

ANGUS COUNCIL

Housing Committee - 22nd April 2004

SCOTTISH HOUSING QUALITY STANDARD

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF HOUSING

ABSTRACT

This report advises members of the Scottish Housing Quality Standard, and the requirements for meeting the standard.

1. RECOMMENDATION

Members are asked to note the criteria for the new standard, and the initial requirements for planning to meet the standard.

2. BACKGROUND

As part of the Scottish Executive's long-term objectives of improving the quality of Scotland's housing stock, the consultation paper 'Modernising Scotland's Social Housing' was issued in March 2003, which proposed a national minimum standard for social housing. In the meantime, following the recommendations of the Housing Improvement Task Force, Ministers announced an intention to introduce a decent homes standard which would cover all tenures. This consequently resulted in the announcement of the 'Scottish Housing Quality Standard', which although it does relate to all tenures, only sets a target date for bringing houses in the social rented sector up to the standard.

3. SCOTTISH HOUSING QUALITY STANDARD

The standard is based on a number of broad quality criteria - a house must be:

- Compliant with the tolerable standard
- Free from serious disrepair
- Energy efficient
- Provided with modern facilities and services
- Health, safe and secure.

These broad criteria are defined in more detail in accompanying guidance notes issued by the Executive, a copy of which has been placed in the members lounge.

The Council must ensure that its own stock meets the standard by 2015, but within that timescale there is flexibility in setting local milestones to take account of special circumstances. Indeed, there is scope to augment the standard with additional local specifications if tenant consultation shows that this is desirable. The Council must prepare a 'Standard Delivery Plan' outlining the measures to be taken to bring the stock up to the standard, and proposed target dates.

The standard delivery plan will take the form of an update to the Angus Local Housing Strategy which, as members will be aware, is to be submitted to Communities Scotland by 30th April 2004. This first update to the strategy must be submitted to Communities Scotland by 1st April 2005. Further guidance on the content of the delivery plan and criteria for assessment are to be issued by the Executive in May 2004

Whilst the standard delivery plan will only relate to improvements to houses owned by Angus Council, the standard itself relates to all tenures of housing, and local authorities are asked to take account of this. The Angus Local Housing Strategy already considers measures to

encourage private owners to maintain and improve their properties, and these will be monitored and reported in future updates to the document.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report – a future report, to accompany the standard delivery plan, will outline projected cost implications of meeting the standard.

5 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

There are no human rights implications resulting from this report

6 CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive, Director of Finance and Director of Law & Administration, and Director of Property Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

RON ASHTON
Director of Housing

NOTE:- The following background papers, as defined by Section 50d of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, (other than any containing confidential or exempt information), were relied upon to any material extent in preparing this report.

Angus Council Report No. 364/04 Angus Local Housing Strategy 2004-09 16th March 2004