



REPORT TO: COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE ON 1 DECEMBER 2009

SUBJECT: FLOODING IMPACT ON RESIDENTS AND HOUSING

BY: DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides an update to the Communities Committee of the consequences of the recent flooding in Moray for the Council's housing stock in affected areas and for the Council's wider responsibilities in relation to housing affected. As this report has been finalised as at 18 November 2009, it is suggested that a verbal update can be provided to the Committee.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of the Council's Administrative Scheme relating to the management and maintenance of the Council's housing stock and to its homelessness functions.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **It is recommended that the Communities Committee:-**
- (i) **welcomes the progress achieved in remedial works and the projected completion periods for remedial works;**
 - (ii) **agrees that the position of tenants seeking transfers is reviewed at the next meeting, in the light of progress achieved; and**
 - (iii) **agrees that a further progress report will be presented to the next Communities Committee meeting.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 4 September 2009, severe flooding affected parts of Elgin, Fochabers, Rothes and other areas, causing damage to Council and private housing. More recently, flooding affected a number of households in the Newmills and Buckie areas over Sunday 1 November 2009.
- 3.2 A detailed report on the impact of flooding was considered by the Committee at its meeting on 6 October 2009. It was agreed at that time that further progress reports would be presented to the Committee (paragraph 5 of the Minute refers).

4. PROGRESS OF REMEDIAL WORKS TO COUNCIL HOUSES

- 4.1 The earlier report to the Committee outlined the sequence of work required to enable the reinstatement of flood affected properties. Since then, significant progress has been achieved by the Building Services DLO.
- 4.2 Of the 66 Council properties identified as being affected, 2 were subsequently found to have been unaffected by flooding. Of the 64 properties affected:-
- all properties have been certified dry
 - reinstatement works in 22 properties are in progress. The remaining 35 have works programmed to start before the holiday period in December 2009
 - 7 properties are complete.
- 4.3 Projected completion dates for properties have been agreed with the DLO. These indicate that a further 23 properties are scheduled to be completed by mid December 2009. For all these properties, tenants have been notified of likely completion dates.
- 4.4 The remaining properties are scheduled for completion in January and February 2010, with the latest completion date currently projected for the end of February 2010. Tenants of these properties have also been notified of the timescales involved.
- 4.5 In mid November, some remedial work issues related to flood damage have come to light in 3 properties which were previously thought to be undamaged, in Provost Christie Drive, Rothes. Of these, 2 properties require only minor works relating to treatment of underfloor timbers, whilst 1 property requires more major works involving the replacement of flooring, timber treatment and associated works. It is believed that some of the problems in this property may pre-date the latest flooding. The remaining properties in the block are situated at a higher level and inspections have confirmed that they have not been affected.

5. TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

- 5.1 As at 13 November 2009, the total number of households accommodated in temporary accommodation as a result of the flooding were:-

Bishopmill House	25 households
Temporary furnished accommodation	31 households
Bed and Breakfast	1 households

- 5.2 Following flooding in the Newmill area in November 2009, 1 owner occupier is likely to require temporary accommodation. This is currently being assessed by staff in consultation with the owner's insurance company.

6. TENANTS SEEKING PERMANENT MOVES

- 6.1 The earlier report to Committee identified that a number of tenants did not wish to return to their homes. The proposed approach to this was verbally outlined to the Committee on 6 October 2009. Since then, all vacancies arising in areas sought by flood affected tenants have been scrutinised for their potential suitability for any flood affected tenants, prior to being relet.
- 6.2 To date, a total of 25 tenants have asked not to return to their homes. This has now reduced to 20, as 2 tenants subsequently decided to return. A further 2 tenants have now been permanently rehoused outwith the flood affected area and 1 tenant has been rehoused outwith Moray. As a result, there remain 20 tenants who have asked for transfers. Of these, 11 require ground floor properties.
- 6.3 Officers have identified 8 forthcoming vacancies that might be suitable for flood transfer applicants. Of these, 5 are now under offer, with offers for the remaining vacancies likely to be made over the next week. However, it is likely that some difficulties will be experienced in seeking to rehouse those tenants who require 3 bedroomed accommodation given the number of vacancies of this type of property which occur in the Council's or RSL housing stock in the areas sought by these tenants. Particular difficulties are likely to be experienced in seeking to rehouse 3 tenants who require 3 bedroomed ground floor accommodation.

7. COMMUNICATING WITH TENANTS

- 7.1 Since the earlier report to the Committee, two newsletter updates have been produced and distributed to Council tenants affected by flooding. A further newsletter is planned before the end of November 2009. In addition, all local Elected Members have been provided with regular reports on the progress of reinstatement works.
- 7.2 Staff have continued to keep in regular contact with those tenants displaced from their homes. Twice weekly surgeries in Bishopmill House have been continued, although the length of these surgeries has been reduced to one hour, given the level of approaches received.
- 7.3 As indicated above, staff have also been alerting tenants to the likely time periods in which their properties will be repaired. Overall, feedback from tenants has been positive, with many remarking favourably on the speed in effecting repairs.

8. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) **Single Outcome Agreement/Service Improvement Plan**

The Single Outcome Agreement and Service Improvement Plan both have priorities regarding the condition of housing in Moray. As a result of the increased workload for the Housing Service over the next few months, it is likely that some of the targets for completion of other work detailed in both the Single Outcome Agreement and the Service Improvement Plan will be adversely affected. Staff will work to ensure that this is minimised.

(b) **Policy and Legal**

There are no direct implications arising from this report.

(c) **Resources (Financial, Risks, Staffing and Property)**

The cost of responding to and dealing with the aftermath of the flooding will be borne by the Council's Flood Reserve Fund, to which the Housing Revenue Account has contributed since 2002. As stated above, it is projected that these contributions will meet the costs of temporary accommodation and reinstatement works to properties.

(d) **Consultations**

Consultation on this report has been carried out with the Chief Executive, the Chief Financial Officer, the Director of Community Services, the Property Services Manager and Managers within the Housing Service.

9. CONCLUSION

9.1 **This report outlines the progress achieved in responding to flooding in Moray.**

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Background Papers: Held by CHO
Ref: CC/JS/TS – Flooding – 1 December 2009

Signature: 

Date : 18 November 2009

Designation: Chief Housing Officer

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