

**REPORT TO: EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING, 19 JULY 2007**

**REPORT BY: ALAN CUFLEY - HEAD OF COMMUNITY HOUSING**

**WRITTEN BY: ROY SCANLON - Housing Renewals Manager**

**SUBJECT: PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING  
Stock Condition and Regional Housing Board Funding**

## **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

To advise the Executive Member of the proposed changes to the allocation of funding for Housing Renewal.

To advise of the need to carry out a Private Sector Stock Condition Survey to inform the new Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy and assess the progress towards providing Decent Homes for vulnerable residents.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. That the Executive Member approves the commissioning of a comprehensive Private Sector Stock Condition Survey and the use of the Building Research Establishment's Housing Stock Modelling Service.
2. That the Executive Member approves the submission of a collaborative bid to the Regional Housing Board for future funding for Housing Renewal.
3. That delegated authority to agree the final details of and submit that bid to be given to the Head of Community Housing after consulting with the Executive Member and Opposition Spokesperson

## **3. BACKGROUND**

### **3.1 Stock Condition and Strategy**

The council is expected by the Government to conduct a Private Sector Stock Condition Survey every five years. The last survey of the private sector stock was carried out in 2003 with the next programmed for 2008. The final report, published in April 2004, was used to inform the council's current Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy. This strategy document was for the period 2003 – 2007 and needs to be reviewed. The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 requires a local authority to produce a Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy drawing on a robust "evidence base".

### **3.2 Public Sector Agreements**

The 2003 stock condition survey was used to establish the baseline for the number of vulnerable people living in decent homes as required by PSA 7 and subsequently to set the stretch target for LPSA2.

### **3.3 Funding**

In the past, funding to support Housing Renewal in the city has been through the provision of a Supplementary Credit Approval from the ODPM. This was changed for 2006/7 and 2007/8 to a grant from the Regional Housing Board (RHB), based on a formula set out in the Regional Housing Strategy.

For 2008 – 2010 the RHB will allocate its private housing renewal funds based on bids from local authorities or sub regional partnerships. Recent guidance from the RHB makes reference to bids being supported by up to date stock condition data.

## **4. DETAILS OF THE PROPOSALS**

### **4.1 Stock Condition Survey**

As well as the ability to review the Private Sector Housing Strategy, a survey will also provide an assessment of the effectiveness of the current Financial Assistance Policy in delivering the aims of that Strategy that includes the delivery of Decent Homes for the city's vulnerable residents. It is proposed to engage consultants to conduct a comprehensive Private Sector Stock Condition Survey and produce a report informing the council on a range of issues. This will cover a profile of the stock, the Decent Homes Standard, Housing Health & Safety, Repair and Renewal, Occupiers response to poor conditions, Energy efficiency/ Fuel poverty, houses in Multiple Occupation, Etc.

On receipt of the final report it is proposed that a review of the Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy and the Financial Assistance Policy will be the subject of a report to the Executive Member in February 2008.

Financial provisions for the survey have been made in the Housing Investment Programme budget.

### **4.2 Regional Housing Board Funding**

With the change in funding arrangements for housing renewal in future years, and to ensure that the current level of funding from the RHB is maintained, there is the need for Portsmouth to submit a bid with at least one other authority or as part of a sub regional partnership.

It is proposed that discussions continue with other local authorities, including PUSH partners to establish the best way to present our need for additional funding. As a result of those discussions, a collaborative bid for funding will be prepared for submission to the RHB with the detail reported to a future Housing Executive Member meeting.

Should it not be possible to report our bid intentions to a meeting of the Housing Executive within the necessary timeframe, delegated authority is sought to facilitate the bid submission without compromise to the city council's position.

The RHB is looking for bids to be submitted by October 2007 and the results of the stock condition survey will not be available before that date. It is therefore proposed that the city council employ the Building Research Establishment's Housing Stock Modelling Service to provide the data to support our bid.

This service provides estimates of local housing conditions using data from the English House Condition Survey, local census and other commercially sourced data. The five London sub regional partnerships use this service to predict housing conditions and as a tool to target resources.

The cost of the Stock Modelling Service will be £10,000 if carried out alone but discounts are offered if it is carried out for a consortium. In light of the RHB's collaborative expectations we would look to commission this with one or more partners.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

The proposals would ensure the council complied with its statutory obligations to have an evidence based Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy and Financial Assistance Policy. It will also provide the up to date data required to support our bid for funding to the RHB, thus enable the ongoing provision of decent safe homes for our residents.

## **6.0 SIGNING OFF THE REPORT**

Signed.....  
Alan Cufley Head of Community Housing

Dated.....

## **7.0 APPROVAL TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

The recommendations set out above were approved / approved as amended / deferred / rejected by the Executive Member for Housing, on.....

Signed.....