



A Tenant's Guide to

the Housing Improvement programme

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Introduction



This guide contains information about the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme. The HRA Capital Programme is an annual plan which details all the improvement and major repair work to the Council's houses.

This guide:

- outlines the Council's policy for the programme
- explains the roles and responsibilities of the people involved
- tells you how the houses are selected for improvements
- explains where the money comes from and how it is spent
- details standards the Council expects for its customers

All the projects the Council carries out fall into one of the five main programme areas:

- Meeting Needs
- Improving Standards
- Structural and External Maintenance
- Safety and Health
- Area Regeneration

The capital programme covers work which is different from day-to-day repairs. It deals mainly with projects which make a big difference to people's houses and the areas in which they live.



Introduction

Where does the money come from?

The Council usually spends around £5 million through the HRA Capital Programme each year. The 'financial year' runs from 1 April through to the 31 March.

Some of this money comes from the sale of council houses and land, most of the rest is borrowed.

The Council can use one quarter of the money it gets from the sale of its houses for the HRA Capital Programme, the rest has to be used to pay off outstanding loans (for example for past house building).



The Scottish Executive decides how much the Council can borrow - for example, in the financial year 2000 / 2001, the Council could borrow just over £3 million (about 60% of the total money to be spent).

In addition to these main sources of income, some money is transferred to the Capital Programme from the Housing Revenue Account itself (the money collected from rents paid for Council houses, lock-ups and shops). This is called Capital Funded from Current Revenue (CFCR).

How are houses selected for the programme?

The programme is split into the five main areas and houses are selected according to various factors. These include:

- age of properties
- known problems
- house condition
- geographical location (so that resources can be spread fairly across the Council's area)

A Stock Condition Survey, collected detailed information about the condition of the Council's houses in 1998. This information is used, along with Planned Maintenance Inspections, to help identify the major programmes and to target resources at housing most in need of work. The Planned Maintenance system was started in 1996. Each house is inspected once every two years, and repairs carried out after the inspection. Any modernisation work identified at the inspection will be logged for inclusion in future capital programmes.

the houses selected



Location selection

Areas of housing where the Stock Condition Survey has identified concentrations of housing requiring improvements, such as new kitchens and bathrooms, are included in the programme. Whole streets are usually included in contracts, even though some homes may have kitchens or bathrooms which are in a reasonable condition. This is to avoid 'pepper potting', where only some houses would be done which causes problems with tenant dissatisfaction.

In addition to work identified through the Stock Condition Survey, a number of homes have improvements done following urgent "one-off" referrals from the local housing offices. This allows the flexibility to respond to urgently identified needs throughout the year.

During each year, future work is being planned. The Council finds out from the Scottish Executive at Christmas how much money it can borrow, and the final planning to put together the following year's programme is done between January and March.

In addition to the condition survey, inspections and location, a number of other factors are taken into account when deciding on addresses to go into the programme. A summary of these is shown opposite:



programme area

Programme Area	What we consider
Meeting Needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amenity Conversions • Fitting Aids and Adaptations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special Needs Assessments, carried out by Housing Services, Community Services and Forth Valley Health Board • Information from Area Housing Teams
Improving Standards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bathrooms, Kitchens and Doors • Central Heating • Rewiring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information from Area Housing Teams • Oldest of existing heating systems • Priority Medical Needs • Pre - 1970 houses
Structural and External Maintenance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-roofing • Structural Repairs • Roughcasting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information from <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tenants requests for repairs and improvements • planned maintenance inspections
Safety and Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health & Safety in the Community • Crime Prevention • Environmental Improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communities • area Housing Teams • police and Fire Services
Area Regeneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council's Area Regeneration Strategy • Information from Communities • Housing needs • Quality of housing and the environment

What we consider

Delivering the programme

To get the best value in price and quality each project is subject to either competitive tendering, where companies have to bid against each other, or strict financial checks by the Council's quantity surveying team in Civic Services. Large contracts, such as those for the supply of materials, must be advertised throughout the European Community.



There are three main groups who work together to deliver the HRA Capital Programme:

Housing Services

Housing Services is responsible for the overall content of the programme.

Within the Service, the Housing Projects Team (based at Viewforth) is responsible for co-ordinating each project.

The Housing Projects Team's role is to:

- specify the content of each individual project
- liaise with tenants to establish choices and needs
- plan the timing of each project
- liaise with Civic Services to make sure contracts run smoothly
- keep Local Housing Teams and Elected Members informed about the programme
- liaise with Community Services for tenants who have special housing needs

The Local Housing Teams deal with enquiries about the programme - contact points are listed on page 16.

Civic Services

Civic Services work closely with the Housing Service to make sure the programme is carried out efficiently and effectively.

Their role is to:

- provide architectural services
- provide surveying and inspection services
- check the costs of tenders submitted for projects
- appoint contractors to carry out the work
- supervise the work in progress and liaise with the contractor
- keep the Housing Service informed of progress

Civic Services operate a telephone helpline for customers who have enquiries about specific contracts. The number is 01786 432126.

Delivering the service



the contractors role

Contractors

Contractors are employed by the Council to carry out the work for each project. Both Stirling Council's Contract Services and private companies are employed.

The Contractor's role is to:

- carry out the work to quality standards set by Housing Services and in the time specified
- inform Civic Services about any problems that may arise
- report on progress of the work
- operate within the Council's Customer Care Code, a copy of which can be obtained from the Housing Projects Team on 01786 442456.



Our customers can expect contractors to:

- Act and dress appropriately
- Carry identification
- Explain what work will be done and why
- Give names and contacts for enquiries



The Contractor will:

- Use clean dust sheets to protect furnishing and fittings
- Move and replace furniture, as required

Each working day the contractor will:

- Leave the tenants' home wind and water tight
- Remove debris and vacuum clean
- Ensure tenants have a water supply and cooking facilities

quality standards



keeping customers informed

How are customers informed about the work?

When the majority of projects have been identified Housing Service will:

- Write to tenants involved to inform them what work is proposed
- Arrange for a Development Officer and an Architect or Surveyor to call, depending on the contract, to discuss choices and individual circumstances

Once a contractor is appointed, Housing Services will write again to give tenants:

- Details of the work
- The contractors name
- Contact numbers for enquiries
- The estimated start and finish dates

Tenants will also be provided with an information leaflet for bathroom and kitchen replacement work

The contractor will, at least 5 days before work starts:

- Contact the tenant to confirm start date
- Give details on how to make different arrangements, if the date is not suitable
- Provide contact points for enquiries and complaints

Housing Services will make every effort to make sure that tenants are kept informed and involved at all stages of the process.

What work is included?

A wide range of work is covered by the Programme - examples of what is included within each programme area are given opposite:

Meeting Needs

Housing Adaptations

Housing Adaptations are carried out to the homes of tenants who are frail, elderly or disabled. The work is identified and recommended by the Council's Occupational Therapists, who are trained to assess people's needs and make recommendations to help people cope with physical difficulties.

The extent of adaptations varies from fitting grab rails, to the installation of specialised bathroom facilities and low level kitchens. Houses have even had extensions built to help families cope with severe disabilities. Sometimes, something simple like changing kitchen and bathroom taps to lever-type can make all the difference to a tenant with arthritis.

Contracts include addresses from all over the Council's area as they depend on the needs of individuals rather than the condition of the house. They are not grouped geographically as this would delay progress on having the work carried out.

There is a waiting list for assessments - tenants who think they might benefit from speaking to an Occupational Therapist should contact Community Services at Drummond House, Tel 01786 471177.

Community Care Conversions

Community Care Conversion work is carried out to Council housing which is classed as "Amenity Housing." These were originally designed for older or disabled people, but many of these houses now need major improvements. The aim is to bring amenity housing up to what is called 'Barrier Free' standards - ideally so that someone who has difficulty walking, or who uses a wheelchair, will be able to use the house and garden easily and safely.

Work can include special bathroom facilities, new kitchens with many extras to help older tenants, rewiring with sockets at higher levels and light switches at door handle height, fitting gas detectors and upgrading the MECS alarm system (emergency call) to allow direct contact with the Council's mobile warden service.

Plans are developed in close consultation with individual tenants. This is important so that the work meets as many needs as possible. The Council's Occupational Therapists also have an important role in assessing the individual needs of tenants.

The areas surrounding these houses are improved by installing ramps and new pathways, drying greens, fencing and security lighting. The police are consulted on plans to make sure improved security is achieved, and the local housing team advise on any particular problems in the area which can perhaps be solved by designing schemes in a particular way.

It is usually necessary for tenants to move out of their homes for about 4 weeks whilst these major improvements are being carried out - alternative accommodation and removals are organised by the Council.

what's included



Improving Standards

Bathrooms

Tenants receiving a new bathroom are given a choice of colour of bathroom suite (made by a leading manufacturer), slip-resistant floor covering and ceramic wall tiles. The Council also decorates the bathrooms of elderly or disabled tenants with the remaining tenants being given a decoration allowance toward the cost of redecorating their bathroom.

Installing a new bathroom should take around 5 working days, although it may take longer if special shower units are fitted (after an assessment by an Occupational Therapist).

Sometimes problems uncovered when the old suite is removed can mean that the work takes longer, for example, floorboards may need to be replaced or re-plastering may be required after the removal of old wall tiles.

Extractor fans are fitted where possible - this is important as it helps to reduce problems of condensation and dampness.

Kitchens

Replacing kitchens involves a lot of planning - surveys have to be done to find out exact sizes and layouts of kitchens, and to ensure that the tenants' existing appliances can be fitted into the plan. Tenants are consulted on the layout proposed for the new kitchen - this is important because once it has been approved by the tenant the new units are made to order, and are very difficult to change. To make it easier for tenants to visualise their proposed kitchen layout, three dimensional computer drawings showing the new kitchen are being developed.

A number of different options are available for the new kitchen - tenants have several choices of new units and worktops, slip resistant flooring and ceramic wall tiles. The Council also decorates the kitchens of elderly or disabled tenants with the remaining tenants being given a decoration allowance towards the cost of redecorating their kitchen.

The work should take around 10 working days, although this may have to be extended if, for example, there are larders to be removed or major plumbing or electrical work is needed.

As part of the Council's policy to improve safety within tenants' homes, the kitchen is also provided with a fire blanket. A carbon monoxide and smoke detector are also fitted if required. Even if a tenant does not want to have their kitchen replaced, the Council will provide these safety features. As with bathrooms, the Council will fit an extractor fan where possible.

improving standards

Doors

In previous years the Council has concentrated on replacing only the doors identified by the Stock Condition Survey as requiring immediate replacement. Not all doors in a street were replaced since funding was not available to do this. Priority had to be given to those in poorest condition, but this approach was not popular with tenants whose neighbours received new doors, but who didn't get their own replaced.

The Council now intends to provide all of the Council's houses (which are not entered off closes) with new thermally efficient, secure doors, by the year 2002.

Tenants get to pick their new door from a choice of several styles.

Doors to flats are being replaced with solid wood high specification doors.

Central Heating

The central heating programme is aimed at replacing old and less reliable heating systems. The Council also replaces some heating systems each year where the tenant has a medical condition which is affected by their heating. For example, older people often have problems coping with a coal-fired central heating system.

Tenants are given a choice of alternative heating systems (where these are available - some areas do not have gas, for example) and a choice of the fire and surround to be fitted in their living room.

Rewiring

Electrical wiring is regularly checked by the Council Planned Maintenance and Stock Condition inspections. Any houses with poor quality wiring are given priority and put into the rewiring programme.

Most houses have been rewired within the past 15 years.

During kitchen replacements and other major internal work, we also check the existing wiring and upgrade it as required.

Window Replacement

Over the past twenty years, the Council has replaced all of the windows in the housing stock. Most of these are uPVC double glazed windows, which keep the house warmer and are easier to maintain.

Some houses, however, still have single glazing because they are in historic areas or are themselves 'listed' (double glazing cannot be fitted in these houses because they do not fit in with the appearance of the house and because they are not in keeping with the traditional methods of building).

housing improvements



Structural and External Maintenance

It is important to carry out work to keep the building itself (rather than the facilities inside) in sound condition. Tenants requests for repair work, the Planned Maintenance inspections and the House Condition survey information are used to identify where this work is required. Tenants should report problems to their local housing team.

Roofing works, roughcasting, gutter and downpipe repairs are constantly being carried out to ensure that buildings are 'wind and water tight'.

Sometimes particular problems, such as subsidence (where the foundations of a house need to be reinforced) occur. These problems need major building work to ensure that they remain safe.

The Council owns some homes which have not been built in the traditional way (with a gap between an outer and inner brick wall). Although many of these houses are physically sound, some can have problems which need to be fixed.

Tenemental Improvements

The Council owns flats within tenement blocks, mainly in Stirling town centre. These properties are typically much older than most of the Council's other housing, and can require major investment to bring them up to current standards, and to repair or renew roofs and stonework.

These projects involve a lot of work, and consultation with residents. Often flats have been sold to tenants, and this means that negotiations have to take place with owners, who apply for grants to help with costs. In many cases, there are shops on ground level, and they too have to be involved in the refurbishment plans.

The Council also owns tenemental properties throughout the area, which it seeks to improve in the future.

It takes a long time to achieve tenemental improvements, from initial planning to completing the works, because of the complicated processes involved.

improvements

environmental improvements

Safety and Health

Environmental Improvements

Ideas for improvements to housing areas are put forward by local communities and Area Housing Teams. These are taken forward either through the HELP (Housing Environmental Local Project) budget, set up specifically to respond to local needs, or if they are too big to be accommodated in this budget, they are considered for inclusion in the Environmental Improvement Programme.

Many of these improvements tackle problems of poor security and lighting, and bring underused areas back into use.

Projects are drawn from lists compiled with local communities and Housing Teams and are carried out in the priority order requested by them. If you have an idea for an environmental improvement in your area, please contact your local office.

Energy Efficiency

As part of its commitment to reduce heating costs for tenants, as well as reducing the harmful impact on the environment, the Council has been working hard to improve the energy efficiency of houses.

Insulation projects help with this by reducing the amount of heat that is lost from a building - through the walls, doors, windows and roof. Many houses have already benefited from better insulation and, over the next few years, it is intended to increase the number of insulation projects - these will include:

- putting in loft insulation
- adding to existing loft insulation to make it thicker
- cavity wall insulation, where the gap between inner and outer brick walls is filled
- fitting an external insulating layer where houses do not have a cavity

The Council will continue to introduce projects using new technologies which improve energy efficiency, such as special boilers and solar panels. The aim is also to improve the Council's energy advice service, and an e-mail address has been set up to help with this (energy@stirling.gov.uk).

As well as Council resources, there are various schemes available (with both public and private companies) which the Council can tap into to attract extra funding for energy efficiency improvements.

Safety and Security

Safety and Security

An important part of our improvement programme is to make your home safer and more secure.

We work closely with the Police and the Fire Service to minimise the risk of break-in or fire and will continue to make improvements in these areas.

Programmes for this include:

- fitting of Door Entry Systems to closes
- the 'Safe Homes' scheme which is a safety and security check done on our behalf by Stirling Communities for Safety
- fitting hard wired smoke detectors and fire blankets in all new kitchens
- new high security doors have been installed at some flats. We will extend this to the rest of the flats over the next few years
- carbon monoxide detectors fitted when a new kitchen or gas central heating is installed.



Area Regeneration

The Housing Service supports the work of SPUR and the Council's urban regeneration programme by targeting investment within the SPUR areas - SPUR stands for Stirling Partnership for Urban Renewal.

This partnership includes the Council, Scottish Homes, Central Scotland Police, Forth Valley Health Board and similar professional organisations. Residents of the SPUR areas and representatives of local voluntary groups also play a major role in the Partnership.

Initially, the main focus for this work will be the regeneration and redevelopment of the Glendevon area of Raploch, where there are plans to replace unpopular houses with high quality new homes. This programme, together with other investment in the houses in the area (such as new kitchens and bathrooms), will be linked to plans for two new schools and the economic regeneration of the area.

In other areas we will seek to build on the success of environmental and back court improvement schemes, like those at Broad Street and Cornton shops, and to support community initiatives such as 'Cultenhove for Change'.

The types of projects considered for area regeneration schemes include:

- tenemental refurbishments in Cornton, Cultenhove and Top of the Town
- community safety and security programmes across the SPUR area
- large and small scale environmental improvement schemes developed with local communities



area
regeneration



Area housing offices

Area Housing Offices

Stirling South

St Ninians local Office 01786 451066

Bannockburn Local Office 01786 816515

Fallin Local Office 01786 814018

Wallace Team

Cornton Local Office 01786 450030

Raploch Local Office 01786 462824

Rural Team

Municipal Buildings 01786 442231

Homelessness Unit

Springkerse 01786 432418

Gas servicing and repairs 0800 027 5888

Out of Hours

Emergency Repairs 01786 470500

Does this guide tell you what you want to know?

Please contact your local housing team if there is anything missing from this guide, or if you think more information could be included.

This booklet is available in large print, braille or on tape please phone Maya Varyani on 01786 443465

如果你對英語有困難而需要別人幫助，請聯絡 Maya Varyani, 電話 01786 443465.

إذا يوجد صعوبة في فهم الانكليزية وتريد المساعدة ،
يرجى الاتصال هاتفيا بـ : مايا وارياني
01786 443465 (Maya Varyani)

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਸਮਝਣ ਵਿਚ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਿਲ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਮਦਦ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ
ਮਾਯਾ ਵਾਰਯਾਨੀ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ। ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ 01786 443465

اگر آپ کو انگریزی سمجھنے میں دشواری ہو اور مدد چاہتے ہوں تو برائے مہربانی ماریا وریانی
سے فون نمبر 01786 443465 پر رابطہ کیجئے۔