The Government has set a target for all social housing to meet the Decent Homes Standard by 2010.

In the February 2005 edition of the residents’ newsletter we told you of the potential additional £45 million investment in Eastbourne’s Council Housing.

This funding is dependant upon Eastbourne Homes achieving two stars in the Audit Commission inspection that is due in November of 2005. These additional funds are to enable Eastbourne Homes to bring the housing stock up to the Decent Homes Standard.

This leaflet provides details of the Decent Homes Standard and allows you to make a provisional assessment of your home if you want to.
Decent Homes Standard

The Government has defined a decent home as meeting the following four criteria:

A - It meets the current statutory minimum standard for housing

Dwellings below this standard are those defined as unfit under section 604 of the Housing Act 1985 (as amended by the 1989 Local Government and Housing Act).

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

C - It has reasonably modern facilities and services

Dwellings which fail to meet this criterion are those which lack three or more of the following:
- A reasonably modern kitchen (20 years old or less);
- A kitchen with adequate space and layout. The kitchen must contain all the required items appropriate for the size of the home eg: sink, cupboards, cooker space, worktops etc;
- A reasonably modern bathroom (30 years old or less);
- An appropriately located bathroom and WC - this means the bathroom and WC must not be accessed through a bedroom. The WC must not be on a different floor to the nearest wash hand basin. A WC without a wash hand basin must not open into a kitchen next to the food preparation area.
- Adequate insulation against external noise (where external noise is a problem). This refers to noise such as road, rail, aircraft or factory noise;
- Adequate size and layout of common areas for blocks of flats. Failures would include steep staircases, lack of hand rails or low headroom.

A home lacking two or less of the above is still classed as decent which means it is not necessary to modernise kitchens and bathrooms if a home passes the remaining criteria.
D - It provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort

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

Decent homes assessment survey

We will be carrying out surveys to each home before the Decent Homes work starts. This will enable us to identify what works will need to be carried out in each home. It is important to note that the amount of work will vary from home to home and that some homes may only need minor work to bring them up to the Decent Homes Standard.

How does your home measure up?

On the following page is a diagram, which has the various elements of the four criteria plotted onto it, which you may wish to use to complete a self-assessment of your property. This will then give you some idea of how your home may fare in our detailed Decent Homes Assessment Survey which will be formally carried out by our appointed Contractors and Consultants. The diagram includes tick boxes next to each illustrated component plotted onto the diagram. You will need to refer to each individual coloured criterion (the four corner boxes) to show you how many failures (crosses) you are allowed in each coloured criterion.

Your Involvement

As part of Eastbourne Homes strategy for involving residents in planning and delivering services we will establish local neighbourhood/area panels, open to all tenants and leaseholders to increase local accountability and control to residents.

Panels will be established to reflect the four areas in which the organisation operates, but the number may change to reflect local areas that residents feel that they belong to. The panels will not have a formal "membership" and residents can attend meetings as they please, when there is something of interest to them. Residents who wish to attend will be entitled to receive assistance with childcare/carer and travel costs.

The panels will give residents the opportunity to meet staff and contractors responsible for delivering services locally. The meetings will focus on local issues and services and agendas will be agreed with residents.

For further information, please contact our Tenant Participation Team on 415356 / 415418 / 415976.
For a home to be 'decent' it must meet four Criteria (A-D)

**Criterion A: Statutory Minimum**
The home must meet the fitness standard defined in Section 604 of the Housing Act 1985. To be decent the house must comply with all elements in this criterion.

- an adequate piped supply of wholesome water; a suitably located WC for exclusive use of the occupants; a bath or shower and wash-hand basin, with hot and cold water; satisfactory facilities for the preparation and cooking of food; a kitchen sink with hot and cold water; adequate provision for lighting, heating and ventilation; an effective system for the drainage of foul, waste and surface water; be free from serious disrepair or serious dampness; and be structurally stable

* Bathrooms - Old: 40 years, Poor Condition: Major repair or replace 2 or more items (bath, wash hand basin, WC)

* A bathroom which is 30 years old or less

* An appropriately located bathroom and WC: must not be accessed through a bedroom, must not have WC on a different floor to wash-hand basin, nearest wash-hand basin must not be in kitchen next to food preparation area

* Central Heating Boilers - Old: 15 years, Poor Condition: major repair or replacement

* Electrics - Old: 30 years for houses and flats, Poor Condition: major repair or replacement

* Chimney - Old: 50 years for houses and flats, Poor Condition: 1 chimney needing partial rebuilding or more

* Roof Structure - Old: 50 years for houses and 30 years for flats, Poor Condition: Replace 10% or more, or Strengthen 30% or more

* Roof Covering - Old: 50 years or more for houses/bungalows and 30 years for flats, Poor Condition: Replace or repair 50% or more

* Kitchens - Old: 30 years, Poor Condition: major repair or replace 3 or more items out of the 6 (cold water drinking supply, hot water, sink, cooking provision, cupboards, worktop)

* Kitchens - Old: 30 years, Poor Condition: major repair or replace 3 or more items out of the 6 (cold water drinking supply, hot water, sink, cooking provision, cupboards, worktop)

* A kitchen which is 20 years old or less

* A kitchen with adequate space and layout - Minimum size: must contain all the required items appropriate to size of home eg: sink, cupboards, cooker space, washing machine space, fridge space, worktops etc

**Criterion B: Reasonable State of Repair**
A home satisfies this criteria unless:

Part A - Is each key building component listed old AND in poor condition

Part B - Are two or more other building components old AND in poor condition

(A component cannot fail on age alone)

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**Criterion C:**
**Reasonably Modern Facilities and Services**
A home is not decent if it lacks THREE or more of the items in this category

- Heating Distribution (radiators/storage heaters or pipework) - Old: 40 years for houses and flats. Poor Condition: Replace or major repair.
- Wall Structure - Old: 80 years for houses and flats. Poor Condition: replace 10% or more or repair 30% or more
- Wall Finish - Old: 60 years for houses or flats. Poor Condition: Replace, repoint or renew: 50% or more
- Windows - Old: 4 years for houses and 30 years for flats, Poor Condition: replace at least one window or repair/replace sash or member to at least two windows (excluding easing sashes, reglazing or repainting)
- Adequate noise insulation - is there adequate insulation from external noise (road, rail, aircraft or factory noise)

**Criterion D:**
**Reasonable degree of thermal comfort**
A home is not decent unless it has:
* Gas or oil programmable heating PLUS cavity wall insulation OR at least 50mm loft insulation
* Electric storage heaters/solid fuel PLUS cavity wall insulation AND at least 200mm loft insulation
When will work start on my home?

In working to decide where was the most appropriate place to start the Decent Homes work within the town we used a combination of the cost to make the properties decent, the percentage of the properties non-decent and Government Quality of Life statistics for each of the twelve postcode areas within the borough (BN22 7, BN21 3, BN23 8 etc). These three factors were then combined to rank each of the postcode areas in order of priority.

We consulted with our Decent Homes Core Group, a sample of residents who completed a postal questionnaire, and attendees at our Summer 2005 roadshow who were asked to complete the questionnaire. All of these people were asked if they agreed with our approach to prioritising the work. In total we received 180 valid responses, of these 96% agreed with our approach to prioritising work areas. However, it is important to remember that the Decent Homes work is a large programme that will take 5 years to deliver by the Government’s targets of 2010. Some homes will be upgraded at the beginning of the programme and some will be upgraded last.

The Results were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Rank</th>
<th>Postcode</th>
<th>Percentage Not Meeting The Decent Homes Standard</th>
<th>Approximate Cost to achieve Decent Homes Standard (£ Million)</th>
<th>Quality of Life (1 = lowest)</th>
<th>Colour on Map</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>BN 20 8</td>
<td>83.6%</td>
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<td>66.8%</td>
<td>6.37</td>
<td>27.5</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>4.64</td>
<td>32.9</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
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<td>4.46</td>
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<td>0.06</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>Green</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Costs are based on Initial Cost Plan
Quality of Life figures produced for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM)
Decency Figures are based on stock condition survey
Priority areas from the table on the previous page are shown on the map below.

Leaseholders

It is important that Leaseholders are aware that they will be expected to contribute to work to the fabric of the building and communal areas only in accordance with their lease.

Change

The Decent Homes programme is all about CHANGE - modifying your homes so that they meet the Government’s Standard. CHANGE also illustrates a number of the key priorities for Eastbourne Homes over the next few years and so for this reason, and following consultation with residents, we have decided to call our Decent Homes programme the CHANGE project - which consultees have agreed is a more meaningful name. We have also given the project its own logo too so that you can recognise when communications from us refer to this particular area of our work.
Available in large print and other formats upon request—call (01323) 415900