



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT

Report Title	Decent Homes Risk Assessment
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AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

Audit Committee Meeting Date:	26 September 2011
Policy Document:	No
Directorate:	Housing
Accountable Cabinet Member:	Councillor C. Malpas

1. PURPOSE

1.1 To enable the Committee to consider the Decent Homes risk assessment

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The Committee is recommended to note and comment on the risk assessment in appendix 2.

3. ISSUES AND CHOICES

3.1 Report Background

3.1.1 The Council is required to bring all its properties up the Decent Homes standard. The original deadline for this was 2010. This was extended to 2012 but many authorities were unable to finance the level of work required to meet the standard. The standard is attached in appendix 1.

3.1.2 At the end of March 2010, 48% of the Council's stock was non decent. At the end of March 2011, the figure was 51%. The age of various elements in the building is taken into account and more properties fall into non-decency every year.

3.2 Issues

3.2.1 In December 2010, the government invited bids for additional funding to meet the Decent Homes standard. The Council has been awarded £49.3 million and this will enable all properties to be made decent by the end of March 2015.

3.2.2 The money is available in phases from April 2012 as below. The first year is guaranteed, but the last two years are subject to confirmation from government.

2012/13	£4.5 million
2013/14	£14.76 million
2014/15	£30 million

3.2.3 Decent Homes was previously been flagged as a high risk area in the departmental risk register, particularly before backlog funding was secured. A separate risk assessment just for Decent Homes has been developed and is attached in appendix 2.

4 BACKGROUND PAPERS

A Decent Home
Definition and Guidance
Department of Communities and Local Government

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APPENDIX 1: DECENT HOMES STANDARD

In order to be decent a home should be **warm, weatherproof and have reasonably modern facilities**. The following is an extract from the Department of Communities and Local Government Decent Homes guidance.

A home is considered “Decent” if:

1. A) IT MEETS THE CURRENT STATUTORY MINIMUM STANDARD FOR HOUSING

Dwellings that fail to meet this criterion are those containing one or more hazards assessed as serious (‘Category 1’) under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS).

B) It is in a reasonable state of repair

Dwellings which fail to meet this criterion are those where either:

- One or more of the key building components are old and, because of their condition, need replacing or major repair; or
- Two or more of the other building components are old and, because of their condition, need replacing or major repair.

Building components include walls, roofs, windows, doors, chimneys, central heating boilers, gas fires, storage heaters, plumbing and electrics. A component is considered old if it exceeds its standard expected lifetime as defined by DCLG in its guidance.

C) It has reasonably modern facilities and services

Dwellings that fail to meet this criterion are those that lack three or more of the following:

- A reasonably modern kitchen (20 years old or less);
- A kitchen with adequate space and layout;
- A reasonably modern bathroom (30 years old or less);
- An appropriately located bathroom and WC;
- Adequate insulation against external noise (where external noise is a problem); and
- Adequate size and layout of common areas for blocks of flats.

A home lacking two or fewer of the above is still classed as decent, therefore it is not necessary to modernise kitchens and bathrooms if a home meets the remaining criteria.

D) It provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort

This criterion requires dwellings to have both effective insulation and efficient heating.