

**TOWER HAMLETS HOMES
ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2010-2017
- REVISED DRAFT -
OCTOBER 2010**

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Appendix One: Action Plan

Glossary of terms	
AHR	Accessible housing register
ASB	Anti-social behaviour
ALMO	Arms length management organisation
AMS	Asset management strategy
BME	Black and minority ethnic
BCM	Building cost model
CIoH	Chartered Institute of Housing
CBL	Choice based lettings
CCTV	Closed circuit television
CLG	Communities and Local Government
CP12	Gas safety certificate
CSF	Critical success factors
DAA	Disabled access audit
DDA	Disabled Discrimination Act
EcoHomes XB	A standard for the environmental performance of the
EPC	existing housing stock
EqIA	Energy Performance Certificate
FRA	Equality Impact Assessment
GLC	Fire risk assessment
HCA	Greater London Council
Housemark	Homes & Communities Agency
HHSRS	A benchmarking service jointly owned by NHF and CIoH
HRA	Housing health and safety rating system
ICT	Housing Revenue Account
IHMP	Information and communication technology
KPI	Integrated housing management package (Northgate)
LBTH	Key performance indicator
MRA	London Borough of Tower Hamlets
M&E	Major repairs allowance
NHER	Mechanical and electrical
NPV	National Home Energy Rating scheme
NDC	Net present value
Northgate	New Deal for Communities
OT	Integrated housing management package
OJEU	Occupational therapist
OGC	Official Journal of the Economic Union
PDA	Office of Government Commerce
PRC	Personal digital assistant
RDSAP	Pre-cast reinforced concrete
RSL	See SAP. Reduced Data SAP is required to support EPCs
RSG	Registered social landlord
SOR	Repairs steering group
SLA	Schedule of rates
SAP	Service level agreement

SCS	Standard assessment procedure (energy efficiency)
TSA	Stock Condition System (THH's stock condition database)
THH	Tenant Services Authority
VFM	Tower Hamlets Homes
	Value for money

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CONTEXT

This Asset Management Strategy (AMS) has been prepared by Tower Hamlets Homes (THH) for the stock we manage as an ALMO on behalf of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets (LBTH).

Our immediate aim is to achieve the decent homes target by 2016/17. However we have a responsibility to take a wider view, making sure that there are systems in place that can guide investment decisions in support of investment programmes, ensuring that in the future we have a stock of good quality, environmentally friendly housing in places where people want to live.

Definition of asset management

Asset management is the management of physical assets to meet service and financial objectives. By applying good asset management practices and principles THH will ensure that LBTH's housing stock meets current and future needs, including planning for investment in repair and improvements, and reviewing and changing the portfolio to match local circumstances.

Purpose of asset management strategy

Our AMS provides the framework to develop detailed planned maintenance programmes that deliver commitments made in our business plan. The strategy is intended to support decisions about re-investment to ensure the sustainability of our stock in the future.

Asset management objectives

THH's asset management objectives are:

- To deliver an investment **standard** that mean our homes conform to the decent homes standard by 2017, achieve affordable warmth targets, meet identified needs, and contribute to community development.
- To manage the repair and maintenance **service** as an integral part of asset management with a twin focus on improved performance and lower costs.
- To **manage the stock portfolio**, in terms not just of age, condition and standard, but also as part of a process of assessment to guide policies of reinvestment to meet the needs of current and future residents.
- To support LBTH corporate priorities through **investment plans** that reflect the agreed allocation of resources for re-investment, and contribute to sustainable neighbourhoods and local employment.

ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE OBJECTIVES

Standards

To deliver homes that meet the needs of our residents, are sustainable and thermally more efficient, the requirements are:

- Meet the decent homes target by 2017 (4.1).
- Agree a costed Future Standard that ensures the stock remains attractive and meets residents' expectations while being more energy efficient and addressing fuel poverty (4.2).

Service

To provide a good repair and maintenance service that THH can afford, the requirements are:

- Value for money responsive repairs service achieving high levels of resident satisfaction (5.1).
- Maximise the use of the stock by reducing void relet times (5.2).

Portfolio management

To manage the stock portfolio in line with THH's corporate priorities, the requirements are:

- A measure of portfolio performance which can be kept up to date as a reliable guide to investment priorities (6.1)
- Option appraisal of 'at risk' stock (6.2).

Investment plans

To support corporate priorities by delivering affordable investment plans, the requirements are:

- Thirty year investment plan forecasts based on an up-to-date and reliable corporate stock condition database (7.1).
- Detailed five year planned programmes demonstrating that the stock can be maintained at the agreed standard and within budget (7.2).
- All work assessed against value for money criteria (7.3).

Data collection

To ensure decisions are made on the best possible information, THH will undertake a programme of rolling stock surveys, Data management is an important component of programme delivery, and THH understand the need to manage the stock condition database (8.1).

Information systems

THH holds stock condition data in our Access-based SCS in order to define works programmes and demonstrate compliance with the decent homes target. Our planned investment programme is large, and we will review any functional gaps in our information systems to manage this programme (8.2).

Procurement

The procurement of our planned investment programme has been deferred until funding has been confirmed (8.3).

Service standards

It is essential that we understand our customers and translate this knowledge into a more responsive service. At present leaseholders make up 42% of the tenure of our stock. We will improve our use of client profiling to tailor services to individual requirements (8.4).

Resident involvement

Our objective is to ensure residents are at the heart of decisions taken in planning, delivering and monitoring repairs, maintenance and investment programmes. It is essential that residents play a key role in monitoring performance and that we can demonstrate improvements based on their feedback (8.5).

Aids and adaptations

As part of our investment programme we will develop an integrated approach to carrying out adaptations works as part of the internal works package. We need to make best use of our stock so that adapted properties are available to those that need them (8.6).

Cyclical and preventative maintenance

Our key objective is to develop a seven year cyclical programme (8.7).

Leaseholders

The management of leasehold stock presents special requirements from the perspective of asset management. Our strategic objectives are to deliver good quality, value for money services to leaseholders and provide them with the opportunity to participate in developing and monitoring services (8.8).

Performance measurement

Service quality is managed through agreed KPIs. It is essential that our customers play a central role in monitoring performance, and that we can demonstrate improvements based on their feedback. We will compare our

performance with others through benchmarking and independent inspection (8.9).

Responsibilities

The Director of Asset Management is responsible for preparing the Asset Management Strategy. THH's Board will formally review the asset management strategy in two years time (8.10).

1. CONTEXT

1.1 BACKGROUND

Tower Hamlets Homes (THH) manages the London Borough of Tower Hamlets' (LBTH) social housing under the terms of a management agreement effective from July 2008.

THH manages approximately 22,000 homes and a number of other assets. Our stewardship of this resource is at the heart of our mission and our commitment to public housing. We know, however, that many of these assets are far from fit, and some of the most vulnerable residents in Tower Hamlets live in them. Furthermore, the condition of these homes and neighbourhoods drives our residents' ongoing well-being – through the levels of overcrowding, fuel poverty, poor health and the wider effects of the neighbourhood in which they live.

Our Asset Management Strategy (AMS) must, therefore, be where we set out our intention to reverse the tide, if only incrementally. The Government's Decent Homes Standard sets a benchmark for us to achieve, but we also need a strategy that reflects our residents' priorities and diversity in the knowledge that this will help us to move away from a prescriptive one-size-fits-all approach.

This strategy was developed with the following inputs:

- Information from a survey of our residents carried out in 2007, in which residents expressed their priorities for the repairs and improvements of their homes.
- The THH Board.
- Review of two and three star ALMO asset management strategies and their best practice initiatives.
- Information from THH's stock condition data base built up from a major survey carried out in 2000 and updated to reflect changes to stock condition as well as financial modelling carried out by Savills, who are consultants specialising in developing large investment programmes.
- The strategic direction set by LBTH's Sustainable Communities Strategy and Housing Strategy.
- Feedback from tenant and leaseholder workshop session held in February 2009 where residents were given the opportunity to comment on the emerging draft and influence the final shape of this strategy.
- Close and ongoing consultation with staff members directly involved in the current delivery of our major investment programme, the repairs service and housing management.

The resulting asset management strategy:

- Has clear links to the objectives set out in the Council's housing strategy.

-
- Shows how detailed plans can be prepared to meet the government's decent homes target by 2017 based on current and reliable stock condition data that can be used to inform stock investment priorities.
 - Shows how we can continue to fund the maintenance of our existing stock, to focus investment to support sustainable communities.

Our primary focus over the period of the strategy is our remit to deliver the decent homes target by 2016/17. However, an AMS must be framed against longer term considerations. Both THH and LBTH have a responsibility to ensure that there are systems in place that can guide investment decisions and support the management of future investment programmes. For this reason our AMS covers a seven year period 2010/11 to 2016/17, but looks forward beyond the current life of the ALMO.

1.2 ASSET MANAGEMENT

Asset management is defined as the management of physical assets to meet service and financial objectives. It is concerned with:

- The overall performance of the stock portfolio and the contribution it makes to the agreed business plan.
- The whole life cycle of a property, from the proposal to build, through development, investment and maintenance, to the decision and method of disposal.
- The way management and investment can be directed to support community development and improve portfolio performance.

The application of good asset management principles will ensure the Council's housing stock meets current and future needs. THH has specific responsibilities for investment in repair and improvement and, together with LBTH, reviewing and where necessary, changing the portfolio to match local circumstances and providing high quality services and accommodation. In formulating our Asset Management Strategy we must therefore:

- Understand where we are - the current suitability of the stock when assessed against future needs and policy requirements.
- Have a clear vision of where we want to be - what the profile of the portfolio needs to be in order to best meet future residents and policy requirements, and the nature of the services provided to residents.
- Identify the best ways of getting from here to there - the Investment Plan and other initiatives.
- Identify the constraints within we will have to work - such as legal, financial capacity, skills, stock condition data, IT capability, procurement options etc.
- Identify the risks involved in making the journey.
- Work out how to measure progress.

Our AMS shows how we will prepare affordable investment plans, support the development of detailed planned maintenance programmes that deliver commitments made in our business plan, and provide services that are

efficient, which LBTH residents judge to be good, and which compare well with those provided by the best social landlords.

1.3 SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

This asset management strategy is intended to be read in conjunction with:

London

- London Mayor's Regional Housing Strategy
- London Climate Change Action Plan

LB Tower Hamlets

- The Sustainable Community Strategy
- 2020 Community Plan
- The Housing Strategy

Tower Hamlets Homes

- Business plan
- Affordable Warmth Policy
- Resident engagement strategy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Vulnerability strategy
- Procurement strategy
- Managing decent homes procurement and delivery
- Value for money strategy
- Resident consultation paper
- Leaseholder consultation policy
- Overcrowding reduction strategy
- Asbestos policy
- Legionella policy

1.4 SCOPE

This AMS refers only to the existing housing stock in management, whether tenanted or leasehold. It also covers directly associated facilities such as garages, pram sheds and communal areas on housing land, which are maintained and paid for by money from the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The Strategy does not cover non-housing assets such as the Council's shops and community buildings, THH offices, public roads or any retail units let or managed by THH.

The focus of our AMS is to identify what is important if corporate objectives are to be achieved. This means an emphasis on investment priorities so that we can deliver decent homes and make the best use of our existing assets. In order not to confuse this core message, there are related strategies which are not considered here because they are covered in other documents. Specifically:

- The delivery of responsive and cyclical programmes are part of separate policies and procedures. This does not minimise the importance of moving work from responsive to planned, or of ensuring

that components replaced under responsive works are coded on the stock condition database.

- The approach to procurement is described in a separate Procurement Strategy, developed for THH in June 2008 by Savills Consultants in conjunction with THH staff and reviewed by THH in 2009. The Procurement Strategy is in essence a sub-section of this strategy, and is referred to as such in this strategy.

2. SUPPLY AND DEMAND

2.1 STOCK DESCRIPTION

THH manages approx 22,000 rented and leasehold homes, of which nearly 1,600 are classified as temporary. These are properties scheduled for refurbishment or demolition and redevelopment as part of large-scale regeneration schemes.

Age and location

The table below breaks down the stock by age, dates of construction and distribution across the Borough, which includes the stock for which we have temporary management responsibility.

MRA Type	Decent Homes Contract Area			Total
	Bethnal Green	Stepney and Wapping	Bow, Isle of Dogs and Poplar	
1945 - 1964 semi detached or large terraced house	35	74	32	141
1965-1974 house	14	3	1	18
Bungalow	27	28	2	57
High rise flats	3,045	2,167	1,160	6,372
Medium rise flats	6,202	4,298	3,454	13,954
Other Pre 1945 house	12	137	71	220
Post 1944 low rise flats	167	122	4	293
Post 1974 House	123	136	106	365
Pre 1944 low rise flats	32	–	41	73
Total	9,657	6,965	4,871	21,493

Note: this includes tenants and leaseholder in the Ocean NDC and Robin Hood regeneration area.

We can see that:

- Nearly half the stock is in Bethnal Green, and a third in Stepney/Wapping.
- Less than 5% of our homes are houses - more than 95% are flats and maisonettes.
- Approximately 30% are in blocks of six storeys or more.
- Approximately 65% of our homes are flats are medium rise blocks (up to 5 storeys).
- Approximately 7% of the rented stock consists of bedsits.

Tenure

THH manage just over 12,000 rented homes, together with over 8,000 leasehold flats. The breakdown by archetype is shown in the table below.

MRA Archetype	Tenant	Leasehold	Total
1945 - 1964 semi detached or large terrace house	141	-	141
1965-1974 house	18	-	18
Bungalow	57	-	57
High rise flats	4,194	2,178	6,372
Medium rise flats	7,564	6,390	13,954
Other Pre 1945 house	220	-	220
Post 1944 low rise flats	229	64	293
Post 1974 house	363	2	365
Pre 1945 low rise flats	41	32	73
Total	12,827	8,666	21,493

Note: this includes the Ocean NDC and the Robin Hood regeneration area

It can be seen that there is a very high proportion of leasehold ownership. Forty percent of households are leaseholders, and 60% are tenants.

Because our residents include a large number of leaseholders, our strategy recognises the importance of taking into account their views when preparing investment plans.

Sheltered housing

No specialist sheltered or supported housing is managed by THH.

Regeneration

Regeneration strategies are lead by LBTH. Of the nearly 1,600 temporary properties managed by THH, most are homes on the Ocean Estate, together with 250 homes which are currently part of the Blackwall Reach regeneration scheme. Properties which form part of the Blackwall Reach scheme are included in our Local Investment Plan. These will be reviewed once the regeneration options have been developed by LBTH.

Of the stock in our 'permanent' portfolio, a few may prove to be expensive to maintain or provide the wrong kind of accommodation. These will be targets for option appraisal, which will involve recommendations to the Board and Council that the properties are remodelled, redeveloped or sold.

Non-traditional stock

Just under a third (29%) of our stock is non-traditional construction. This equates to 270 individual blocks. The form of construction is set out below.

Archetype	Form of Construction				
	Concrete Frame/Brick	Concrete Frame	Concrete frame/large panel	Crosswall	Large Panel
High rise flats	55	12	2		4
Medium rise flats	178	8	6	1	
Post 1944 low rise flats	4				
Total	237	20	8	1	4
% of total blocks	25.5%	2.2%	0.8%	0.1%	0.4%

Note: this includes the Ocean NDC and the Robin Hood regeneration area.

Based on past structural surveys and in-house knowledge we have identified two high rise blocks with known structural problems, for which a financial provision has been made in our investment plan to 2016/17. The remaining high rise and non-traditional stock is believed to present no significant structural issues.

Related assets

There are approximately 1,800 garages in THH management.

The Council's shops and community buildings do not form part of the current management agreement.

Stock condition

Data on stock condition was originally collected in a survey by external consultants (Hunters) in 2000. The sample was a 10% internal survey of flats, 20% survey of houses and 100% survey of blocks. The resulting cloned database now forms the Stock Condition System (SCS), a database that has been maintained, adjusting stock numbers, and updating data to reflect major works, voids, maintenance and repairs programme and works programmes undertaken. In December 2009 Savills Consultants undertook a 10% validation survey. This new survey data is also held on SCS, together with specialist data from M&E.

Over the past few years the stock has been maintained in a safe and weather-tight condition, but much of the stock was built in the 1960s and 1970s and so major elements like lifts and other services are forecast to be in imminent need of replacement. There has been a growing backlog of renewal and improvement works, particularly to kitchens, bathrooms, electrics and heating

systems, dating back to the transfer of stock from the GLC in 1985. The condition of the stock is also affected by the following factors:

Low water pressure Thames Water has reduced the water pressure in recent years in order to minimise loss of water through leakage from their network, and the development of large scale buildings with offices and flats in Tower Hamlets has affected the water pressures in the area. This has had a disproportionate affect on our medium and high rise stock, resulting in many properties experiencing low water pressure and requiring capital works to boost water mains pressure so that they can receive an adequate water supply.

Listed buildings While our stock is disproportionately flats built in the 1960s and 1970s, we own some attractive properties in conservation areas, and properties which are in listed buildings. Trinity Green, part of the Cleveland Estate, has 6 Grade 1 listed buildings, while the entire Boundary Estate is Grade 2 listed (20 blocks of 528 dwellings). Overall we have 93 grade 2 listed buildings across the Borough. Whilst we are very pleased to have dwellings of such high architectural quality, there are special problems and costs associated with work to this stock. Typically works to Grade 2 dwellings, or to dwellings in a conservation area, will add 10% to the total costs, whereas works to a Grade 1 dwelling will have an uplift of 20%.

Health and safety

HHSRS

HHSRS data was collected as part of the 2009 SC validation survey. It will be collected in further surveys to be carried out to inform the investment programme and to maintain the stock condition database.

Asbestos

Our asbestos policy applies to all buildings, either, owned, leased or managed by THH, or any other locations which may be utilised by that service at any time. The specific objectives of the asbestos policy are to:

- Locate any asbestos containing material in our premises and assess their condition.
- Prepare records of the location and condition of all asbestos containing materials and assess the risk from them.
- Provide information and advice on the location, type and condition of the material to anyone who may disturb it.
- Ensure that all residents and contractors clearly understand the risks involved in disturbing asbestos containing materials.
- Take all reasonably practicable steps to prevent employees and others from breathing in asbestos fibres.

In line with the requirements of the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations Type Two asbestos surveys have been undertaken within all communal areas of THH blocks and a removal program implemented.

Within the home, THH undertakes a rolling program of surveys in void properties before they are re-let and this information is used to populate the asbestos register which can be accessed by both contractors and staff. Once sufficient information is available it is then provided to tenants and leaseholders.

Fire risk assessment

In light of the fatal fire in Southwark THH embarked on a rolling twelve month programme of fire risk assessment to the common areas of residential property managed by THH. The current position is that:

- All blocks have had a fire risk assessment completed.
- Quality checks have been undertaken to ensure that the FRA's are fit for purpose.
- As part of the Neighbourhood Action Plans, fire safety has been included and SMART targets established to monitor the removal of metal gates (across corridors), washing lines and storage in common parts to reduce the associated fire risk.

Legionella

To combat legionella the requirements of the Health and Safety Executive's Approved Code of Practice, L8 have been implemented for all tank-fed housing schemes and multi-storey flats. To comply with our legal duties we have identified and assessed the sources of risk and put in place measures that prevent or control the identified risks. We implement, manage and monitor all measures and controls, and keep records of all actions taken. Responsible employees have been identified and we only use contractors approved to carry out this type of work.

Energy performance

The average SAP rating of THH dwellings has risen year on year, and currently stands at 65.6. This is based on the SAP 2001 methodology calculated in 2010. However, although our stock is improving over time, it is in the lower quartile for London ALMOs (the upper quartile of London ALMOs returning their SAP ratings is from 73.25).

We recently bid for and got access to £2.1m funding to provide cavity wall insulation to our blocks where we have not carried out the works previously. This work is underway and scheduled to be completed by February 2011.

THH has set a target to achieve an average SAP score of 70 by 2011/12.

Decent Homes

According to our latest stock condition assessment, carried out in 2010, 58% of the stock was non-decent. The table below shows the expected levels of non-decency at 2010 for the stock and the level it is projected to reach by 2017.

Reason for non-decency	Failures 2010	Failures 2017
HHSRS ¹	1,015	1,015
State of repair	5,993	10,764
Modern Facilities	2,748	7,942
Thermal Comfort	651	651
Total Dwelling Fails ²	6,601	10,879
% of stock failing	56.0%	92.4%

Does not include Ocean NDC. Dates are 1 April 2010 and 1 April 2017.

Note 1 The majority of failures relate to overcrowding

Note 2 Does not take into account tenant refusals

The concentration of disrepair within the stock is illustrated below, which shows the spread of key of key component failures in the stock up to 2017:

<i>Number of key component failure</i>	
1 key component failure	1,921
2 key component failure	2,401
3 key component failure	1,854
4 or more key component failure	4,227

Housing need

The population of Tower Hamlets is growing rapidly, and will expand from 196,000 residents recorded at the 2001 Census to over 300,000 by 2020. Of existing residents, 43.8% are from an ethnic minority and almost half of minority households are Bangladeshi. However, older residents (65+) now make up 11% of the population and we are using our knowledge of older residents to contribute to an Older Peoples Housing Strategy being developed by the Council.

Residents face considerable challenges in overcoming disadvantage. Three quarters of our tenants receive full or part housing benefit and the borough has the highest level of child poverty in the UK. Over half (52%) of children in families are dependent on benefits. The borough has the second lowest level of academic achievement in London and double the average number of residents

with no qualifications. 42% of residents are estimated to be out of work and youth unemployment is 18%, compared with a 12% London average.

There is a significant shortage of social housing in Tower Hamlets and the demand for social rented homes is one of the highest in London, particularly for properties with three or more bedrooms (which is less than 3% of our stock). Equally challenging is the need to tackle homelessness and reduce the number of people in temporary accommodation. There is also a growing need for adapted accommodation, which we experience through our aids and adaptations service, and in the need for tenancy support, reflected in the growing number of referrals we make to support partners.

Overcrowding in social tenancies in the borough remains a major challenge. In September 2009, nearly 40% of applicants were registered as living in overcrowded conditions, lacking one or more bedrooms. There are over 23,000 households on the Housing Register of which 7,000 applicants are experiencing overcrowding.

Despite our efforts to address this situation through our overcrowding reduction strategy, it is unlikely to resolve the huge demand that exists. Residents on the housing register are likely to continue to wait a very long time for accommodation of a suitable size to become available, especially those living in overcrowded conditions requiring larger properties. THH will need to take these factors into account when planning to undertake internal works as part of planned investment programmes.

A half (49%) of THH tenants have at least one member with a disability or long-term illness (2008 Status Survey). However only 33 of our homes are categorised as being 'fully accessible' on Tower Hamlet's Accessible Housing Register.

Tower Hamlets' *Housing Needs Survey 2004* estimated that 3,021 new affordable homes were needed each year for five years. This was required in order to tackle both the backlog of need and address future projected needs. In response, we are working with the Council to identify opportunities to provide additional homes on the estates we manage through infilling under-crofts and utilising unused land.

In 2007/08, Tower Hamlets hosted the delivery of over 1,000 affordable homes. This was the largest by a local authority and 10% of the Housing Corporation's London programme. However, it is only one third of what is needed. There is very little chance that enough affordable housing will be developed for social rent and intermediate (e.g., shared ownership) to meet demand over the planning horizon of this strategy.

As well as the rate of additional stock being insufficient to match demand, the supply of new lettings of existing homes decreased by more than 25% over the two years from 2005/6 to 2007/8. The total number of lets during 2007/8, both Council and RSL, was 1,627 compared to 2,214 in 2005/6. The figure for 2008/9 was 2,142 lets.

The evidence is, therefore, of a strong demand for affordable housing in Tower Hamlets to retain and attract people who choose to work and live in the borough. However, some of the existing homes provided by THH do not meet required standards, and there are environments which are not conducive to sustainable communities. THH needs to consider ways to make best use of its current stock to help provide the accommodation and environments that people need.

3. ASSET MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

3.1 THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

The 2007 Green Paper 'Homes for the future' set a new agenda in terms of more homes, more affordable homes and homes that are well designed, greener, and linked to good schools, transport and health care. Our Asset Management Strategy is therefore focused not just on the existing stock. It seeks to take into account the surrounding environment, looking at what is sustainable, and what needs to be done to support communities in the longer term.

In addition, central government has set a target of all affordable homes meeting the Decent Homes Standard. For LBTH, this is to be achieved by 2017, subject to the required decent homes funding being made available by the Government.

3.2 THE LONDON CONTEXT

The London Housing Strategy

The May 2009 draft of the London Housing Strategy contains a number of visions and aims. Those that relate to asset management can be summarised as:

- Social rented homes to be improved so that they are more than 'decent' (i.e. developing a successor to the Decent Homes standard).
- By 2016 all occupied homes in London to achieve a SAP rating of at least 40, and should aim for a rating of 65 where the building fabric will allow.
- Protect the environmental benefits of gardens more effectively (they promote biodiversity, abate the heat island effect, reduce flood risk and contribute to local character and amenity).
- Housing regeneration to be aligned with complementary social and economic initiatives.
- Physical improvements to be designed to deter criminal activities, improve accessibility and inclusion and to be sustainably managed and maintained over the long term.
- Regeneration programmes to be designed in partnership with existing communities and to give full consideration to the impact of regeneration activity on equalities target groups.
- Ensure that all regeneration schemes seeking public investment promote
 - resident engagement
 - support for proposals
 - consideration of the impact of schemes on equalities target groups
 - long term sustainability

-
- Explore innovative approaches to long term community ownership in regeneration schemes, such as Community Land Trusts.
 - No more than 1% of homes should stand empty and unused for over six months, and long term empty homes, derelict empty homes and listed buildings at risk should be brought back into residential use.

The London Climate Change Action Plan

The Mayor's Climate Change Action Plan sets out his carbon emission reduction targets for the capital. The Pan-London carbon reduction target is to reduce carbon emissions by 60% by 2050 against a 1990 base. The step by step approach to meeting this target is:

- 15% by 2010
- 20% by 2015
- 25% by 2020
- 30% by 2025

Reference is made in the Climate Change Action Plan to the role that the decent homes programme plays in delivering thermal comfort, with the caveat that more should be done to improve the overall energy efficiency of homes that are being improved.

3.3 THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

As well as reflecting the London context, this AMS draws heavily on the strategic direction set by LBTH. This direction is articulated (in terms of residential asset management) in two statutory documents:

- The Sustainable Community Strategy
- The Housing Strategy

Both of these strategies contained a number of aims and objectives, many of which relate to asset management. The Housing Strategy is set in the context of a Community Strategy with four themes:

A great place to live Every tenanted home and every block will be refurbished to meet the decent homes standard through the implementation of an effective investment programme.

A prosperous community The delivery of the decent homes programme through external contractors will include provision for local employment initiatives ensuring that the benefits of such large scale expenditure are long lasting and can be retained within the community.

A safe and supportive community The delivery of the decent homes plus programme will include improved lighting to estates, refurbished or new provision of door entry systems and CCTV and, wherever possible, designing out unsafe areas.

A healthy community By tackling the consequences of poor housing on health and life chances through the refurbishment of homes to the decent

homes standard and the integration of main stream funding in those areas of work not included within the decent homes definition. Overcrowding will be reduced and internal and external environments will be improved to increase the ability to live healthily.

In setting the objectives for this AMS we have drawn together the relevant requirements of these strategic documents as well as that of the London Housing Strategy.

3.4 OBJECTIVES OF TOWER HAMLETS HOMES

Our vision is '*Going for gold by 2012 – being a three star service by 2012.*'. Our key strategic aims underpin the delivery of the vision. These are to:

- Deliver excellent housing services.
- Invest in housing and achieve the decent homes standard.
- Provide value for money services.
- Engage residents in all aspects of our services.

Engagement is a central theme. We have three principles that support our vision for equality and diversity:

- **Accessible:** We will provide services that are appropriate but flexible enough to meet our residents' needs and preferences so that all our residents can access the services they need and want.
- **Inclusive:** We will tackle poverty and inequality and help our residents fulfil their individual potential, to be part of communities and able to participate in wider Tower Hamlets life.
- **Fair and seen to be fair:** We are a fair and ethical organisation and place to work. Decisions we make are fair, and everyone can see and understand why we made them. We recognise that we work in a very diverse part of London, and that our tenants and leaseholders are a diverse group of people, and that they will have differing needs, requirements and preferences in the ways that they access and receive our services. Residents shape our services: only by listening to them, understanding them and reacting to changes can we ensure that our services are appropriate. Tower Hamlets is one of the most culturally rich and diverse boroughs in the United Kingdom. By ensuring that we embrace this diversity, we can help to create an environment in which everyone in the borough can take a full part in its social, cultural and economic wealth.

THH has set out twelve key objectives in our 2009/12 Business Plan, one of which is Decent Homes – to mobilise a fit for purpose AMS and infrastructure. Our AMS addresses this business plan objective. It also contributes to a number of other business plan objectives, namely:

- Value for money: identify and deliver genuine organisational efficiencies that can be reinvested into customer-facing services.

-
- Resident and staff engagement: challenge and improve services through a range of different ongoing resident and staff engagements.
 - Customer focus: challenge and improve services by focusing on customer insight, customer information and access, and the drivers of customer satisfaction.
 - Diversity: improve our understanding of our residents' diverse needs and use this to challenge and improve services in every aspect of the organization.
 - Innovation: innovate services in a way that reflects Tower Hamlets' unique communities, needs and neighbourhoods.
 - Partnerships: plan, procure and deliver services in partnership with other public, private or third-sector organisations.

The main constraints that we face are:

- THH's budget, which is dependent upon Audit Commission ratings, and central government allocations to LBTH.
- Whatever the budget, the need to obtain good value for money.
- The need to understand resident's requirements and preferences, both tenants and leaseholders.
- Compliance with statutory leaseholder consultation requirements.
- Minimising disruption to residents arising from the major works and planned works schemes.
- Many leaseholders not being able to pay leasehold major works recharges.

3.5 ASSET MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES

Our vision for our Asset Management Strategy is:

By properly maintaining and making the best use of our assets, we will create high-quality neighbourhoods for residents, in which they will be proud to live. By 2017, we will have invested in residents' homes to reach locally agreed standards, negotiated around residents' needs and aspirations.

This vision leads to our four strategic aims:

- Meeting the aspirations and diverse needs of our residents by empowering them to drive our local priorities for repairs and capital investment.
- Driving better value and sustainability into our asset base.
- Creating places and neighbourhoods that promote the wellbeing of the residents that live there.
- Protecting and investing in our assets, to sustain them into the foreseeable future.

From these strategic aims come the following objectives:

Standards We will clarify the investment standards we aim to deliver in terms of the quality of the dwellings and their associated external areas:

- To raise THH's housing stock to the Government's decent home standard and keep it there, targeting cold and damp dwellings early in the investment programme as far as possible.
- To develop a Decent Homes Plus Standard that will set out additional repairs and improvements that would be expected when decent homes works are undertaken.
- To develop and implement a local climate change reduction policy that will help reduce carbon emissions from existing and new housing.

Services We will provide a long-term high-quality repairs and maintenance service:

- Deliver a high-quality, customer focused repair service.
- Turn round voids quickly and efficiently
- Carry out planned maintenance programmes

Portfolio management We will deliver the homes that people want, now and in the future, which means that we need to appraise remodelling, regeneration and new development options:

- Bring forward proposals that help regenerate localities (which may include the development of new housing), and which improve the quality of the streets and other communal areas, particularly by:
 - The redesign of streets and other external communal areas where this can help design out crime and anti-social behaviour.
 - The protection of, or extension of, garden areas (private and public).
 - Improving the accessibility and inclusion of the housing stock and associated areas.
- Alter the stock profile to provide more family housing to assist with the Overcrowding Reduction Strategy.

Investment planning We will establish standard processes and delivery partners to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness with which we can use our capital expenditure programme to improve the employability of local people:

- Develop an Investment Plan that will not only help us improve the dwellings, but improve the mix (more larger dwellings), their environmental performance and the external environments.
- Deliver more skills and employment training opportunities for our residents through our major works and planned programmes by working in partnership with our major works contractors and LBTH.

The strategy is a response to these questions, and from it flows the following ambitions:

- To deliver an investment **standard** that mean our homes conform to the decent homes standard by 2017, achieve affordable warmth targets, meet identified needs, and contribute to community development.

-
- To manage the repair and maintenance **service** as an integral part of asset management with a twin focus on improved performance and lower costs.
 - To **manage the stock portfolio**, in terms not just of age, condition and standard, but also as part of a process of assessment to guide policies of reinvestment to meet the needs of current and future residents.
 - To support LBTH corporate priorities through **investment plans** that reflect the agreed allocation of resources for re-investment, and contribute to sustainable neighbourhoods and local employment.

The objectives set out above are considered in more detail in Sections Four to Seven. This is backed by a delivery plan described in Section Eight.

4. STANDARDS

Goal	
To deliver homes that meet the needs of our residents, are sustainable and thermally more efficient.	
Objectives	
4.1	To meet the decent homes standard by 2017.
4.2	To agree a costed Future Standard which ensures our stock remains attractive and meets residents expectations, while being more energy efficient and addressing fuel poverty.
Requirements	
4.1	Demonstrate delivery of decent homes.
4.2	A Future Standard to be discussed, costed and agreed.

4.1 DECENT HOMES STANDARD

The decent homes standard is clearly defined and we need to achieve it to fulfil the Government's requirements. The immediate aim is to deliver decent homes within budget and with a high level of resident satisfaction.

To plan the delivery of the decent homes programme and to demonstrate compliance by 2017 and beyond, THH will maintain an up-to-date stock condition database. This will build on the existing stock condition database, capturing all pre-works inspection data and completions from the works programme.

4.1 Decent homes standard	
Objectives	
Compliance	Up-to-date and reliable data to show that all homes will meet the decent homes standard.
Tasks	
Data quality	As part of data management (8.1) a sample of decent homes checked annually.

4.2 THH STANDARD

We will establish a THH Standard that reflects residents' priorities, addresses the repairs and improvement needs of our stock, and goes well beyond the requirements of Decent Homes criteria.

We also need to contribute to the development of an LBTH local climate change reduction policy, and adopt its requirements in our investment planning. LBTH is working with the Energy Saving Trust to develop a Climate Change Strategy.

One of THH's main contributions towards this strategy will be to improve the SAP rating of the properties we manage.

The THH standard will consist of a THH 'Core Standard' that will apply to all THH schemes, with 'Local Standards' to reflect local circumstances. Both standards will need to be aligned with business objectives and be capable of being funded by the business plan. The THH Standard will be developed by:

- Listening to what our residents want.
- Using our stock condition data to identify works needed to our stock.
- Identifying energy efficient, low carbon, and modern materials which will enhance the durability and quality of our stock.
- Agreeing the quality of the estate environment residents want.

In response to these residents priorities, and taking into account our stock condition information we will publish a detailed THH Standard to be used in major works and planned maintenance programmes.

Four Decent Homes/THH Standard Pilots Schemes have been established, spread amongst the three housing management areas of the borough. These are expected to be completed by 2011. The pilots will assist in testing THH's capacity to develop and deliver the entire Decent Homes programme and to develop the THH Core Standard specification and additional Local Standards. It should also enable THH to monitor the standard of works that can be delivered. This will include establishing the specification for materials and standard of workmanship to be applied in the delivery of the main programme. No of blocks/ properties made decent as a result of these works?

THC has provided further funding to commence accelerated delivery of decent homes to x number of blocks which will make x properties decent.

Internal standards

Our THH Standard will cover the following:

- Homes which are warm and dry with effective heating systems, able to reach stated internal temperatures within defined timescales, for defined durations within cost parameters.
- Homes which are secure and draught free with double glazing where this can be fitted, achieving a minimum SAP rating of 40 by 2016.
- Homes which have modern electrical wiring with enough sockets in accordance with defined good practice such as the National Housing Federation's *Guide to Standards and Quality in Development*.
- Homes which have reasonably modern facilities including kitchens and bathrooms.

Affordable warmth

For our AMS, THH's strategic commitments to affordable warmth are as follows:

- Reduce energy used for heating and cooling by improving the thermal efficiency of homes.
- Develop a 'Core Standard' for refurbishment which identifies energy efficient, low carbon, and modern materials which will enhance the durability and quality of our stock whilst contributing to reducing fuel poverty.
- Apply this core standard in major works and planned maintenance programmes. This will result in homes that are warm and dry with effective heating systems, able to reach stated internal temperatures within defined timescales, for defined durations within cost parameters; homes which are secure and draught free with double glazing where this can be fitted.
- All occupied stock to achieve a minimum SAP (2005) rating of 40 by 2016. We will agree the approach to tackling fuel poverty by targeting the lowest SAP scores and the people on lowest incomes.
- Reduce unnecessary electricity use by increasing the take up of energy efficient light bulbs and appliances. We will use low-energy appliances in areas over which we have control (communal areas) and where their use offers the most energy-efficient option.
- Establish partnership working and a co-ordinated approach to providing affordable warmth
- We are exploring the use of photovoltaic panels to generate electricity for communal areas & sell surplus electricity to the national grid

Automatic meter reading

We are working with the Council to introduce Automatic Meter Reading (AMR). AMR allows for an increased understanding of energy consumption on a near real-time basis. It allows energy prices to be substantially reduced by eliminating estimated billing. The OGC estimates that 2% of annual energy costs can be saved by installing AMR. With subsequent demand side management this can increase to as much as 15%. Approximately £130K funding has been allocated to provide AMR to THH managed stock.

Tenants in blocks served by communal heating systems should benefit from lower service charges. Leaseholder satisfaction should increase due to accurate billing based on actual readings as well as facilitating faster resolution of any disputes.

We have also obtained funding to install reflective radiator foil, which is installed at the rear of radiators, reducing heat loss, as well as distributed free energy saving power points which switch off all appliances plugged into it. We also obtained funding to run training courses to educate residents in energy saving measures.

We see this as a small but significant improvement in service delivery as well as a contribution towards energy efficiency.

Communal areas

The quality of internal communal areas is of considerable importance to our residents. In order to be responsive to residents' priorities we have set up a dedicated team to undertake estate improvement works. This programme was established in 2005, initially as a short term project, but it is still continuing. The work mainly involves painting and decoration of internal communal areas, deep cleansing of concrete floors, and application of anti-graffiti paint, and making the area generally more attractive.

A yearly work programme is drawn-up based on resident and other stakeholder feedback. On average 100 stairwells and communal areas are improved each year. So far 400 have been done since the start of the programme. Satisfaction surveys are undertaken on completion of works. The current figure stands at 90% of residents describing the quality of improvements as very good.

A higher standard for communal areas will form part of the THH Standard subject to funding being available. We will agree priorities with residents.

External environment

As with communal areas, we know that the immediate external environment is very important to residents, particularly in terms of safety and aspects of design that tend to discourage anti-social behaviour.

Our THH standard will seek to design streets and external communal areas to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour, drawing on guidance in the Home Office/CLG publication *Safer Places* and the *Secured by Design* initiative as well as residents views. The standard that is agreed will be fundable by the business plan.

4.2 The Future Standard	
Objectives	
Target standard	Guided by corporate objectives, THH will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define aspirational standards. • Agree the standard that can be supported by the business plan. • Agree a delivery timescale.
Tasks	
Future Standard	Aspirational Future Standard for THH agreed, including affordable warmth and environmental criteria.
Modelling of costs	Costs of the Future Standard assessed to ensure the standard is fundable by the business plan.

5. SERVICE

Goal	
To provide a good repair and maintenance service that THH can afford.	
Objectives	
5.1	To deliver a value for money responsive repairs service that achieves resident satisfaction scores in the top national quartile.
5.2	To maximise the use of the stock by reducing void relet times.
Requirements	
5.1	Manage and improve performance of the repair service.
5.2	Reduce the costs of void relets.

5.1 RESPONSIVE REPAIRS

Repairs Statistics:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2008/9 Total orders: 78,013 • 2009/10 Breakdown of orders to date: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency 30% Urgent 41% Priority 9% Non Priority 20% • 2009/10 Satisfaction year to date – Excellent and Good 83.5%

The strategic objective for THH is to deliver a value for money service that meets the needs of our residents and achieves continuous improvement. Key objectives include:

- Completing repairs more quickly, doing more work at the first visit and being better at keeping residents informed about the progress of the work.
- Achieve top quartile performance in all aspects of responsive maintenance.
- An optimum balance of expenditure between emergency, urgent and responsive repairs having regard to good practice guidelines.

The focus is to simplify processes and shape the service to the needs of residents. We aim to reduce back-office costs by better system integration. The intention is to push down the cost of delivery by doing the job in one visit, through improved diagnostics, better appointment systems, a multi-skilled and

well trained work force, and improved material procurement and van stocks. Building on this, we will:

- Reduce the overall volume of responsive repairs through planned programmes and predictive analysis.
- Analyse the proportion of emergency repairs to see whether there are patterns that can be addressed, and set targets to reduce the proportion of work carried out as emergencies or urgent.
- Identify repair hotspots and develop strategies to address individual and collective issues.

Service access

Most residents have experience of the repair service and this experience shapes their view of THH. So it is important to ensure that the service is easy to access. We will:

- Regularly review with the help of residents all information leaflets and handbooks to make it as easy as possible for people to understand the services that are provided and how they can be accessed.
- Use customer profiling to tailor contact methods to suit individual preferences.
- Provide 'Language Line' and translation services so that residents whose main language is not English can readily access the service.
- Carry out equalities monitoring to ensure that the service is easily accessible to the diverse communities we serve.
- Review on-line access facilities.
- Hold Repair Days on estates to bring the repairs service closer to residents. We held them in 2009/10 & residents' reported that they found them very useful

Our commitment to provide an accessible, customer-focused service will be underpinned by the provision of customer service training and refreshers for all asset management staff, along with clear guidelines and minimum standards for our contractors.

Repairs Steering Group

The Repairs Steering Group (RSG) is the mechanism for planning and delivering improvements in the service to residents. The RSG consists of tenants, leaseholders and a THH board representative. The RSG has an Action Plan against which to monitor progress. Examples of service improvements implemented in response to demand from residents include:

- Three repairs appointments slots per day (instead of two), plus Saturday morning.
- Repairs Days held on all estates. A team of contractors and housing staff are available to receive home and communal area repair requests directly from residents. As many repairs as possible are undertaken on the same day, and are a highly visible method of promoting the service and giving residents direct access to their contractors.

- Regular walkabouts with contractors and residents to identify and prioritise communal repairs. These joint inspections, attended by housing and technical staff, are held on a four-weekly cycle.
- Processes and systems are being updated to use vulnerability data more effectively.
- Both Mitie and Morrison, our two main contractors had placed their staff within our Repairs Contact Centre, working alongside THH staff to handle emergency calls and reminders. This helped in improve repair diagnosis, reducing the level of call-backs and increasing resident satisfaction.

The RSG Action Plan ensured that we addressed relatively poor performance against target on a range of indicators measuring customer care and service effectiveness. Specifically, we targeted:

- Improved call handling performance from 80% of repairs calls answered within 37 seconds, in February 2009 to 95% of calls handled within 30 seconds by September 2010.
- Increasing the percentage of repairs for which an appointment was made and kept from 87% in February 2009 to 94 % by September 2010.

Through the delivery of the Action Plan we are addressing 'value for money' and have improved the following:

- Reducing the average numbers of repairs order per week from the 2008/9 figures of 1626 to 1266 as of September 2010.
- Reduce the average spend per responsive repair from the 2008/9 average of £172 to £127 in year to date as of September 2010.
- Sustained reduction in disrepair claims.

The present repairs and maintenance service is provided via contracts that have a five year term which expired in April 2010. The option was exercised to extend them for one year, while renegotiating the terms to reduce the level of variation orders.

A revised payment regime for contractors was introduced, which allowed contractors to take decisions on repairs required. These actions have helped to improve the performance of the repairs service across performance indicators measuring completion of repairs against target.

5.1 Responsive repairs	
Objectives	
Service management	Focus on the end-to-end responsive repairs service.
Improve customer satisfaction	Increase the percentage of jobs completed at first appointment and within timescale.
Improve customer access	Monitor access to the service and use customer profiling to respond to individual needs.
Delivering a value	Reduce the overall volume of responsive repairs and

for money service	decrease the proportion of jobs undertaken as emergency or urgent. Increase the proportion of work done under planned programmes.
Reduce service delivery costs	Simplifying the process to get the right job done at the first visit.
Tasks	
Customer access	Review access and develop customer profiling.
Emergency repairs	Undertake pattern analysis of emergency repairs and targets set for reduction in cost of emergency and urgent works
Repair demand	Repair hot-spots identified and strategy agreed to address individual and collective issues.
Planned works	Planned maintenance packages created to cover additional areas of work targeted at reducing responsive repairs.

5.2 VOID WORKS

When properties are vacated and before new tenants move in the dwelling must be brought up to the agreed Lettable Quality Standard.

A Letting Standard was agreed with residents in 2008, specifying improved levels of repairs and cleanliness. Gas and electrical safety checks are undertaken on all empty homes and new tenants receive information about asbestos and an energy performance certificate. Post-inspections are undertaken on all voids

A Voids Service Review undertaken in December 2008 resulted in the creation of a central voids team, who oversee all steps on the 'void path' Performance is scrutinised at a monthly 'Voids Chamber'. Repairs are currently finished in an average of 12 days against a target of 10 days and the overall turnaround from termination to re-let was 20 days in September 2010 against a target of 28 days.

The average cost of a void is £3,000+, which compares with a London average cost of £2,584 (Housemark's *London Voids Benchmarking Club*).

In the context of affordable warmth, THH policy in this area reduces residents' expenditure on fuel by incorporating the following changes as part of the Lettable Standard:

- Energy efficient light bulbs are installed to each habitable room.
- Hot water cylinders are insulated with cylinder jackets.
- Hot water cylinder thermostats are set at 60°C. This helps prevent legionella but also reduces unnecessary fuel use.
- Where no form of central heating exists, gas or electric central heating is installed with radiators provided in all rooms, including bathrooms.
- All radiators are cleaned and Thermostatic Radiator Valves are fitted.

-
- Information on energy efficiency grants is included in the Tenancy Induction Pack.

The management of void properties requires the ability to present attractive dwellings for relet within acceptable timescales and costs. Our objectives are to:

- Reduce the time taken to re-let properties.
- Maintained the lettings standard consistently across our stock.

We are determined to turnaround voids in the most effective way and this means:

- Encouraging tenants to leave their home in a good state of repair through our incentive scheme.
- Minimising relet works within the agreed lettings standard.
- Use of decorating allowances.
- Decorating assistance for older people or people with disabilities.
- Working with contractors to improve quality against agreed KPIs while reducing levels of inspection.

5.2 Void works	
Objectives	
Maximum use of the stock	Reduce void relet times.
Tasks	
Void works	Target set for reducing the average unit cost of voids.
Tenant incentives	Review of the effectiveness of current incentives to encourage tenants to leave their homes in good repair.
Decorating allowances	Review the operation of allowances to maximise their use, minimise inconsistency and protect the needs of those who need more help.

6. PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT

Goal	
To manage the stock portfolio in line with THH's corporate priorities, meet the needs of the wider community, demonstrate good stewardship and ensure the stock's long term sustainability.	
Objectives	
6.1	Develop an approach to portfolio scoring to indicate priorities for investment and any need for more detailed option appraisal.
6.2	Review options where demand is low, costs are high, or there is an opportunity to make better use of the assets.
Requirements	
6.1	A measure of portfolio performance which can be kept up to date as a reliable guide to investment priorities.
6.2	Option appraisal of 'at risk' stock.

Despite significant demand for social housing in Tower Hamlets, delivering decent homes in some blocks may not represent good value for money or the best use of the assets. In these cases stock in poor condition with low demand should be identified and a formal option appraisal carried out for consideration by the Council and the Board.

6.1 PORTFOLIO PERFORMANCE

Our aim is to identify:

- Any opportunities for remodelling to produce larger dwellings in order to ease overcrowding.
- The relatively small number of properties that are comparatively expensive to maintain. Such properties may be a drain on resources and best suited for disposal or redevelopment.

It is important that we do not bring properties up to a decent homes standard if there is a question about their short to medium term future.

As part of improving our portfolio performance we intend to use our stock condition data to categorise the stock on the basis of the cost of maintenance and tenure profile. This will adopt a simple categorisation as follows:

- Identified for disposal - red
- Potentially prohibitively expensive to improve - amber
- Expected life of at least thirty years - green

We will develop a simple approach to scoring in a way that can be achieved quickly and within available resources. Our starting point will be to analyse poor performance by condition. We can then consider the advantage of developing more sophisticated approaches related to income, popularity and the future shape of demand.

6.1 Portfolio performance	
Objectives	
Portfolio performance	Agree the measurement of portfolio performance.
Tasks	
Pilot	Pilot exercise completed using existing data and revised in the light of experience.
Revised approach	Future methodological options reviewed and next steps identified.

6.2 OPTION APPRAISAL

This work on portfolio performance will help to define candidates for option appraisal. However, the immediate priorities are:

- Bedsits
- Under-used HRA land.

Bed-sit accommodation

Overcrowding remains a major challenge for THH, with more than 40% of our housing applicants registered as living in overcrowded condition. We have a severe shortage of family sized accommodation. As at October 2008, more than 3,000 households were waiting for three or more bedroom accommodation.

A 'knock through' strategy has been developed which focuses on converting blocks with a large number of bedsits, or bedsits with high tenancy turnover into family sized accommodation. Bedsits bordering overcrowded households are identified with a view to joining (knock-through) these properties to create larger accommodation. Just under £1m has been spent on these works since 2008.

Our stock includes a significant number of studio flats. In some cases entire blocks contain bed-sit accommodation. The Council will in due course be investigating options for developing these blocks to address issues of sustainability and the housing needs of residents. We will work with the Council to support this policy.

Under-used HRA land

With the Council we are evaluating a range of regeneration initiatives aimed at making the best use of our housing assets and addressing the varying needs of our residents.

LBTH's Development and Renewal directorate is undertaking the work of option appraisal and feasibility studies of various sites within THH managed estates. So far they have identified 72 sites which have development potential. Information on each site, including possible constraints and development opportunities is currently being compiled. We will use this information to prioritise sites for development as affordable housing, community facilities or improved open space.

The option appraisal model

The mechanism for guiding investment decisions about re-investment or disposal is essentially the same as the exercise to make judgements about new development or the acquisition of leases. The requirements for appraisal methodology are:

- An initial methodology which is simple and can be applied quickly, but which can become more sophisticated in the future.
- An approach which looks both at individual schemes and its impact on the stock portfolio.
- An approach which can be applied to re-investment, acquisition and new development.

The decision to reinvest or dispose of property should be a judgement that balances financial criteria against a housing management assessment of the need for investment and the wider business priorities. No option appraisal framework operates in a political vacuum, and none are intended to operate in a rigid or deterministic manner. The objective is to devise a methodology that filters the difficult decisions and makes recommendations on the basis of agreed, explicit and consistent criteria: a framework against which decisions can be measured, the reasons for the decision made explicit, and the costs of that decision properly understood.

An Excel-based model for option appraisal will be developed and tested. This will be based on income and expenditure forecasts for the options under consideration, expressed at NPV, and weighted to reflect agreed business priorities. When the test model has been evaluated, we will decide on the benefits of making the model more sophisticated.

6.2 Option appraisal	
Objectives	
Methodology	A methodology for evaluating options for individual properties or schemes.
Bedsits	Implement a bedsit conversion programme.
Land	Utilise land that has the potential to provide affordable homes, community facilities or improved open space.
Tasks	

Criteria	Methodology agreed for option appraisal.
Scheme	Apply scheme based option appraisals as required.
Bedsits	Work with LBTH to identify priorities and options.
Land assets	Work with LBTH to complete an assessment of development opportunities offered by redundant or under-used land.

7. INVESTMENT PLANNING

Goal	
To support corporate priorities by delivering affordable investment plans for the existing stock.	
Objectives	
7.1	Prepare 30 year investment plans.
7.2	Detailed five year planned programmes based on need identified in the stock condition survey.
7.3	Ensure all work is value for money.
Requirements	
7.1	Investment planning and budgeting.
7.2	Detailed five year planned programme demonstrating that the stock can be maintained at the agreed standard and within budget.
7.3	All work assessed against value for money criteria.

7.1 INVESTMENT FORECASTS

THH has inherited an existing programme of major, planned and cyclical works from LBTH, as well as responsibility for delivering the normal range of maintenance services covering responsive repairs, gas servicing and voids. Major works contracts will run for four years from November 2009 until 2013. If additional funds for decent homes works are approved and released by the Government, these contracts will be superseded.

In summary, the minimum expenditure requirements are as set out in the table below. These are absolutely minimum requirements based on replacing components at the end of their projected life and make no allowance for early failures, or for new installations or improvements. They do not include any provision for additional lifts, enhanced security, environmental improvements, or any estate remodelling.

	2010-17	2018-25	2026-30	2031-35	2036-40	TOTAL 2010-40
Estimated spend requirement	£276 m	£122 m	£68 m	£152 m	£60 m	£699 m
Average per year	£39.4 m	£15.3 m	£13.6 m	£30.4 m	£11.9 m	

Thirty year cost forecasts have been prepared by Savills, together with options based on different standards and schedule of rate assumptions. The current investment plan includes for the cost of maintaining the stock in a decent

condition beyond 2017. Any additional costs associated with achieving an agreed higher aspirational standard will be included in our database and will form part of our business plan.

The biggest risk is that required levels of future investment cannot be funded by the HRA. That is why it is important that investment requirements are properly modelled and the options evaluated, including the options for cost reduction, delayed investment and securing of additional resources.

7.1 Investment forecasts	
Objectives	
Investment plan	THH has a strategic planning requirement for maintenance cost forecast over 30 years, at whole stock and scheme level, with the ability to report on main components. The purpose is to see trends and to support business planning.
Business plan	The investment plan will feed into the business plan with a clear audit trail. The investment plan will report on the costs of the whole stock, in a consistent way. Reporting will extend to non-survey costs. Related assets and leasehold properties will be included.
Non-survey costs	THH will prepare investment plans in a format that includes budget forecasts for responsive, void and cyclical works, as well as for contingent works.
Tasks	
Review assumptions	Annual process agreed that reviews rates, confirms the stock and revises the investment plan in support of the budget cycle.

7.2 PLANNED PROGRAMMES

The Base Case Investment Plan

In June 2009 THH Board approved a five year housing capital investment programme from 2009 to 2014 inclusive. That programme was based on existing resources and estimates for future years without assuming additional resources arising from obtaining 2-star status. For the period 2010/2014 a realistic minimum level of resources that can be anticipated for the capital investment programme are as follows:

	2010/1 1	2011/1 2	2012/1 3	2013/1 4	Total
Supported Capital Expenditure (SCE)	£13.5 m	£13.0 m	£13.5 m	£13.5 m	£53.5 m
Major Repairs Allowance (MRA)	£10.9 m	£10.9 m	£10.9 m	£10.9 m	£43.6 m
Base case Total (£m)	£24.4 m	£23.9 m	£24.4 m	£24.4 m	£97.1

					m
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The projects in the Investment Plan are based on a best value review of major works, when residents decided that stock condition should be a high priority. Factors taken into account included:

- decent homes requirements
- area maintenance records in respect of lifts, heating and electrical rewires
- an assessment of day to day running costs where an element may be incurring high running costs indicating a need for renewal
- information from local housing offices, resident meetings, estate inspections and records showing where facilities are lacking in a block
- Members' enquiries.

Core schemes include the following:

- Single-element schemes which address the planned maintenance requirements of the stock and concentrate on a single building element such as windows, roofs, rewiring, heating or lift replacement.
- Multi-element schemes where a number of building elements have simultaneously reached the end of their useful life or major structural repairs are required.
- Schemes addressing the need for improvements usually to security but also covering minor environmental improvements.

Also included in the investment programme are blocks that have been identified as pilot decent homes blocks. These are blocks that were originally in the investment programme for external repairs and associated works that have now been considered suitable for carrying out additional decent homes works as pilots to provide experience of the type of internal works involved.

The Government definition of Decent Homes is narrow and does not cover all essential repairs to the housing stock such as structural repairs, building components that have failed before their due time, lift renewal or security improvements. Approximately one-third of the resources available in the current investment programme are spent addressing problems which have no direct bearing on Decent Homes.

The 2-star Case

Additional funding was expected to be available from CLG in 2009/10, which would allow the Decent Homes target is to be achieved by 2016/17. However the ALMO funding was deferred and therefore the ALMO programme will not commence until 2011/12 although still requiring completion by 2016/17.

If additional funding is available following the 2-star rating, the total value of the investment programme is expected to be approximately £276m. This programme would be spread over six years involving approximately 20,000 dwellings (inclusive of 8,000 leaseholders). The funding levels predicted under the initial ALMO bid were as indicated in the tables below. These will need to

be adjusted once the level of funding available and the timing of its release are confirmed.

	2010/ 11	2011/ 12	2012/ 13	2013/ 14	2014/ 15	2015/ 16	2016/ 17	TOTA L
Total	£26.1 m	£38.8 m	£50.8 m	£47.9 m	£49.2 m	£33.6 m	£29.6 m	£276 m

Comparing the Base Case against the 2-star Case for the period 2010/14 the difference in THH's financial capacity represents an extra 60% above the Base Case.

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	Total
Base Case	£24.4 m	£23.9 m	£24.4 m	£24.4 m	£97.1 m
2-star Case	£26.1 m	£38.8 m	£50.8 m	£ 47.9m	£163.5 m

The table below shows the breakdown of the estimated costs per annum on the 2-star Case:

	2010 /11	2011 /12	2012 /13	2013 /14	2014 /15	2015 /16	2016 /17	Total
	£ millions							
Internals	£18.4	£27.2	£28.5	£21.1	£9.4	£4.5	£0.0	£109.0
Externals	£5.2	£8.4	£17.2	£20.9	£31.6	£22.8	£23.2	£129.0
Lifts	£1.4	£1.4	£1.4	£1.4	£1.4	£1.4	£1.4	£9.5
Scaffolding	£1.1	£1.8	£3,8	£4.6	£6.9	£5.0	£5.1	£28.3
Total	£26.1 m	£38.8 m	£50.8 m	£47.9 m	£49.2 m	£33.6 m	£29.6 m	£276.0 m

The definition of works under internal, external and common parts packages is outlined below:

Internals	Kitchens including a partial rewire. Replacement of bathrooms Full electrical rewire where necessary Central heating – replacement of either boiler or whole system as required. Installation of smoke alarms Main services plumbing.
Externals	Repairs to balconies

Common parts	Repairs to roofs including structure, coverings, chimneys, rainwater goods Windows, External wall repairs (pointing, render, structural defects). Door entry systems, lobbies and staircases and lifts will be undertaken at the most appropriate juncture, i.e. this could be in parallel with either the internal or external works depending on the need and circumstances of individual blocks.
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Investment planning has been undertaken at a relatively high level (constituency and estate areas) but has not been taken down to individual blocks or dwellings at this stage. This will be further developed once the amount of funding THH will get is finalised.

The investment plan was developed through a series of workshops attended by officers and resident representatives who helped establish the base planning criteria which are:

- The external works priority was derived from the SCS database with those areas needing the highest percentage of external work per dwelling (inclusive of leaseholders) being given highest priority. This created a priority order of where investment should start and finish, with the first priority being those areas with the highest need based upon the highest percentage.
- The priorities for internal works were derived from those areas needing the least amount of external work and the highest percentage of electrical work per tenanted dwelling only. These criteria were chosen on the basis that a considerable number of properties were in need of rewiring and that this work represented a health and safety requirement. As a large proportion of dwellings require replacement of kitchens and bathrooms anyway, the determining priority factor was agreed to be the condition of the electrical installation.
- The frequency that certain elements are required to be replaced for example, number of properties requiring a kitchen + bathroom + heating + rewire; number of properties requiring windows + wall repairs + roofing + doors; etc This type of elemental analysis provides a good indication of work packaging options. The SCS database holds costs in five yearly bands and these have now been developed into annual programmes covering the period 2009-2017.
- In order to minimise disruption to residents and to spread work fairly across the borough, internal and external work was programmed not to occur in the same year and wherever possible kept at least two years apart.
- Non programmed costs such as asbestos, insulation etc. are linked to the main internal and external spend profiles as appropriate. Scaffolding has been linked exclusively to the external spend.
- The total spend profile has been developed to match the original profile within the BCM as closely as possible with a weighting towards the first 5 years (2009/10 – 2013/14).

- Work Packaging. Resident workshops have considered the following packaging options:
 - Option 1 – One Hit Works Package. All work to an individual property undertaken at the same time.
 - Option 2 – Separate Programmes for Internal and External Works – Two hits.
 - Option 3 – Elemental Approach – Separate programme for each building element.

Due to the nature of the work required, the geographical basis of the estate/constituencies and the block arrangements, it was agreed that Option 2 would be most appropriate and that these programmes would also pick up replacement of common area components such as door entry systems, lifts, water booster pumps etc as required.

The programmes have also been structured to try and balance the flow of work to contractors. Under the current plan the externals works grows steadily over the period 2010/15, and then falls off slightly. The internals programme grows quickly over the period 2010/13 before tailing off. Further smoothing and balancing of this programme would most likely be beneficial although this requires more detailed local investment planning. These profiles will now change to reflect the latest funding position.

The anticipated volume of works to achieve decent homes standard, based on the ALMO funding bid, is shown in the table below which shows the number of units having different types of work undertaken.

INTERNAL

Bathroom	Heating Distribution	Heating Individual	Kitchens	Electricals	Mains services plumbing	Walls - Internal	Common Parts - Internal
8,413	5,948	5,039	5,945	4,921	11,339	28,941	5,970

EXTERNAL

Windows	Doors	Roof Structure and Chimneys	Rainwater Goods	Walls	Balconies
5,419	11,685	14,623	8,576	15,927	12,817

OTHER

Common Parts	Door entry systems	Lifts	Communal Mains Services Plumbing	Communal Electricals	Communal Heating
18,840	13,745	5,945	16,442	6,237	1,535

As can be seen, the programme involves replacement of a significant number of building elements and will involve work to more than 800 blocks as well as

individual houses. This will present a logistical challenge involving more than 140 blocks per year by the time the programme is running at full capacity.

In terms of investment planning our priority is to update stock condition information to support the development of a planned investment programme to deliver decent homes by 2017. Our stock condition database contains data cloned to give whole stock information. We can analyse by estate and groups of street properties, linking this to an index of failures by decent homes criteria. This can be done while splitting into internal and external works (to fabric) plus communal areas, to identify what work would be done on a purely worst-first basis. However, there are other criteria to consider, including delivery across the Borough and phasing the works in a way that makes sense to the contractors carrying out the work.

The investment plan will be translated into a detailed planned programme based on priorities in the AMS. This will inform discussions with residents about the scope of works and when this will happen. Developing this plan must take into account the views of leaseholders, who in some of our blocks represent a significant number or majority of the residents. We must ensure that proposed works are reasonable and affordable while meeting our responsibility to maintain the stock and achieve the decent homes standard.

There will be a clear audit trail to demonstrate that the planned programme supports the asset management strategy. In turn, the planned programme will demonstrate compliance with the decent homes standard, and the agreed decent homes plus standard. A rolling budget will be approved on the basis of the planned programme.

Expanding on the agreed investment plan we will use our stock condition database to produce Local Investment Plans. These plans will:

- Determine the current and future investment needed at a local level
- Reflect resident preferences and priorities.
- Produce local plans suitable for consultation with residents.
- Ascertain an expenditure profile and ensure that THH and LBTH have the resources available to meet the needs.
- Inform the procurement strategy.

Alternative Funding Options

A number of alternative investment scenarios are being developed on the basis of possible reduced levels of funding following the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review. These scenarios will centre around the various investment options available at certain funding levels, and will focus on developing priorities outside of the required landlord obligated works i.e. kitchens, bathrooms and environmental works. Residents will be consulted on these options before the end of 2010 before definitive plans are agreed.

Boiler replacement programme

We have a five year rolling programme of boiler replacement. We have approximately 9,500 boilers; 67% of these are less than ten years old. There are no remaining back boilers. All new boilers are the latest 'A' rated condensing type, therefore very energy efficient, which reduces fuel poverty for our residents, as well as contributes to carbon reduction. We have removed all our back boilers, which is important in a borough suffering from acute overcrowding, as residents do use rooms where such boilers are installed as bedrooms, which can be dangerous in case of a fault. Information on boiler type, age, installation information is recorded on the stock condition database.

Communal heating systems

THH have 55 communal heating systems which serve some 4,000 properties. We have adopted several key policies regarding system replacement and maintenance which have a direct bearing on heating costs for those residents who live in properties heated by communal systems.

All of our communal heating systems now have weather compensation controls. These controls vary the heating water temperature with respect to outside ambient temperature. These systems are regularly maintained and the set points reviewed. The boilers operating at lower temperatures than necessary and at rest more often significantly reduces energy consumption.

During capital works to communal heating plant and distribution systems we will:

- Fit thermostatic radiator valves to all radiators. This allows residents an active control of their environment and hands off ability to maintain a comfortable temperature. On/off valves almost invariably remain on.
- Insulate all pipe work. Where new distribution mains are laid the insulation levels are increased in line with current recommendations reducing loss of energy through transmission.
- Specify condensing boilers where feasible. Condensing boilers are always considered as the first option for communal boiler replacement. Site conditions, planning considerations and existing system limitations occasionally provide unassailable problems. Technologically advanced energy saving equipment is however, always the primary consideration.
- Replace fixed head pumps with variable head pumps. For some time Tower Hamlets has settled on the use of variable head pumps as opposed to fixed head pumps wherever practical. The interactive boiler house controls ensure the pumps only run at the speed required reducing electrical consumption and cost.
- Ensure the pipe work design reflects the policy of reducing energy waste though system restriction and that the plant is as sensitive and responsive to demand change as possible.
- Install 'Radflek' radiator reflectors to all radiators. The placing of heat reflective sheets behind radiators is an inexpensive method of maximising the useful radiator heat output. These units are

inexpensive and easy to install and we intend to make the installation of this type of fitting as standard to all Major works schemes.

7.2 Planned programmes	
Objectives	
Preparation of planned programme	THH has a requirement to prepare planned maintenance programmes based on survey data, with the ability to see the impact of accelerating or delaying works programmes. Reporting will be at unit level, to support aggregation by any grouping of units.
Planned programmes	Decent homes failures will be reflected in the planned programme. It should be possible to report on planned programme dates to demonstrate compliance.
Programme priorities	Publication of an indicative annual programme twelve months in advance of delivery.
Consultation	THH is committed to consulting with residents on planned programmes, and to providing better information about when programmes will be delivered. This requires links between a finalised works programme and customer facing systems hosted on Northgate.
Tasks	
Rolling five year programme	Investment plan delivery programme revised annually.
Local investment plans	Prepare local plans, based on consultation with residents, and informed by budgets and priorities in the high level investment plan.

7.3 VALUE FOR MONEY

A conventional measure of value for money is the ratio of planned to responsive repairs. Our ratio is currently 32:68 with the usual target being 60:40. As we move into our investment programme the ratio will improve and we should reach the 60:40 target. However, this is by increasing the level of spend, and is not in any way a measure of effectiveness. We therefore have to address this question in a more sophisticated manner.

We therefore propose to adopt two strategies:

- First, we plan to increase the level and quality of benchmarking to assess value for money for all management and maintenance costs, developing a smart procurement strategy to deliver plans, and to evaluate the procurement of services. THH is a member of Housemark. We will use the information supplied by our benchmarking partners on their costs and performance to challenge our historic cost and apply efficiency lessons learned from them in our repairs and investment programmes.
- Second, our investment programme will be informed by a preventative agenda that aims to maximise the amount of future maintenance work

that is directed towards planned and programmed activity. This is not a simple shift from responsive to planned. The objective is to use cyclical programmes to extend the life cycle of key components without seeing an offsetting rise in responsive repairs.

A particular issue relates to external works. Many of our blocks are more than five storeys high, and external works generally require erection of scaffolding. This adds to the cost and influences how works are prioritised. We will want to make best use of scaffolding by undertaking as much work to a block as possible, thereby saving money and reducing inconvenience to residents by not putting up scaffolding repeatedly unless really necessary.

This drive for improved efficiency also entails:

- Responsive repairs done by appointment on the first visit with minimum back-office involvement or checking.
- Potential warranty claims flagged and properly pursued.
- The capacity to analyse repair activity to identify trends and reduce responsive and planned costs by intelligent cyclical or preventative works i.e. where preventative works are undertaken, but not done before the work is necessary.
- Reducing the average cost of a void to top 25% performance.
- Adopting whole life costing as our standard approach to cost evaluation.
- Improving Value for Money through renegotiating our current repairs contracts to increase the number of jobs completed for the same money.
- Procuring new contracts for Decent Homes, part of which will establish value for THH through the entire supply chain.
- Appointing a number of contractors to ensure ongoing competitiveness and value for money.
- Developing and delivering the Decent Homes programme in a manner that minimises contractors' site and other overhead costs.
- Adopting a partnering approach that encourages innovation and continuous improvement, including shared savings.
- Adopting clienting arrangements appropriate to the partnering approach with less duplication between THH staff and contractors and a greater focus on costs, quality and resident satisfaction.
- Reducing overall costs to move to top 25% performance in terms of average cost of maintenance.

THH's Value for Money (VFM) Strategy sets out in detail the organisation's approach to achieving value for money. A Value for Money Register forms part of the strategy which captures VFM activity at all levels of the organisation. The strategy also contains VFM performance indicators which are reviewed at agreed intervals.

7.3 Value for money	
Objectives	
Benchmarking	Verify that all planned programmes are delivering value for money.
Preventative strategies	To undertake more work as planned programmes, reducing the proportion of responsive repairs, but not replacing components before the end of their useful life.
Reducing delivery costs	To lower end-to-end service delivery costs by doing the right things right first time and cutting out the costs of doing what is unnecessary.
Tasks	
Responsive costs	Targets agreed for reducing cost per unit, and monitoring procedures in place.
Cyclical programmes	Detailed cyclical programme prepared.
Cyclical programmes	Protocols agreed to define repair or replace decisions.
Cyclical programmes	Plan the monitoring of these programmes to test that they deliver genuine value for money by delaying major works without increasing the cost of responsive repairs.
Cyclical programmes	Automatic reports established that can track responsive repairs trends by area and components.
Demand	Complete analysis of the spread of demand for responsive repairs (by area, type of works and customer characteristics).
Demand	Complete review of the ways in which the demand for small value non-urgent work might be better managed.

8. DELIVERING THE STRATEGY

8.1 DATA COLLECTION

An important part of achieving value for money when formulating an Investment Plan is being able to accurately predict the urgency and scope of different repair, replacement and redevelopment work. This is, in turn, dependent upon the quality of the information held about the stock, and our ability to extract and analyse it.

Our SCS is actively managed. Stock numbers are adjusted, and data added from voids, works programmes and specialist M&E. Data held on the system about key building components (roof, windows, structural elements, has undergone major changes since 2000. This is because most blocks have been revisited since the original survey and components have been changed or checked for their remaining life. Of some 805 blocks under the management of Tower Hamlets Homes, nearly 75% have had 25% to 100% of the major components changed. Each time a building component is replaced or renewed to a significant degree (such as to extend its useful life), this new information has been recorded on the database. This will continue:

- Internal works will be carried out as part of the investment programme, and the database updated as works are completed.
- External programmes can be prioritised on the basis of existing data, but this will be strengthened by addition external (and internal common area) stock condition surveys, aiming for 100% external coverage and no survey data more than five years old.
- The timing of these external surveys is likely to precede the investment programme.

8.1 Data collection	
Objectives	
Rolling surveys	Improve the quality of planning data through a programme of rolling stock condition surveys.
Works data	Ensure that accurate and timely works programme data is returned at unit level.
Voids	The requirements for capturing void works data is similar to that for other works programmes.
Responsive repairs	Relevant responsive repairs captured to update the stock condition database.
Managing data	Improve the coverage and quality of data.
Tasks	
Stock surveys	Initiate a rolling programme of in-house stock surveys.
Managing data	Agree protocols for data collection and quality control.
Database validation	Database validation to confirm that reports can be relied upon for the purpose of business planning and decent homes reporting.
Works data	Complete annual audit of works data to confirm accurate

	and complete data is being fed-back into SCS.
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8.2 INFORMATION SYSTEMS

The SCS database used by THH is an Access database. Our IHMS is Northgate. There are interfaces from Northgate to SCS so that works data from capital programmes and responsive repairs are reflected in the stock condition database.

Asbestos data is held in a separate, web-based database. There is an interface to Northgate permitting works orders to be flagged. Contractors have access via the web to the asbestos register.

Gas servicing is managed on Northgate. Information from CP12s is reported to SCS. Data to support SAP scores is passed to LBTH who use Auto Assessor to monitor thermal efficiency.

The decent homes investment programme is a very large project to manage, and must be supported by reliable and easy to use information systems. We therefore intend to review the systems needed to manage the investment programme with the aim of identifying any functional gaps and specifying the required interfaces.

8.2 Information systems	
Objectives	
Planned programmes	Information about planned programmes to be visible when ordering responsive repairs.
Contract management	Review requirements for specialist software to manage planned programmes.
Tasks	
Planned programmes	Agree how information about planned programmes can be made available to residents and to Northgate.
Contract management	Evaluate the benefits of implementing project management software.

8.3 PROCUREMENT

Details about our approach to procurement can be found in our 2008 Procurement Strategy.

In summary, the current Housing Investment Programme has recently been delivered through a variety of framework partnering contracts established through an OJEU tendering process undertaken in 2009. These frameworks cover a wide variety of repair and improvement works although they are predominantly related to external elements (roofs, walls, windows etc) as well as M&E services such as electrical, heating and lift replacements. In principle our future decent homes programme will be let under the 'umbrella' of a series

of framework agreements using modern methods of procurement. The type of work to be carried out in the investment programme involves considerable repetition over many years and we will therefore use a Partnering approach with incentives to identify and implement improvements in efficiency. We will also engage a panel of contractors to spread the risk of poor contractor performance, but also to encourage high-level performance through constructive competition. It is important to note that all contracts will be in the name of the Council and THH will carry out the day-to-day contract management.

It is intended that the contract packages will be geographically based with a main internal and external contractor, subject to capacity, being allocated its own investment area, location and volume of work. This approach has been proven to deliver best value for money through contractors having a known workload in a defined geographic area enabling them to minimise site set up and other overhead costs. These contractors will need to demonstrate a proven ability to deliver similar work types through the selection process.

The procurement of the main Decent Homes frameworks has been deferred in the light of the recent delays in funding. This exercise will take six to eight months to undertake and will be completed in a timescale that enable works to commence as soon as the additional ALMO funding becomes available.

The contracts will be between the suppliers and the Council rather than with THH. THH will manage the contracts as LBTH's Agent. The THH programme will also seek to reduce costs by buying in bulk. We have sufficient lead-in time to decide whether to join an existing volume procurement buying club, (such as SYNTRA – formerly the London Area Procurement Network - or the Hackney/Greenwich Supply Chain Management Consortium), or whether to use the buying power of our own selected contractors.

8.3 Procurement	
Objectives	
Contractors	Planned works delivered to a high standard, on time and to budget.
Value for money	Enhancing client-side functions to manage the delivery of capital programmes.
Tasks	
Prioritisation	Identify work programmes that provide the greatest opportunity for procurement savings.
Value for money	Review the client role to strengthen programme management.

8.4 SERVICE STANDARDS

It is essential that we understand our residents and then translate this knowledge into more responsive service.

Improvements will be made to the way we deal with and learn from complaints. Resident satisfaction surveys will be undertaken following decent homes programmes, and new lettings and exit surveys are undertaken as part of the Local Authority Core Returns to central government.

It is important to collect and use customer-profiling information as the key to performing well on diversity, and we will use the information which we hold proactively to ensure that any access and customer care needs are addressed. Accurate and comprehensive profiling information will be used to set targets and performance indicators. Information will be available to staff and to contractors where relevant.

The 2010 Status Survey shows that 71% of tenants were either very or fairly satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service, a 6% improvement on the 2008 survey.

Aspects of the service where residents are less satisfied are:

- The quality of work undertaken.
- The professionalism of operatives.
- The repair was not undertaken or the appointment was missed.

THH has inherited comprehensive repairs and maintenance policies and service plans from LBTH. However, a Repairs Service Review undertaken in 2008 also highlighted a number of weaknesses, particularly in resident involvement, repairs ordering, and client contractor working relationship.

We have reviewed our repairs and maintenance policies and service standards, overseen by a Repairs Strategy Group, based on the 2008 and 2009 status surveys. In particular:

- Improvements have been made to the way we deal with and learn from complaints.
- Resident satisfaction surveys are undertaken following decent homes and major works programmes, and new lettings and exit surveys are undertaken as part of the Local Authority Core Returns to central government.

These mechanisms used together are intended to embed resident involvement in service monitoring and development, using customer satisfaction to drive-up standards, and then linking this back to show how customer feedback has shaped the service.

8.4 Service standards	
Objectives	
Customer satisfaction	Collection of reliable information about service standards.
Better customer information	Collection and analysis of data to shape service delivery more intelligently.
Better customer	Listening to customers, acting on what customers

feedback	have said, and then feeding this back to show how their views have influenced service delivery.
Better use of complaints	To demonstrate learning where the experience has wider applicability.
Tasks	
Satisfaction	Review ways to use satisfaction data to improve service quality.
Complaints procedure	Review the repair and maintenance element within the overall corporate complaints procedure.

8.5 RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT

To achieve our strategic objectives we must ensure tenants and leaseholders are at the heart of decisions taken in planning, delivering and monitoring our service. THH has published a draft *Residents Guide for Decent Homes Programme*. This sets out the consultation processes that we will adopt in determining the detail of the projects in the asset management programme and how residents will be kept informed as work is undertaken. We have also published our policy on consulting leaseholders expanding upon leaseholders' statutory rights. However, we will be looking to build on this foundation, and over the life of this AMS we will:

- Produce and implement a programme of consultation events.
- Establish and implement a strategy to improve engagement with BME groups within the communities we serve.
- Extend existing resident involvement in service review and estate walkabouts.
- Set achievable Local Standards to augment the THH Core Standards.
- Develop performance indicators to measure the effectiveness of our consultation activities.
- Review and further improve the manner in which we consult with leaseholders.

Tower Hamlets has the youngest population of any local authority, with 39% of residents under 25 years of age (50% within the Bangladeshi community). Our response is to target engagement specifically to younger people, addressing specific issues such as financial management experienced by younger residents, support for younger families and youth activities.

We will ensure our repairs service and the investments programme are delivered in a way that meets the service requirements of all our residents by implementing the principles of THH's Equality and Diversity strategy – accessibility, inclusion and fairness.

We have undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment as part of our planning for the development of the decent homes programme. This enables us to assess the possible impact on different sections of the community and take action to address any adverse impact on any one group before the finalising the delivery of the programme. The action points following from the EqIA are:

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- Undertake analysis of stock condition and programmed work against neighbourhood/block diversity profiles.
 - Introduce routine analysis of scheme satisfaction results by diversity strands to check service delivery is accessible, inclusive and fair.
 - Capture and share learning from the Decent Homes pilot schemes in responding to the needs of individual residents.

For the decent homes programme, our Repairs and Investment Steering Group will be directly overseeing its delivery, and work has begun on the way residents will be involved in the procurement process, including to ensure that resident engagement is representative of the diversity of the communities affected. Criteria for the selection of contractors will be set out in an evaluation model with a pre-determined quality and price ratio, including criteria to ensure commitments to equality and diversity. Evaluation will be conducted through a panel of ALMO officers, Council officers, residents, Board representatives and any consultants engaged on the project. It is envisaged that residents will be engaged in particular in the evaluation of specific aspects relating to customer care, including the contractor's approach to working with residents in occupation, engaging with vulnerable people, VFM, and applying equal opportunities to all ALMO residents. This may require positive action to target groups who do not typically engage with these processes.

The tenderers' written qualitative submissions will be followed by an interview and possibly site visits. In these circumstances residents and board members will be invited to be part of the interview panel considering short listed contractors and to participate in any site visits to assist in the selection process.

We will also identify where residents will have choice over materials, components and systems, for example:

- Type of kitchens to be used
- Type and colour of worktops
- Wall tiles options
- Floor covering types
- Shower attachments to taps in bathrooms
- Wall tiling heights in bathrooms

At the end of works on an estate or block we will hold a 'lessons learnt' session to record feedback. These events will be attended by residents, contractors and suppliers.

As well as understanding what our residents want in terms of a 'product', it is essential that we understand their requirements of the services that we offer. This applies to all areas of our service including day to day repairs, planned major works and specialist services such as aids and adaptations.

THH aims to ensure equality of access to all services. There are barriers to engagement and consultation, and we are committed to their mitigation or removal:

- Ensure that residents receive equal access to services irrespective of age, ethnicity, gender, gender reassignment status, disability, religion and belief or sexual orientation.
- THH's offices are accessible to people who are physically disabled.
- We will provide interpreting through either a member of staff or through an external organisation.
- We will provide the services of intermediaries if someone has hearing or speech difficulties or other specific needs.
- We will work with other partner organisations to ensure services are provided to them to meet their specific needs.
- Ensure all staff are trained on equalities and diversity issues and ensure they are equipped to deal with our residents' individual needs.
- Make available leaflets and information in large print, on audio tape, in Braille or in different languages as required.

8.5 Resident involvement	
Objectives	
Increase resident involvement	Seek effective ways to increase the involvement of residents in asset management.
Feedback	Provide easy and effective ways for residents to provide service feedback.
Tasks	
Increase resident involvement	Discuss options and propose improvements to the way planned programmes are prioritised.
Feedback	Provide easy and effective ways for residents to provide service feedback.

8.6 AIDS AND ADAPTATIONS

THH undertakes the installation and maintenance of some minor adaptations and all major adaptations to homes on behalf of the Council. The budget is of the order of £750,000 a year. THH also have a process in place for assessing any requirements for aids and adaptations our residents may have. The purpose of providing aids or adapting council stock is to enable THH tenants to maximise their independence and quality of life.

The service was restructured following an Internal Audit review in 2006 and consequently turnaround times for installation work have fallen from an average of 85 days in 2006/7, to 50 days in 2007/8, and to an average of 30 days in 2008/9. A backlog of orders has also been eliminated. In 2008/9, a total of 203 adaptations were completed with a value of £640k. In the current year £517K has been spent on 246 adaptations to date.

There has been a major improvement in overall timescale for assessing and undertaking work, both by the Council's OTs and by THH staff. In 2008/09 we started monitoring the end to end process for completion of adaptations. The start date for the process is taken from when a client first contacts or is referred to the early intervention team in Social Services. In cases where a

client has been receiving other forms of assistance from Social Services (such as provision of equipment or care) the process is monitored from the date it is decided that an adaptation is required, for example because the client's condition has deteriorated or because the use of equipment has not met the client's needs.

Target times for the adaptations process are based on those given in the June 2006 CLG Good Practice Guide: Delivering Housing Adaptations for Disabled People. Clients whose disability is assessed by Social Services as representing a critical or substantial risk to independence are eligible to receive adaptations.

During our Decent Homes programme of works we will need to develop an integrated approach to carrying out aids and adaptations works as part of internal works packages. This will require an assessment of residents' needs during internal surveys and individual scopes of works which accommodate any non-standard installations. To avoid delays we will consider the need for a dedicated OT resource. A standard specification for items such as lever taps or level access showers will need to be adopted.

THH is committed to assist disabled residents to find properties which are accessible and suitable for their needs. We have developed an Accessible Housing Register (AHR), which contains a list of our tenanted stock, where each property has been given an accessibility category from A to G. Each category indicates how accessible a property is ranging from full wheelchair access to general needs stock.

When properties are advertised for letting, information about the accessibility of each property is included in the advertisement. This enables disabled and elderly people applying for properties to decide if the property is suitable for their needs. Information from this register is used in the planning of future accessible and special needs housing in the borough.

8.6 Aids and adaptations	
Objectives	
Programme coordination	Develop an integrated approach to the delivery of aids and adaptations as part of the planned programme.
Tasks	
Programme coordination	Agree protocols that assess requirements for adaptations as part of planning internal works programmes.

8.7 CYCLICAL AND PREVENTIVE

Cyclical decoration

We are preparing a seven year cyclical programme to run in parallel with the capital works programme. This will include common areas and the external finishes of houses, low rise and medium rise blocks. This programme has now commenced, but funding is limited.

8.7 Cyclical and preventative maintenance	
Objectives	
Cyclical programme	Develop a new seven year cyclical programme.
Tasks	
Cyclical programme	Support value for money objectives (7.3) through the delivery of intelligent cyclical programmes to extend the life of key components.

Gas servicing

The percentage of our homes with a valid CP12 certificate has risen steadily over the last three years, from 89.29% in 2005/6, to 100% compliant in October 2010.

Our Gas Plan is managed by a qualified engineer and we have adopted a risk-based approach to managing access. Appointment letters and reminders are system generated and age profiles of lapsed certificates used to target enforcement action; there are no properties that have been non-compliant for more than twelve months. Properties with no certificate are flagged to housing management staff when accessing the system. We work with the Council's Legal Services Team to take timely action against tenants where access is not forthcoming and Service Interval Programmers are fitted in properties with a history of no access.

We have improved our procedures whereby we identify in advance when a CP12 will expire. Previously, reminder letters were generated after expiry of certificates. Now we have adjusted the system where letters are generated six weeks prior to the expiry of certificates. This gives contractors more time to undertake gas servicing and issue new certificates before the current one lapse. This is helping to maintain our high compliance rate.

For those properties where we encounter difficulties gaining access, we check our diversity database to find out any specific information regarding the background of the tenant to identify any special needs and help they may require allowing gas servicing works to be undertaken to their properties.

Post inspections (10%) of gas servicing works are undertaken by qualified engineers. We stress the importance of gas safety to tenants through our newsletter called Open Door, advertising in Bengali language newspapers,

having gas safety stands at residents events, offer Saturday and evening appointments, and support elderly and vulnerable residents in arranging them.

We have raised the profile of gas safety through use of block notice boards, translate information we produce in different languages, and use our Repair Days to discuss gas safety issues. We undertake more gas servicing during summer months to minimise disruptions to people's homes during winter.

Leaseholders have the opportunity to have a gas safety check using the same contractors carrying out the work on the tenanted stock. The payment is made direct from the leaseholder to the contractor.

TV aerials

It is important for many of our residents to be able to access a wide variety of television channels, including BME language channels, which are normally only available via the satellite platform. A programme of Communal TV Aerial upgrades therefore began in 2003 to ensure readiness for the analogue turn off in 2010.

Because of further technical developments since the original programme began (e.g. Sky+ and HD TV) a supplementary programme has begun to upgrade the early digital installations to the new format. In addition we will improve the quality of records we keep about aerials, which will aid quick identification and diagnosis of repairs requests reported by residents. By installing communal aerials and satellite dishes, THH will be able to enforce the policy of not allowing individual satellite dishes to blocks, thus removing an eyesore and protecting the structure.

Lifts

Functioning lifts are clearly a very important aspect of the facilities that we provide our residents in multi-storey blocks. We currently have a five year lift replacement programme. On average we are replacing about 12 lifts per year. All new lifts have a direct connection to call centres. This assists people who are trapped inside lifts to talk to an operator directly, thereby helping to improve residents' safety and security.

Although lifts do not form part of the decent homes works, the replacement programme is coordinated with the wider decent homes works to minimise disruption to residents - by ensuring that lifts are not out of action at the same time that the decent homes work is being undertaken to their flats.

Our stock has a large number of properties without lifts, which is causing a problem as residents get older, and the funding requirements to install lifts are very high, and will result in high bills for leaseholders.

Door entry systems/ CCTV

Access control is crucial to providing residents with as much confidence as possible about their safety and security within the block. We spent £1m in 2008/9 on installation and replacements of door entry systems, and have brought forward programmes for new door entry installations from future years at the requests of residents. New systems are normally installed in response to requests from residents, the police, the ASB team or local housing offices, as a means of combating antisocial behaviour.

8.8 LEASEHOLDERS

THH are providing services for tenants and for leaseholders, and our AMS takes the needs of leaseholders into account. We recognise that leaseholders are affected by our planned programme and have legitimate interests in the way the programme is specified and delivered. While recognising these legitimate interests, and the low incomes of many of the people who are leaseholders, we also have to recognise the interests and responsibilities of the Council as owner. We will therefore:

- Work closely with the Leaseholder Focus Group.
- When planning work at block or estate level, meet with leaseholders separately from any general meeting with residents.
- Extend to leaseholders the works packages being offered to tenants, albeit with the contract and payment being between the leaseholder and the contractor (mirroring existing arrangements for gas servicing).
- As the freeholder, ensure that necessary works are carried out to the leasehold stock, and enforcing this where necessary by placing a charge on the property.

8.9 PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

We will continue to develop and review our performance measurement systems to improve both efficiency and effectiveness. We will develop Performance Indicators (PIs) that are relevant to each project and to the programme as a whole. These will be primarily based on an Earned Value approach to provide a true measure of progress of the various works. We will also use Partnering PIs to encourage measurable improved efficiency. We currently use some KPI's from the Constructing Excellence – UK Construction Industry KPI set together with other measures derived from past District Audit reports. These are:

- Cost Predictability – Design
- Cost Predictability – Construction
- Start Date - Variance
- Time Predictability – Construction
- Final Cost – Variance
- Final Account Audit

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- Resident satisfaction

As we move from the existing programme based on building elements towards a comprehensive Decent Homes investment programme, we will review these measures and develop a revised set in consultation with all stakeholders.

Until 2009, we sought to benchmark our performance through the Constructing Excellence - Local Authority Construction and Property benchmarking club. However this group became rather disparate, with some members now representing ALMO's some becoming the LA client of an ALMO and other LA members more geared towards non-housing work. As a result we are currently looking at methods of benchmarking which can provide a more relevant comparison for measuring our performance.

8.10 RESPONSIBILITIES

Ownership of the Asset Management Strategy

The Director of Asset Management will hold overall responsibility for ensuring that this strategy is implemented.

Governance responsibility

The AMS and the associated Investment Plans will be adopted by the Council and THH's Board, who will delegate responsibility for programme monitoring, and authority to agree defined changes in cost time or quality to the LBTH Capital Programme Board. They will review the programme quarterly. The Strategy itself will be reviewed and updated in two years time (2012) by the Board.

Quarterly progress reports on progress will include:

- Progress against Asset Management Strategy targets and key performance indicators.
- Report of budget approvals made through delegated powers.
- Budget monitoring.

Financial control

Financial control of asset management budget is exercised through the monthly programme review process. This process collects and monitors progress through the review of updated, standard programme and financial data from all consultants and surveyors responsible for the delivery of contracts. Key elements of this review process are to monitor the following:

- Projected outturn against approved budget (by contract).
- Projected spend against the current financial year budget (budget overall).
- Updated contract information (addresses in the programme).

Monitoring through the Programme Review process is focused on:

- Ensuring that individual contracts remain within budget and that any further approvals required is sought in the context of Financial Regulations and Standing Orders.
- To ensure that spend is contained within the approved annual budget and progress is reported to members.

Risk management

We are aware that evaluation of risk is an essential part of an effective asset management approach. Major decisions taken about the future and utilisation of the asset base in the absence of a risk assessment may have a long-term detrimental effect on the sustainability of communities and financial viability of the organisation.

The organisation has a systematic approach to managing asset-related risks. This involves the regular review of impact and probability of specific risks materialising and an evaluation of the control arrangements that are in place for managing and minimising current and emerging risks. These are updated in light of changing circumstances.

It is recognised that many aspects of risk are cross cutting and need to be dealt with through a multi disciplinary approach both within THH and with the involvement of our partners. Our corporate approach to risk management is set out in THH's Risk Management Strategy. The Corporate Risk Register directly captures major risks for the organisation. The most relevant risks for the AMS at present are:

- Risk 6 Delivering Top Quartile Voids Performance
- Risk 7 Delivering Top Quartile performance in the Repairs Service.
- Risk 8 Procurement of Decent Homes Works

THH has set high standards in terms of the risks it will accept on behalf of its Residents. We have robust improvement plans for each of the above areas to ensure that progress is continuously made to achieve our high standards. Outlines of the plans are contained in the Risk Register.

As part of the delivery of the decent homes programme, we will maintain a separate risk register, focusing on various aspects of the decent homes programme. This will feed into the Corporate Risk Management structure. The major risks specific to the decent homes programme at present are listed below:

- Decent Homes funding is inadequate: This could arise if HCA do not allocate full amount bid for, or new stock condition survey identifies higher level of need than in the ALMO bid, or THH fail to achieve Two Stars;
- Lack of in-house technical resources to plan, deliver and control the programme: this will be mitigated by support from consultants.

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- Challenge to the procurement process by unsuccessful contractors resulting in delays in appointing contractors.
 - Challenges by leaseholders to the scope / cost of works;
 - Inability to meet / manage residents expectations;
 - Inadequate IT systems to enable robust project management and financial control.

8.11 ACTION PLAN

The action plan to address issues identified in this strategy can be found in Appendix One.

APPENDIX ONE: ACTION PLAN

4.1 Decent homes standard		When	Who
Data quality	As part of data management (8.1) a sample of decent homes checked annually.		
4.2 Future Standard		When	Who
Future Standard	Aspirational Future Standard for THH agreed, including affordable warmth and environmental criteria.		
Modelling of costs	Costs of the Future Standard assessed to ensure the standard is fundable by the business plan.		
5.1 Responsive repairs		When	Who
Service access	Review access and develop customer profiling.		
Emergency repairs	Undertake pattern analysis of emergency repairs, and targets set for reduction in cost of emergency and urgent work.		
Repair demand	Repair hot-spots identified and strategy agreed to address individual and collective issues.		
Planned works	Planned maintenance packages created to cover additional areas of work targeted at reducing responsive repairs.		
5.2 Void works		When	Who
Void works	Target set for reducing the average unit cost of voids.		
Tenant incentives	Review the effectiveness of current incentives to encourage tenants to leave their homes in good repair.		
Decorating allowances	Review the operation of allowances to maximise their use, minimise inconsistency and protect the needs of those who need more help.		
6.1 Portfolio performance		When	Who
Pilot	Pilot exercise completed using existing data and revised in the light of experience.		
Revised approach	Future methodological options reviewed and next steps identified.		
6.2 Option appraisal		When	Who
Criteria	Methodology agreed for option appraisal.		
Scheme	Apply scheme based option appraisal as required.		
Bedsits	Work with LBTH to identify priorities and options.		
Land assets	Work with LBTH to complete an assessment of development opportunities offered by redundant or under-used land.		
7.1 Investment forecasts		When	Who
Review assumptions	Annual process agreed that reviews rates, confirms the stock and revises the investment plan to support the budget cycle.		

7.2 Planned programmes		When	Who
Rolling five year programme	Investment plan delivery programme revised annually.		
Local investment plans	Prepare local plans, based on consultation with residents, and informed by budgets and priorities in the high level investment plan.		
7.3 Value for money		When	Who
Responsive costs	Targets agreed for reducing cost per unit, and monitoring procedures in place.		
Cyclical	Detailed cyclical programme prepared.		
Cyclical	Protocols agreed to define repair or replace decisions.		
Cyclical	Plan the monitoring of these programmes to test that they deliver genuine value for money by delaying major works without increasing the cost of responsive repairs.		
Cyclical	Automatic reports established that can track responsive repairs trends by area and components.		
Demand	Complete analysis of the spread of demand for responsive repairs (by area, type of works and customer characteristics).		
Demand	Complete review of the ways in which the demand for small value non-urgent work might be better managed.		
8.1 Data collection		When	Who
Stock surveys	Initiate a rolling programme of in-house stock surveys.		
Managing data	Agree protocols for data collection and quality control.		
Database validation	Database validation to confirm that reports can be relied upon for the purpose of business planning and decent homes reporting.		
Works data	Complete annual audit of works data to confirm accurate and complete data is being fed-back into SCS.		
8.2 Information systems		When	Who
Planned programmes	Agree how information about planned programmes can be made available to residents and to Northgate.		
Contract management	Evaluate the benefits of implementing project management software.		
8.3 Procurement		When	Who
Prioritisation	Identify work programme that provides the greatest opportunity for procurement savings.		
Value for money	Review the client role to strengthen programme management.		
8.4 Service standards		When	Who
Satisfaction	Review of ways of using satisfaction data to		

	improve service quality.		
Complaints procedure	Review the repair and maintenance element within the overall corporate complaints procedure.		
8.5 Resident involvement		When	Who
Increase involvement	Discuss options and propose improvements to the way planned programmes are prioritised.		
Feedback	Provide easy and effective ways for residents to provide service feedback.		
8.6 Aids and adaptations		When	Who
Matching need	Achieve the best possible fit between existing adapted property and potential tenants.		
Stock assessment	Identify property suitable for conversion or extension as part of the development of neighbourhood plans.		
8.7 Cyclical and preventative maintenance		When	Who
Servicing	Review the approach to the servicing of fire alarms, lift servicing, door entry systems and similar equipment.		
Cyclical programme	Support value for money objectives (7.3) through the delivery of intelligent cyclical programmes to extend the life of key components.		
Value for money	Build technical competence to manage the programme of works by framework contractors.		