

**PORTFOLIO:**

**HOUSING**

Report of  
Portfolio Holder:

**COUNCILLOR  
JAMES BAINBRIDGE**

**HOUSING**

**Carlisle Heat Initiative**

We are currently running a Carlisle Heat Initiative, to assist those households who either have a very old and inefficient heating system, or no heating system at all. According to the 2005 Local House Condition Survey, there were 20% of homes that had an unfit heating system, or no system at all, and this equates to some 8500 properties. This number will have decreased over the past 5 years, due to the work we have done through the Warm Front and other schemes, but nevertheless there are still a considerable number of properties without adequate heating. In addition, the survey also indicated that 43% of central heating boilers were more than 15 years old, a time at which they are getting towards the end of their economic life. In addition, we are targeting the initiative at those people who are in Fuel Poverty (i.e. having to spend more than 10% of their income on fuel).

So far, since the start of the scheme in October 2010 we have received 265 applications, but not all met the required criteria, and in addition, it was based on a first come-first served basis, as we had a finite amount of resources for this particular scheme.

To date, we have approved 42 applications, completed 14 installations, allocated funding of £204,000, and have a further 25 applications awaiting approval. As some installations are coming in at less than was originally budgeted for, there is potential to assist more people once the level of these underspends are better known.

The scheme is proving very successful, and is assisting those households who need help most. We are anticipating that we will be able to install upgraded/new heating systems in 90-100 properties, at an average cost of £2600, and in a period of only 5 months.

## **Families and Women's Accommodation**

This project has been approved. The allocation of funding has been approved by the Executive. Following an options appraisal process a site has been chosen for the project. This is land at Water Street, Carlisle which is owned by the Council. The next stages for the project include selection of a design team by February 2011, the drawing up of designs for the scheme and submission of a planning application in April / May 2011.

## **Community Training and Resource Centre (CTRC)**

The building of this scheme started in September 2010 and is due to be completed in July 2011. The Council is currently seeking external management provision for the scheme through a tender procurement process which should be completed by the end of March 2011

## **Dispersed Foyer for Young People**

The development of a dispersed foyer for young people in need of accommodation and support is linked to the CTRC. The support element of the project will be delivered from the CTRC and a partnership developed with key housing providers to link into the accommodation accordingly.

## **Empty Homes**

The work of the Empty Homes Officer has been nothing short of outstanding. Between 2001 and 2008, the Council assisted in bringing 135 empty properties into use. Between 2009 (when the post was established) and the present day, 250 properties have been brought into use following assistance from the Empty Homes Officer. The level of involvement can range from advice and assistance with grants, through to enforcement action.

Since 2009 there has been 33 grants paid to landlords in order to help bring empty properties back into use (31 at 25%, and 2 at 50%). There are currently 14 grants awaiting approval, and about 10 further properties are being held on a waiting list should further funding become available.

**Councillor James Bainbridge**  
**Housing Portfolio Holder**