7 The costs of meeting the various standards identified by the year 2010 were quantified in the light of the data obtained by King Sturge, Chartered Surveyors.
- 4.8 At a full day meeting of RHOAB on 25 January 2005, Dr Graham Moody of GMA presented a detailed analysis of the Housing Revenue Account, including revenue and capital for 2005/6 and 30 years projections.
- 4.9 Detailed financial modelling by GMA projected an investment gap of £11.9m in meeting the costs necessary to achieve the minimum decent homes standard by 2010.
- 4.10 GMA reviewed each of the four options available to RDC and analysed the benefits and risks of each.
- 4.11 The RHOAB concluded 'retention/no change' (staying as we are) is not a viable option.
- 4.12 The RHOAB concluded that no properties in Rochford meet relevant ODPM criteria and that therefore PFI is not appropriate in Rochford.
- 4.13 The RHOAB concluded that, while a Rochford ALMO would be feasible (assuming an ALMO were to be permitted by GO-East in light of its ability to achieve 2 star rating), such a venture would be risky and of limited benefit.
- 4.14 The RHOAB concluded that only LSVT of the council's stock to a housing association would achieve both the decent homes standard and most if not all of the Rochford gold standard by 2010 and also ensure these are sustained for at least 30 years.
- 4.15 The RHOAB decided that neither retention nor PFI was feasible but to hold a 'test of opinion,' in accordance with ODPM guidance, to gauge the current views of tenants and leaseholders on ALMO and LSVT.
- 4.16 The RHOAB decision of 25 January 2005 was immediately notified to all tenants, leaseholders and other stakeholders in a special edition of 'Your Home/Decide Your Future Now.'

- 4.17 The ITA undertook the 'test of opinion' achieving a response from some 51% of tenants, leaseholders. (A copy of the ITA Test of Opinion report and the ITA Consultation report is attached at Appendix 5). Of these some 29% expressed no clear preference between ALMO and LSVT. Of those who did, 39% favoured LSVT and 61% ALMO. It is stressed by the Government Office that the test of opinion is not binding on the Council but is simply part of the evidence required to be taken into account in the options appraisal.
- 4.18 In his report to the RHOAB, the ITA emphasised that the test of opinion was not entirely conclusive. It was undertaken when not all information was yet available for tenants' consideration (e.g. no LSVT partner has at this stage been identified).
- 4.19 The RHOAB instructed that a 'mini-audit' should be undertaken to obtain an urgent objective assessment of what prospects a Rochford ALMO would have of obtaining 2-star accreditation from the Audit Commission. Housing Quality Network was engaged to undertake an immediate 'mini audit' of the present housing service and to report back to the RHOAB at its meeting on 5 April, in time for the Council's meeting on 13 April.
- 4.20 On 5 April 2005 the RHOAB is to meet to formulate its final recommendation to the Council. In the event that LSVT is recommended, the RHOAB report should also include comments as to the nature of the delivery vehicle, e.g. whether a charitable HA and whether a local Rochford HA within a regional group.
- 4.21 Once the Council's decision is made it will be necessary to make a submission to the Government Office seeking ratification of that decision, known as 'sign-off'. GO-East anticipates notifying its decision confirming sign-off within 28 days.
- 4.22 It is intended that a further report will be made to Members once the GO-East decision is known recommending a plan of action for 'Options Appraisal Phase 2.' This will cover arrangements for establishing a shadow board for the ALMO or RSL, whichever is chosen, and for progressing implementation of the chosen option.

## **5 RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The ALMO option would at best achieve the basic decent homes standard in the council's stock by 2010, whereas adoption of the transfer option would provide sufficient additional funding to meet most if not all the aspirations of tenants and leaseholders. For an ALMO to achieve government funding it would require to achieve 2-star performance but there is doubt that this could be achieved in the timescale set by the government.

## 6 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Achievement of decent homes targets is intended to impact on sustainable community objectives including crime reduction.

## 7 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The release of resources to achieve decent homes if not tenants' aspirations will impact favourably on the local environment.

## 8 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Movement towards any option away from the current position will require careful and detailed management to avoid or minimise implications for the General Fund. It is anticipated that receipts under the LSVT option from both the transfer and subsequently will result in the medium term of at least a cost neutral position for the Council and probably some ability to produce funds.
- 8.2 Work on implementation of the chosen housing option will in the medium term require allocation of financial resources, but in the event of transfer in particular it is anticipated that receipts accruing to the Council both from the transfer and subsequently will far outweigh such outlay.
- 8.3 Both the housing options under consideration have staffing implications involving transfer of staff to a new organisation under TUPE. The staff-side representative has been kept informed of the option appraisal process and its implications. A number of staff currently engaged in housing management and maintenance are expected to be invited to transfer to any new housing management organisation. Following the Council's decision, these matters will be subject to negotiations in consultation with the staff-side representative to ensure the situation is sensitively managed. Part of the process will involve deciding which housing functions should be undertaken by the Council or by the new housing vehicle.

## 9 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There will be legal implications for the Council depending on the option selected. These are set out in the RHOAB report.

## 10 RECOMMENDATION

- 10.1 It is proposed that the Council **RESOLVES**

To endorse the recommendations of the Rochford Housing Options Appraisal Board and to advise the Regional Government Office of its decision.

Steve Clarkson

Head of Revenue and Housing Management

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**Background Papers:-**

Minutes of the Rochford Housing Options Appraisal Board  
(These are on deposit in the Members Library)

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## APPENDIX 1

**Options Appraisal Jargon Buster****Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO)**

One of the four Investment Options. This is an organisation that is set up by a Council to manage independently its homes to deliver housing management services and improve homes to meet the Decent Homes Standard. The Council still owns the properties and is still the landlord.

However, the decisions concerning housing services (e.g. repairs and maintenance) will be made by a Board of Management consisting of equal numbers of tenants, Councillors and people from the wider community (who are able to bring specialist skills to the Board).

**Assured Tenancy**

Created by the Housing Act 1988, these tenancies are usually given by Housing Associations and other similar Registered Social Landlords but NOT by local authorities. They are similar to Secure Tenancies except that tenants do not have the Right to Buy (except in the case of former Council tenants whose properties have been transferred through a Large Scale Voluntary Transfer).

Landlords must still obtain a Possession Order through the Courts to evict an Assured Tenant. Assured tenancies do not have time limits on them (as opposed to Assured Shorthold Tenancies, which last only for a specific period and are usually given only by private landlords).

**Community Housing Task Force (CHTF)**

Part of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) set up to guide local authorities through the Option Appraisal Process.

**Decent Homes Standard**

The standard which every council home must reach by 2010. This is a set of standards that have been determined by the Government, detailing a minimum or basic set of conditions that is acceptable for council properties. A decent home is one that is wind and weather tight, warm and has modern facilities. This includes items such as modern kitchens and bathrooms, proper wiring, heating and window glazing.

**GO-East**

Government Office for Eastern England (covers 56 councils)

**Housing Transfer**

When the management and ownership of council housing are moved from the local authority to a Registered Social Landlord RSL (see Stock Transfer and definition of RSL).

**Independent Tenant Adviser (ITA)**

Somebody appointed by the tenants but funded by the council to give them independent advice and support. ( A requirement of the ODPM)

**Investment Gap**

Quite simply, the difference between the amount of money we have to provide tenants with a housing service and the amount of money that we need to provide a service taking into account the 'Decent Homes Standard'.

**Investment Options**

Ways of tackling the estimated 'Investment Gap' where the finances of a Council or Housing Association are not enough to pay for a housing service required by the Decent Homes Standard.

Rochford District Council is at present considering four options - Stay As We Are, Arms Length Management Organisation, Private Finance Initiative and Stock Transfer. The idea is that, by engaging in the most appropriate option for our needs, we will be able to generate extra finance from the Government and thus provide the standard of housing our tenants and leaseholders want.

**Landlord Functions**

These are all the things that the landlord does in managing tenants' homes. In this case the landlord is Rochford District Council which owns their homes. Tenants are provided with a number of services such as those provided by the housing office (tenancy management), the repairs service and generally looking after their homes.

**Large Scale Voluntary Transfer (LSVT)**

See Housing Transfer.

**Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM)**

The government department responsible for social housing provision.

**Private Finance Initiative (PFI)**

One of the four Investment Options. This is a partnership where private sector finance is used to provide a public service through joint working. In the case of homes of tenants concerned, a PFI arrangement is governed by a contract for 25-30 years. Under this contract, the private sector partner will deliver the housing service and improvements that the Council pays for.

**Registered Social Landlord (RSL)**

A 'not-for-profit' organisation registered with and regulated by the Housing Corporation whose main business is the ownership and / or management of social housing. Most RSL's are housing associations. (RSL's with properties in Rochford include Swan, Estuary and Springboard housing associations.)

**Right to Buy**

Introduced under the 1980 Housing Act most secure tenants are entitled to the right to buy their Council home subject to certain criteria. To qualify for the Right to Buy, you must have spent at least two years as a public sector tenant (not necessarily with the same council or other appropriate organisation).

Under this scheme, tenants are entitled to a discount on the market value of their homes, depending on the number of years they have spent as a public sector tenant.

**Right to Manage**

The right of local authority tenants to set up an organisation to manage their own homes, usually through a Tenant Management Organisation (TMO).

**Rochford Housing Options Appraisal Board (RHOAB)**

The steering group appointed by Rochford District Council in 2004 to undertake the housing options appraisal. It consists of 4 councillors, 4 tenants and 1 leaseholder (who are voting members) together with 1 representative of the Local Strategic Partnership, 1 representative of a local housing association and 2 staff representatives.

Its terms of reference have been to consider the needs of all Rochford District Council tenants in determining the future of their homes and how they will be managed and to consult with tenants, leaseholders, staff and other stakeholders about housing stock options relating to tenants' aspirations for the future of their homes and to use feedback to shape and inform the council's decision, including a shared vision on how the housing service should develop in future.

**Stock Options Appraisal**

The process of choosing one of the various investment options to best meet the investment needs of the housing stock and the aspirations of the tenants living there. The work needed to meet the Decent Homes Standard and income raised by rents, service charges and subsidy received will all require to be considered when choosing the 'best-fit' option for Rochford.

**Registered Social Landlord (RSL)**

A term introduced by the 1996 Housing Act to describe a landlord registered with the Housing Corporation. In practice, this usually means a Housing Association (and sometimes a Local Housing Company).

**Secure Tenancy**

Created under the Housing Act 1980, these tenancies provide security of tenure for as long as the tenant and landlord wish the tenancy to last.

A Secure Tenancy can only be ended by the landlord obtaining a Possession Order through the Courts or the tenant giving Notice. These tenancies are usually given by local authorities. Secure Tenants enjoy certain rights, the Right to Buy their property, the Right to Exchange their property, the Right to Manage and the right to make alterations to their property.

**Service Level Agreement**

An agreement that is made between two or more parties to provide a certain level of service. In this case it applies to tenants and leaseholders and will refer to what services you can expect and how they will be provided, often within certain timescales, e.g. by what date a repair will be done.

**Stay As We Are**

This means that Rochford District Council retains ownership of the stock with no change in contractual management arrangements but no additional investment.

**Stock Transfer**

One of the four Investment Options. Sometimes known as Large Scale Voluntary Transfer (LSVT). This is where a local authority chooses to transfer ownership of its stock (or part of it) to a Registered Social Landlord. This can only happen if the majority of tenants vote for this through a ballot.

**Tenant Management Organisation (TMO)**

Non-profit organisation set up to take on management responsibilities in a local authority or RSL estate. A TMO is run by a board of tenants, who take the decisions in relation to the management of the estate. The TMO will employ and manage staff to undertake the day-to-day running of the estate.

**Tenants & Residents Associations**

Voluntary groups made up of people who live in a particular area. The group may be made up of any number of tenants and residents who come together to influence change in their area. This could be to have their say on local issues, concerns about crime and nuisance, lobbying for improvement of their homes and environmental issues.

**Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE)**

The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 1981 are regulations and amendments that implement the European Community Acquired Rights Directive 1977. They are intended to safeguard employee interests if the area in which they are working e.g. the housing management service – also known as an “undertaking” - is transferred to another employer. That is where the assets of a business or part of it are acquired by another company which then runs the business or entity. The assets transferred can be the staff, or the staff plus equipment.

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## APPENDIX 2

**Interim Report of Council Members on RHOAB to Rochford District Council October 2004****Stage 1****Information distribution and initial feedback**

Rochford Housing Options Appraisal Board (RHOAB) was set up in April 2004. Members include 4 tenants, 1 leaseholder, 4 elected councillors, (voting) and 2 community representatives, 2 staff representatives and substitute members (not voting). Chairman is Mr T Childs. Vice Chairman is Cllr Mrs M Vince.

To date, consultation has involved giving information on Options Appraisal (OA) and explaining the OA to 1763 tenants, 123 leaseholders, some 700 applicants on the Rochford housing register and to other stakeholders including RDC staff and building maintenance contractors. To date some 30% of tenants and leaseholders have been seen face to face at a series of road show events and public meetings around the District or in their own homes while others have been assisted on the telephone.

An Independent Tenant Adviser (ITA) 'Your Choice Housing Consultants' has been appointed by RHOAB tenants and leaseholders. Regular mail-shots have included 3 special editions of the tenant newsletter and a newsletter from the ITA. 6 sessions to brief Rochford District Council (RDC) staff were held from 23 September - 6 October led by ITA. (Over half the staff attended.)

RHOAB has met 7 times at monthly intervals. The Eastern regional government office (GO East) representative sat in on the RHOAB meeting on 10 August 2004. ITA has provided briefings and training to RHOAB and to RDC staff.

**Stage 2****Fact finding**

An 'aspirations survey' is being held in October to obtain tenants' views on 'Decent Homes Plus' – those items above the basic 'decent homes standard' (DHS) that tenants wish to include in the 'Rochford standard.' A detailed questionnaire of some 16 pages is being used to obtain this data. Meetings are being offered to assist tenants to complete these forms if required. The fact finding exercise will cover assessment of the costs required to achieve not only DHS by December 2010 but also the aspirations of tenants (the Rochford standard) and to sustain the stock in compliance with the DHS and the Rochford standard for 30 years thereafter.

Findings of current stock condition survey have been validated by King Sturge chartered surveyors. This relates to a previous 5% sample of 95 dwellings in 2003 but to meet government requirements this is to be augmented by a further 15% survey. This will be based largely on RDC records but must be supported by further random surveys.

The Options Appraisal will also include consideration by RHOAB of the results of a housing needs survey being undertaken by David Couttie Associates (jointly commissioned by Thames Gateway local authorities (Rochford, Basildon, Castle Point, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock.) The full report is due by December 2004 but Rochford data is intended to be substantially extrapolated by October 2004 for consideration by RHOAB. (Total of 10,200 forms being issued.)

Financial modelling of data supplied by RDC and from other relevant comparative sources will be undertaken by Graham Moody Associates, financial adviser.

An interim report is provisionally due to be submitted to RHOAB to RDC by January 2005. (If there is an interruption in the data flow over the next few weeks then this date may be set back up to two months.)

In the meantime, RHOAB is undertaking a series of visits to other Local Authorities and Registered Social Landlords (housing associations) to meet their staff and tenants and to assess their respective views on the various options and related issues. These are expected to include Colchester Arms Length Management Organisation, Flagship Housing Association, Swan Housing Association, Anglia Housing Association, Forest Heath District Council (which recently undertook a large scale voluntary transfer) and another council that has opted to utilise the private finance initiative option for part of its stock. Interested staff and tenants have been invited to take any spare seats on the coach.

### **Stage 3**

#### **Technical and financial appraisal of options and risks by RHOAB**

Financial adviser Graham Moody Associates (GMA) (who was appointed jointly by RHOAB and RDC) will report initially to RHOAB and then to RDC.

GMA will evaluate alternative options for fulfilling the Council's roles, duties and responsibilities and to make best use of resources, particularly in the context of Best Value.

The exercise will take a balanced view of the alternative options of the Rochford District Council retaining its stock, transferring its stock to a newly established landlord (Registered Social Landlord or Trust), to an existing Registered Social Landlord, to an Arms Length Housing Company, Private Finance Initiative partner or any other appropriate action.

Accordingly certain matters of a financial nature will need to be considered:

- 1 In relation to the continuation of the Council housing, the future implications for the Housing Revenue Fund and the General Fund with reference in particular to:
  - A The Resource Accounting regime.
  - B Capital Funding opportunities.

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- C Funding of the backlog of repairs and improvements of the Council's housing stock.
  - D Achievement of the Decent Homes Standard by 2010.
  - E Achievement of 'Decent Homes Plus' taking account of tenant and leaseholder aspirations.
  - F The impact of the Right to Buy, taking account of the new capital finance regime.
  - G Debt free status of the Council and when that might occur.
- 2 The likely impact of the Local Government Act 2003, the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003, the requirement for true depreciation accounting and other changes in legislation on service provision.
- 3 Meeting future housing needs within the District, based on the most recent local housing needs survey, and the scope for provision of new social housing, working within Planning Policy guidelines.
- 4 The implications for existing and new tenants of each of the options, with specific reference to the impact of rent levels.
- 5 In relation to the establishment of an Arms Length Housing Organisation:
- A Financial and other implications of following this route.
  - B The benefits to the Council and its tenants with regard to control and management of its stock.
  - C The financial implications on accessing finance, with particular reference to the linking of borrowing approval to the outcome of Audit Commission Best Value Inspection results.
  - D The optimum timescales for the Council and its tenants in pursuing this route and the likelihood of success in relation to meeting the Government's criteria.
- 6 In relation to a stock transfer option:
- A The timescales involved in following this route, including seeking a place on the Government's Stock Disposal Programme.
  - B The likely cost of the exercise up to ballot and who meets that cost.

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- C The financial consequences to the Council of stock transfer, including the effect on the General Fund, with specific reference to the impact of the capital receipt.
  - D The consequences for the Council of the current likely increase in the disposal programme.
  - E The alternatives of full or partial transfer.
  - F VAT implications, based on current arrangements and future forecasts of the VAT moratorium on stock transfers.
  - G Any other effects on the Council and its operations.
- 7 Views on the residualisation of the Council as a social housing provider/manager if no change is made to the present service arrangements.
- 8 An assessment of the benefits to all parties in the Council following a Large Scale Voluntary Transfer option and establishing its own receiving body in the form of a Registered Social Landlord or Housing Trust, in contrast to a similar avenue being followed and the stock being transferred to an existing Registered Social Landlord.
- 9 Transfer of Undertaking Protection of Employees (TUPE) arrangements should the Council pass the management of its housing stock to a receiving body, together with an examination of the retained housing duties and responsibilities of the District Council in such circumstances.

It is hoped that the interim report due will be submitted to RHOAB by December 2004/January 2005.

#### **Stage 4**

##### **Consultation by RHOAB on the interim findings of the financial adviser**

Test of opinion survey to be undertaken in January 2005 to establish views of tenants and leaseholders on the short-listed option or options.

#### **Stage 5**

##### **Review of results of test of opinion by RHOAB**

Consideration of the interim report content in light of test of opinion from tenants and leaseholders.

**Stage 6**

**Submission of RHOAB report and recommendation to RDC**

Consideration by RDC Members and decision on favoured option by end February 2005. \*

(Signed)

Cllr RGS Choppen

Cllr KA Gibbs

Cllr Mrs JR Lumley

Cllr Mrs M S Vince

(RDC representatives on Rochford Housing Options Appraisal Board).

(This half-yearly report is submitted in accordance with the RDC protocol regarding members serving on outside bodies).

(\*NOTE - Subsequently rescheduled for April 2005 principally due to delay in completion of housing needs survey).

## APPENDIX 3

**Aspirations Survey Findings**

53% (932) of the Council's tenants and leaseholders responded to the aspirations survey held in November and December 2004 as part of the housing options appraisal exercise.

Members of the Rochford Housing Options Appraisal Board have expressed their gratitude to those who took time to respond.

These detailed findings are now being used by the Board to guide their stock condition survey analysis and to assist in working up the estimated costs of meeting tenant aspirations over and above the basic decent homes standard. results were as follows:

	<b>Totals</b>	<b>% of sample</b>
Tenants of Flats	215	24
Tenants of Bungalows	169	19
Tenants of Houses	301	33
Tenants of Sheltered flats/bungalows	218	24
(some types not stated)	<b>903</b>	<b>100</b>
Total 1 bedroom	492	55
Total 2 bedroom	164	18
Total 3 bedroom	183	20
Total 4bedroom	55	6
(some sizes not stated)	<b>894</b>	<b>100</b>

The aspirations expressed by tenants and leaseholders who had responded (expressed in percentage terms) in response to a series of specific questions were:

**Part 1 Q1 Current Home - Tenants and Leaseholders' Priorities for improvement**

	<b>Priority;</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
		<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Windows		7	5	5
Heating		10	5	5
Car parking		7	4	7
Security		18	10	8
Gardens/grounds fences,		9	9	12
Bath/wc		25	17	10
Kitchen,		20	14	9
External doors		17	10	10

**Part 1 Q2 Kitchen - Tenants and Leaseholders' Priorities for improvement**

	Priority;	1	2	3
		%	%	%
More units		17	7	6
Better flooring		9	6	6
Extractor fan		14	7	6
Better sink		9	7	5
Better lighting		4	3	5
More worktops		6	7	7
Better/more wall tiles		8	8	6
Better taps		14	9	8
Better kitchen layout		17	8	6
More power sockets		9	6	6

**Part 1 Q3 Security - Tenants and Leaseholders' Priorities for improvement**

	Priority;	1	2	3
		%	%	%
More secure front door		37	10	8
More secure back door		16	17	8
More secure windows		6	4	7
Outside lights by door		16	13	12
Improved door entry (flats block)		17	6	5
Improved communal lighting/layout		5	6	9

**Part 1 Q4 Garden/Grounds - Tenants and Leaseholders' Priorities for improvement**

	Priority;	1	2	3
		%	%	%
Paths		27	11	6
Fences and gates		24	15	7
Secure storage for mowers/cycles		10	7	7
Outside tap		12	9	8
Communal area landscaping		5	5	8
Play areas for children		5	4	4
Outdoor seating in communal areas		6	6	8

**Part 1 Q5 Heating - Tenants and Leaseholders' Priorities for improvement**

Priority;	1	2	3
	%	%	%
Radiator in each room plus boiler	11	3	3
Individual thermostatic radiators	21	13	5
Heated towel rail in bathroom	18	11	9
Wall-mounted gas fire in lounge	6	4	4
Better loft insulation	11	6	6
Cavity wall insulation (pp radiator)	2	2	3

**Part 1 Q6 Bathroom WC - Tenants and Leaseholders' Priorities for improvement**

Priority;	1	2	3
	%	%	%
Wall mounted shower	40	8	5
Extractor fan	8	8	6
Better/more wall tiles	8	12	9
Better sink	5	7	6
Better bath	13	8	6
Better taps	8	8	9
Better flooring	5	4	5
Better layout	4	2	4
Disabled adaptations	9	6	4

**Part 1 Q7a Other Improvements - Tenants and Leaseholders' Priorities for improvement**

Priority;	1	2	3
	%	%	%
Rain canopy over front door	7	4	4
Front entrance porch	14	7	5
Built-in main bedroom wardrobe	11	8	6
Hard wired smoke detectors	26	11	7
Easier access to the home	3	2	3
More electric power points	13	13	7
Better lighting e.g. dimmers	11	13	13

**Part 1 Q7b 'Your No 1 Improvement' and Part 1 Q7c 'Other Improvements'**

Tenants and Leaseholders' narrative responses largely repeated the comments given in response to set questions

**Part 2 Existing facilities -Tenants and Leaseholders' dissatisfaction expressed**

	<b>Happy</b>	<b>Not entirely happy</b>	<b>Do not have</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Full double glazing in windows	78	9	4
Full central heating	80	7	3
Modern kitchen	39	22	25
Good quality exterior doors	38	18	26
Adequate car parking	46	11	18
Adequate ventilation in kitchen	43	16	24
Modern bathroom	27	24	30
Wall-mounted shower	27	13	46
Secure storage for lawnmower etc	33	9	28
Built in wardrobe in main bedroom	25	8	46

**Part 2a How important in your opinion is the provision of more affordable housing in Rochford?**

	<b>%</b>
Very important	77
A little important	7
Not very important	4

**Part 3 Your Priorities for Neighbourhood Improvements (including top priority or important)**

<b>Priority;</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Your home itself	41	14	27
Better car parking provision	15	20	43
Anti-social behaviour	28	20	23
Crime reduction	36	26	19
Transport	29	22	33
Outdoor spaces for children	18	25	34
Outdoor spaces for adults	10	22	45
Road and pavement safety	44	24	16
Traffic congestion	26	22	31
Race relations	8	13	55
Clean streets	34	26	24
Community social activities/events	14	28	34
Sports facilities	13	22	38
Clubs etc for young people	30	27	20

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Priority;	1	2	3
	%	%	%
Better estate caretaking	21	24	29
Better cleaning / window cleaning	16	18	40
Appointment system for repairs	31	27	20
Electric buggy parking (sheltered)	20	20	29
New affordable housing for locals	49	22	8
Handrails in/outside of home	24	20	31

Street safety, cleanliness and policing were cited most frequently as the single most important improvement in neighbourhood.

## APPENDIX 4

**Summary of the Rochford ‘Bronze’, ‘Silver’ and ‘Gold’ Standards**

Over and above the requirements of the Decent Homes Standard the aspirations of tenants and leaseholders are set out under the terms of three levels of provision known as the Rochford ‘Bronze’, ‘Silver’ and ‘Gold’ Standards:

**Bronze Standard**

In addition to what Rochford Council already does under the tenancy agreement, the following would be required of the landlord within the bronze standard:

- Replacement of tap washers.
- Replacement of internal doors and ironmongery.
- Rear paths and patios.
- Close boarded 1.8m fencing between gardens where RDC responsibility.
- Works to trees in gardens (possibly subject to means testing) is already carried out where damage to council property likely.
- Internal decorations (discretionary).

**Silver Standard**

In addition to Bronze Standard, the following items would be carried out by the landlord under the heading Silver Standard:

- Kitchen Replacements.
- A choice of taps, including a mixer and lever tap.
- Extractor fan.
- Enhanced layout of the kitchen, and an allowance for extra units.
- 4 or 5 colours rather than the present.
- 2 or 3 will be offered and tenant representatives will be asked to agree a colour choice for void properties.
- Extra handles/knobs to be supplied to enable quicker replacement.
- Bathroom Programme.
- A wall mounted electric shower.

- More tiles (possibly one full wall tile for showers).
- Better bath (pressed steel rather than plastic).
- A choice of taps with mixer.
- A heated towel rail where possible.
- A choice of wash hand basin styles.
- Double glazing.
- Spy holes on doors, that can have them fitted.
- Heating improvements.
- Already provided.
- Other internal.
- Hard wired smoke detectors
- Improved security to windows and doors e.g. by fixing restrainers on fanlights.
- Additional power sockets replacing single sockets with doubles.
- Dimmer switch in lounges.
- Replacing single sockets with doubles.
- Other external.
- Fencing and gates for all properties.
- External porch lights.
- Door entry system programme (possibly with CCTV also) for all flat blocks subject to leaseholder consultation.
- Outside taps.
- Paths.

**Gold Standard**

In addition to Bronze & Silver Standard, the following items would be carried out by the landlord under the heading Gold Standard:

- Kitchens - choice of sink, better lighting and better flooring.
- Bathrooms - better sink, better flooring and bathing adaptations.
- Built in wardrobe in one bedroom.
- Rain canopy over the front door.
- Path refurbishments.
- Secure storage for Mobility Scooters at sheltered schemes.
- Outdoor seating in communal areas (subject to local consultation).
- Better/More play areas for children (subject to local consultation).
- Enhanced communal landscaping (subject to local consultation).