

**Subject:** Rossendale Housing Stock  
Condition Survey

**Status:** For Publication

**Report to:** Cabinet

**Date:** 17<sup>th</sup> March 2010

**Report of:** Head of Regeneration

**Portfolio**

**Holder:** Regeneration

**Key Decision:** Yes

Forward Plan  General Exception  Special Urgency

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To provide Cabinet with information relating to the key outcomes of the Rossendale Housing Stock Condition Survey.

**2. CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

2.1 The matters discussed in this report impact directly on the following corporate priorities and associated corporate objective.

- Delivering Quality Services to Customers (Customers, Improvement)
- Delivering Regeneration across the Borough (Economy, Housing)
- Improving health and well being across the Borough (Health, Housing)

**3. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 All the issues raised and the recommendation(s) in this report involve risk considerations as set out below:

- The survey work provides numerous linkages between housing; health; the economy and fuel poverty facing Rossendale and Pennine Lancashire. These reports provide robust, baseline evidence to act as a negotiation tool to attract further investment into the area from Government agencies. Failure to support the proposed principles and policy implications of this work could undermine the effectiveness of the Council's Private Sector Housing Team and proposed strategy revision of the Private Sector Housing Strategy putting at risk the ability of Rossendale and partner authorities to lever in investment.

## 4. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

- 4.1 During 2009, officers from five of the Pennine Lancashire Authorities and a representative from Elevate formed a steering group to procure and commission individual district Stock Condition Surveys and an overarching Pennine Lancashire report incorporating Housing Market Renewal Areas within the individual districts. The aim of the joint commissioning was to provide best value through economies of scale and consistent project management.
- 4.2 The Rossendale study provides baseline evidence based on random sample of households across the borough that will be used to inform policy and decision making on a number of aspects which link housing to health; the economy; aids and adaptations; and energy efficiency including fuel poverty. A copy of the Executive Summary is attached, however, some of the main findings of this report are:-
- Only 63% of vulnerable householders are living within a decent standard of housing leaving an estimated shortfall of 570 vulnerable householders living in poor, inadequate housing. (The Government's PSA7 target was to make 70% of dwellings occupied by vulnerable households decent by the end of 2010).
  - That there are approximately 4,500 householders within Rossendale suffering from fuel poverty (i.e. spending more than 10% of their income on heating) in order to remedy this situation investment in the region of £7.1 million would be required.
  - The report identifies that there is over £32.2 million pounds worth of Category 1 Hazards prevalent within properties within the Valley. (The new Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) which replaces the old fitness standards of a property, covers a total of 29 hazards. These are classified by the seriousness and likeliness to cause injury or illness to householders etc. Local authorities are required to take action where a Category 1 Hazard has been identified (as formerly with unfitness).
  - Indicative costings for undertaking and delivering aids and adaptations for residents with a disability across Rossendale (from their perceived needs) would be in the region of £4.9 million.
  - In total the report identifies that there is a need for £60.1 million of investment required across Rossendale to householders of all tenures in order to remedy Category 1 Hazards; general householder repairs; provision of Aids and Adaptations; and the alleviation of fuel poverty.
- 4.3 Unfortunately resources from the Government's Single Capital Pot allocation that the Council uses to support the above have reduced from £668,000 in 2007/8 to £431,000 for 2009/2010 although current indications are that this may increase slightly in 2010/11. This obviously, impacts on the ability of the Council to effectively address the issues identified within the report.
- 4.4 In view of the level of funding currently available through the Single Capital Pot, it is unlikely that the Council will be able to fully address the wider issues of the private sector housing stock in the near future.

- 4.5 The need for significant additional investment to address housing conditions is common across Pennine Lancashire and is highlighted within the Pennine Lancashire Housing Strategy. It is a key priority for discussion with the Homes and Communities Agency (HaCA) via the 'Single Conversation' which is the methodology now used to negotiate future investment for local authority areas.
- 4.6 Negotiations with HaCA will commence in the coming months, but the outcomes of these discussions would only result in any additional investment being available from March 2011 onwards.
- 4.7 The report also highlights the ongoing and growing needs for investment in aids and adaptations to assist those households living with disability.
- 4.8 At the moment, 'low level' aids such as handrails, bath rails etc are provided directly through the Social Services authority. Where more significant adaptations are required, the household is assessed by the Occupational Therapist and given appropriate advice before being referred to the Council for a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG).
- 4.9 Funding for DFG is awarded annually through a Specified Capital Grant to local authorities. Rossendale receives around £335,000 and provides additional funding from its own Housing Capital Programme resources. The budget for this work for 2009/2010 is therefore £700,000.
- 4.10 However, demand for the service remains high and currently there are 150 cases on the waiting list for DFG's with a total works value of £1,000,000.
- 4.11 In view of this, officers have lobbied the Government Office for the North West, who determine the annual allocations, to increase the annual funding made available. The 2010/2011 allocation is yet to be announced.

#### **COMMENTS FROM STATUTORY OFFICERS:**

##### **5. SECTION 151 OFFICER**

- 5.1 The report identifies c £60m of spending required following the findings of the Housing Stock Condition Survey. This compares to annual resources by way of various Government grants equating to c 1% of actual need.
- 5.2 Given the available resources within the Council and other competing financial demands it is highly unlikely that the required investment as identified by the Rossendale Housing Stock Condition Survey can be delivered by Rossendale Borough Council in isolation.
- 5.3 It is also reasonable to conclude that, unless significant resources are invested, the financing gap (currently £60m) will increase.

##### **6. MONITORING OFFICER**

- 6.1 Disabled Facilities Grants are mandatory grants funded through a specific capital grant provided annually. There is no statutory responsibility for the

Council to provide additional resources to meet local demands although this is considered good practice by the Audit Commission.

## **7. HEAD OF PEOPLE AND POLICY (ON BEHALF OF THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE)**

7.1 There are no HR implications arising from this report.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

8.1 Clearly, there are considerable challenges ahead for the Council and its partner agencies to address the findings of the report and attract the level of investment needed to meet the needs of our residents.

8.2 The findings from the report have been incorporated into the delivery plans of the wider Pennine Lancashire Housing Strategy and will inform the revision of the Council's Private Sector Housing Strategy and action plan.

8.3 In view of the level of investment required in Rossendale's housing stock it is essential that the Council, both separately and collectively with its Pennine Lancashire partners, continues to lobby central Government for continued significant investment in housing renewal initiatives.

## **9. RECOMMENDATION(S)**

9.1 That the outcomes from the Rossendale Housing Stock Condition Survey be noted.

9.2 That the Council and its partners continue to lobby for continued investment in initiatives to address the conditions within the private sector housing stock.

## **10. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT**

10.1 Portfolio Holder for Regeneration; Partner Local Authorities; Elevate; Residents contacted as part of the survey process.

## **11. COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

Is a Community Impact Assessment required No

Is a Community Impact Assessment attached No

## **12. BIODIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

Is a Biodiversity Impact Assessment required No

Is a Biodiversity Impact Assessment attached No

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Background Papers	
Document	Place of Inspection
Rosendale Stock Condition Survey	Attached