

COMMITTEE:	TENANTS ADVISORY GROUP
DATE:	15th April 2002
SUBJECT:	Best Value Review: HOUSING MANAGEMENT – PART II
REPORT OF:	Janet Canny, Head of Housing Management
Ward(s):	ALL
Purpose:	To update the Advisory group on the progress of this review.
Contact:	Janet Canny, Head of Housing Management Telephone 01323 415306 or internally on extension 5306.
Recommendations:	That Tenants Advisory Group note the content of this report.

1.0	<u>Background</u>	
1.1	The Best Value Review of Housing Management follows a two stage process. Part I, has covered the strategic review of stock options. Part II, seeks to review the Housing Management function, from an operational perspective.	

1.2	<p>Part I of the Review has reported to Cabinet and is seeking to establish the feasibility of Large Scale Voluntary Stock Transfer (LSVT). The areas of review covered by Part II are those which would apply to transferred stock. These particular services would need to be provided, measured with appropriate service standards set, regardless as to who fulfilled the actual landlord role.</p>	
1.3	<p>The other functions relating to the Housing Management Division are those provided by our Property Services Team and cover the maintenance and improvement of the Council housing stock and Lifeline and Retirement Housing Service. Property Services was the subject of a 'Quality Review' undertaken in 1999, and set within the parameters of best value principals. This service area is due to undertake a further Review in Year 5 of the Council's Best Value Review Programme. Retirement Housing's review was completed in Year 1 and Lifeline's review is due to report shortly.</p>	
1.3	<p>Those services provided by the Housing Needs and Strategy division are scheduled for year 5. The services provided are likely to fall outside those that would be transferred should LSVT proceed.</p>	
1.2	<p>Part II of the Review commenced in November 2001, and its progress to date is detailed within the main body of the Report.</p>	
2.0	<p><u>Key Objectives</u></p>	

2.1	The Review seeks to concentrate on the following aspects of service provision, namely: Estate Management, Revenue Collection and Tenant and Leaseholder participation.	
2.2	Estate Management issues incorporate tenancy management including enforcement of tenancy conditions, reletting of properties and the management of tenancy changes. This area also includes environmental issues including caretaker services, the management of garages, gardens and the general environment.	
2.3	The Revenue Collection element of the Review will cover all matters pertaining to collections and the administration of property and garage rents, leaseholder service charges and the prevention of debt and the provision of welfare benefits advice.	
2.4	Tenant and Leaseholder Participation covers a review of the existing Tenant and Leaseholder compact and will seek to identify other mechanisms for the improvement in the opportunities for tenant and leaseholder involvement in service provision.	
3.0	<u>Key Challenges</u>	
3.1	<p>Following a specific scoping exercise carried out by Members and Corporate , which will be considered by Cabinet on the 6th March 2002, the key challenges for the Review to consider are:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ø To examine and make recommendations on the use of “Introductory Tenancies” and associated measures to assist in the enforcement of tenancy obligations. Ø To examine service standards and their role in forming the above Contracts. 	

4.0	<u>Progress to Date</u>	
4.1	To ensure the most efficient and robust Review possible, three working groups have been established covering the three areas of service – Estate Management, Revenue Collection and Tenant and Leaseholder participation. The primary Review Group considers feedback from these working groups and charges them with their future “Programmes of Work”.	
4.2	The Review Group is chaired by Councillor Elkin, attended by Councillor Pooley and attended by Tenant Representatives together with relevant officers. Martin Ray represents the Corporate Management Team. Tenant Representatives also attend each working group meeting. External representatives attend from a local Housing Association.	
4.3	The Review Group has commenced work on the review of nuisance and anti-social behaviour policies, review of the Tenant and Leaseholder compact and review of revenue collection procedures. A full project plan detailing this review is found at appendix 1.	
5.0	<u>Consultations</u>	

5.1	As detailed in Paragraph 4.2, Tenant Representatives form a core part of the Review Group and associated working groups. It is anticipated that additional information and further opportunities for consultation will be made available through further contact with our wider body of Tenants and Leaseholders.	
5.2	Issues relevant to the Review also formed part of the Annual Tenants Survey and the results from this are currently being analysed.	
5.3	There are a number of cross-cutting issues which form part of this Review's key objectives and challenges. It is clear that additional consultation will be required with external agencies and organisations including the Police, Mediation Services, East Sussex County Council and the Benefits Agency.	
6.0	<u>Human Resource, Environmental, Financial, Youth and Anti-Poverty Implications</u>	
6.1	There are no specific implications identified at this time.	
7.0	<u>Conclusions</u>	
7.1	That Members note the content of this Report.	
Janet Canny Head of Housing Management		

Background Papers:

The Background Papers used in compiling this report were as follows:

There are none.

To inspect or obtain copies of background papers please refer to the contact officer listed above.