

CABINET

15 OCTOBER 2003

ANNUAL REPORT ON PROPERTY MAINTENANCE & ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMME –  
TACT COMMENTS

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF HEALTH & HOUSING

Contact Officer: CLIVE BROOMFIELD Tel No: 01962 848149

RECENT REFERENCES:

CAB626 - Annual Report on Property Maintenance - 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2003

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The purpose of this report is to confirm TACT's comments following their further consideration of CAB 626, and to demonstrate what progress is being made relative to their suggestions and aspirations.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1 That the contents of the report be noted.

CABINET15 OCTOBER 2003ANNUAL REPORT ON PROPERTY MAINTENANCE & ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMME – TACT COMMENTSREPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF HEALTH & HOUSINGDETAIL:1 Background and Introduction

1.1 At the Cabinet meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2002, the Director of Health & Housing reported that due to timings of meetings and volume of work within the department, it had not been possible to consult with TACT prior to the report being submitted to Cabinet.

1.2 Cabinet regretted the lack of prior consultation with TACT, but also recognised the need to obtain Council's approval to the recommendations. It was therefore agreed to approve the carry forward in principle subject to consultation with TACT for further submission to a future meeting of Cabinet and then to Council.

1.3 At the Cabinet meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2003, Members considered CAB 626, and the following was resolved: -

That the following be approved in principle subject to consultation with TACT and further submission to Cabinet and to a future Council meeting:

1 That the progress made and the levels of work still remaining as identified by the 1988 Stock Condition Survey (as detailed in part 1 and summarised in part 6 of the report) be noted.

2 (i) That the approval of the carry forward on £672,000 from the 2002/03 Housing Revenue Account Repairs Programme Budget, to meet existing contractual commitments towards works in progress and projects delayed in their commencement, as detailed in part 2 of the report be approved.

(ii) That following the end of year (2002/03) outturn calculation. That Council be asked to approve the transfer of any underspend of the MRA (estimate at £672,000) into an HRA Repairs Reserve.

(iii) That the proposed Property Maintenance and Enhancement Programme 2003/04 as detailed in part 3 and summarised in part 4 of the report be endorsed.

(iv) That the ongoing and emerging issues detailed in part 5 of the report be noted.

1.4 TACT subsequently produced a formal response to this paper that was circulated to Officers in May 2003. TACT comments are shown in Appendix A of this report, together with Officer replies.

- 1.5 The comments made by TACT were considered and debated at the Property & Contracts forum on 24<sup>th</sup> April and 26<sup>th</sup> June 2003 respectively. Broad agreement was reached at these meetings as to how issues raised by TACT (as appropriate), would be incorporated into “housing business” over the currency of the municipal year.
- 1.6 Appendix A to this report includes Officer responses relative to TACTs comments, and indicates what progress has been made to date and/or what plans are proposed to take into account TACTs proposals and aspirations.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

2 CORPORATE STRATEGY (RELEVANCE TO):

- 2.1 Maintenance and enhancement of the Housing Stock is a core function of the Council’s service.

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 3.1 None.

4 TACT COMMENT

- 4.1 As detailed within the report.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None

APPENDICES:

Appendix A - TACTs Comments on Cabinet Report CAB 626, including Officer responses.

**APPENDIX A**

**TACT COMMENTS TOWARDS CAB 626 ANNUAL REPORT ON PROPERTY  
MAINTENANCE & ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMME  
& SUBSEQUENT OFFICER RESPONSES**

- 1 TACT wish to thank Head of Property Services for the consultation at the property and contracts forum 24/04/03. We note and accept the end of year figures approved in cabinet – 2/04/03 and in minutes 1049 and 1060.

*Response – TACTs responses are noted*

- 2 TACT make notice, void properties para's 3.3 and 3.6 with the reminder that refurbishment and redecoration can also be quite limited.

*Response - TACTs response is noted and accepted*

- 2.1 The maintenance of voids part (3) TACT will always advocate processing any enhancement redecoration and refurbishment to be done urgently with minimum delays.

*Response – TACTs response is noted. TACT representatives attend the monthly Property Maintenance Project team meeting with Serco where a performance report on Voids is considered every month. This report gives details of time taken to restore void properties and costs prior to reletting.*

- 2.2 TACT make note of the improved decoration vouchers (property and contracts forum 24/04/03) and applaud the updating.

*Response - TACTs comments are welcomed. The Property & Contracts Forum considered the new Decoration Voucher scheme in detail at the meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> April and 26<sup>th</sup> June 2003 respectively. The new Decoration Voucher scheme became operational in September 2003.*

- 2.3 An aspiration of TACT and an enhancement of service would be the reintroduction of two-room redecoration for designate dwellings. This may also achieve some economy of scale.

*Response - TACTs aspirations are noted. It has been agreed that the reintroduction of two room redecoration for OAPs will be considered in conjunction with the Rent Setting process in November/December 2003, when the financial implications can be considered against other competing priorities within the HRA*

- 3 The refurbishment of PVC windows para's 2.4c and 4.5.2(1) we welcome. We also register a tenant aspiration and enhancement by introducing some trickle ventilation when appropriate.

*Response - TACTs comments are noted and accepted.*

- 3.1 We regret there are no plans for a rolling plan of enhancement with the replacement of wooden rear door for PVC door another tenant aspiration.

*Response - TACTs comments are noted. The issues of a rolling replacement of doors with UPVc type will be considered in conjunction with the outcome of the 2003 stock condition survey, and household questionnaire.*

- 3.2 During any refurbishment of PVC windows in some designated bungalows kindly consider the conversion of a rear window into a rear door which we record as an aspiration.

*Response - TACTs comments are noted and accepted. It can be confirmed that in OAP bungalows the conversion of rear windows into rear doors has already been incorporated into previous replacement schemes*

- 4 This paper the 'Annual Report of Property Maintenance' is of real importance for TACT and indeed all tenants. We request in future a TACT involvement at the drafting stage. We further suggest it incorporates the findings of any tenants surveys and aspirations. Finally we seek for the paper submitted to Cabinet with the addition of a full TACT response.

*Response - TACTs comments on the importance of the Annual Report on Property Maintenance is appreciated. This report has been produced annually since 1990 and has informed the Council, its tenants and all stakeholders of strategic, policy and operational issues connected with the Council's housing portfolio. It is accepted that it should continue to incorporate the findings of tenant surveys and aspirations. To include TACT comments when presented to Cabinet is now Council policy.*

- 5 TACT wish to propose or suggest an Annual Joint Meeting of the rent and business planning forum and the property and contracts forum to discuss any tenant survey results aspirations and implications.

*Response - TACTs proposal for an annual joint meeting of the Rent and Business Planning Forum and the Property and Contracts Forum is accepted, and will be included in this years business calendar. Although not confirmed with TACT, this meeting is likely to take place towards the end of November 2003.*

- 6 Paragraphs 1.5 ABC and Part 3 note responsive – cyclic – planning maintenance we applaud the degree of supervision of contractor achieved at responsive maintenance/ We note assurances made by Head of Property Services however submit there are grounds for tighter supervision of contractor at other disciplines.

*Response - The comments relating to contractor supervision are welcomed. The necessity and levels of contractor supervision is subject to ongoing review depending on the scope and extent of works being carried out.*

- 7 The stock condition survey and secondary condition survey parag's 3.1(J) and 10.4. Thank you for the full consultation. We wish this work every success for we do realise the implications for the future of our homes.

*Response - The comments regarding the Stock Condition Survey, (currently being undertaken) are welcomed.*

- 8 We study para 4.1 the MRA and Credit Approval, indeed have discussed this within the Rent and Business Planning Forum. Please give all practical protection for the MRA in the procedures you advocate.

*Response - TACTs comments relative to the Major Repairs Allowance (MRA) are noted. The Government capital funding allowance is provided specifically for repairs and enhancements towards the housing stock. The use of these funds is detailed in CAB 626 Part 4, and therefore TACT can be reassured that these funds are being expended appropriately. Only a change in Government policy could affect this funding regime.*

- 9 The availability of contractors para 4.4(iii) TACT agree with your concern we further hear of the difficulties Serco and Nationwide for solution within a longer term.

*Response - TACT comments are noted. It is well known within the construction and allied industries there is a shortage of skilled tradesmen generally. The Council has endeavoured to promote trade apprenticeship schemes within their Term Maintenance Contracts with Serco and Nationwide. Further partnership working arrangements are planned for the future that will encourage contractors to take a longer term view in their training and recruitment practices.*