

TORBAY COUNCIL

Report No: **50/2005**

Title: **Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy 2005-2009**

To: Executive

on 15th March 2005

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To agree a new approach to giving financial assistance (renovation grants) to home owners to improve their living conditions.
- 1.2 To improve the quality of private rented sector accommodation and improve the level of nomination rights for households in housing needs.
- 1.3 To respond effectively to the new provisions within the Housing Act 2004 within existing resources.

2. Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 2.1 The functions within this directorate contribute to the themes and priorities as listed below:

- 1. Improving access to good quality affordable housing

- Improving communication, participation and consultation;
- Regenerating Torbay, providing affordable homes, and contributing to sustainable neighbourhoods;
- Promoting healthy housing and tackling homelessness,
- Helping people to live independently.

The Strategy will also make a significant contribution to three of the other 7 Corporate Themes:

Making Torbay a safer place
Improving Health and Social Care in Torbay
Creating sustainable communities

3. Recommendation(s)

- 3.1 That the Torbay Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy for 2005-2009 (as set out at Appendix 1 to this Report) be adopted.

4. Reason for Recommendation(s)

- 4.1 To comply with new legislation.
- 4.2 To target resources strategically and improve the Council's performance in relation to BVPI 62 and 64, which are to make properties fit for habitation and to bring long term empty properties back into use.
- 4.3 To assist with the Council's vision that all residents should have the opportunity to live in a decent home, reduce health inequalities and promote independent living.
- 4.4 To increase the proportion of vulnerable households (in receipt of income related or disability benefit) offered assistance that are living in non decent private sector

accommodation (national Local Public Service Agreement)

5. **Key Risks associated with the Recommendation(s)**

The risk assessment below identifies the impact if the Strategy is not implemented. There is a high likelihood of a failure to direct resources to where they are most needed if the Strategy is not adopted. Adoption of the Strategy will lead to targetted use of resources in accordance with the new Act.

Likelihood	6	6	12	18	24
	5	5	10	15	20
	4	4	8	X	16
	3	3	6	9	12
	2	2	4	6	8
	1	1	2	3	4
		1	2	3	4
		Impact			

Low risk
 Intermediate risk
 High risk

The "x" in the above matrix denotes where the author has assessed the level of final risk to fall

- 5.1 Training staff in new approach detailed within Housing Act 2004, which is a radical and complicated change in procedures will be required.
- 5.2 Successfully meeting various targets within the action plan timescales will be a challenge.

6. **Background**

- 6.1 The Regulatory Reform Order (RRO) 2002 allowed Local Authorities to develop and offer their own more flexible financial assistance for people to promote repair and improvement in the private housing sector. Before the Order, the Government controlled very tightly the way in which financial assistance could be given. The RRO swept aside the previous framework, with the exception of mandatory Disabled Facility Grants, and allowed authorities to adopt a new, flexible approach tailored to the needs of their area.
- 6.2 The Housing Act 2004 fundamentally changes the approach which should be adopted towards the assessment of Housing Standards.
- 6.3 To enable Torbay to make use of this new freedom and complying with the Act and move forward from the interim strategy it is necessary to prepare and publish a new formal Private Sector Renewal Strategy.(Appendix 1)
- 6.4 The draft strategy detailed in Appendix 1 has been developed following extensive research and consultation with South Devon Residential Landlords, Past Grant recipients, local registered Social Landlords, Home Improvement Agency.
- 6.5 The Housing Strategy Working Party considered the draft policy at its meeting on 20.01.05. and recommended it should be adopted by the Council.
- 6.6 Private sector housing issues in Torbay have been robustly identified, examined and prioritised and are clearly outlined in an action plan.(See page 62 onwards)

- 6.7 The strategy and related policies and action plan reflect good practice adopted by other Councils and is consistent with the approach at national, regional and local level.

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IMPLICATIONS, CONSULTATION AND OTHER INFORMATION

Part 1

These sections may have been completed by the Report author but must have been agreed by the named officers in the Legal, Finance, Human Resources and Property Divisions.

Does the proposal have implications for the following issues? If "Yes" - give details. <i>delete as appropriate</i>		Name of responsible officer
Legal	Yes Legal requirements are dealt with in the new Private Sector Renewal Strategy	Bill Norman
Financial – Revenue	No The Strategy outlines the new framework for allocation of Renovation Grant monies.	
Financial – Capital Plan	Yes – Budget provision for Disabled Facilities Grants and other direct assistance provided by the Council to enable private sector renewal is earmarked in the Capital Plan Budget. The Council will have reviewed the Capital Plan Budget on 3rd March 2005 and the draft Housing Renewal Strategy will need to reflect any minor changes in approved budgets as a result of that review.	Lynette Royce
Human resources	No	
Property	No	

Part 2

The author of the report must complete these sections.

Could this proposal realistically be achieved in a manner that would more effectively: <i>delete as appropriate</i>		
(i)	promote environmental sustainability?	No
(ii)	reduce crime and disorder?	No
(iii)	promote good community relations?	No
(iv)	promote equality of opportunity on grounds of race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief?	No
(v)	reduce (or eliminate) unlawful discrimination (including indirect discrimination)?	No

If the answer to any of the above questions is "Yes" the author must have addressed the relevant issue/s in the main report and have included a full justification and, where appropriate, an impact assessment.

Part 3

The author of the report must complete this section.

	<i>delete as appropriate</i>	If "Yes", give details
Does the proposal have implications for any other Directorates?	Yes	Social Services and Environmental Health – will assist these sections in discharging their duties

Part 4

Is this proposal in accordance with (i.e. not contrary to) the Council's budget or its Policy Framework?		<i>delete as appropriate</i>
		Yes
1.	If "No" - give details of the nature and extent of consultation with stakeholders and the relevant overview and scrutiny body.	
2.	If "Yes" - details and outcome of consultation, if appropriate.	
	As detailed in Appendix B of the attached report (Appendix 1)	

Part 5

Is the proposal a Key Decision in relation to an Executive function? (i.e. would generate expenditure or savings in excess of £100,000 or 20% of an approved budget OR affect more than 2,000 residents of the Borough.)	<i>delete as appropriate</i>	If "Yes" - give Reference Number
	Yes or No	yes

Part 6

Wards

All

Appendices

Appendix 1

Torbay Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy

Background Papers:

The following documents/files were used to compile this report: