

Dacorum has some of the highest house prices in the region. It is crucial for the area and its prosperity that people are able to afford to live and work within the Borough. We have an overriding priority to enable new homes, and in particular new affordable homes. The Council owns around 10,600 properties and is working with housing associations, private landlords and housing developers to make sure that Dacorum has enough, good quality, affordable housing, now and for the future.

Who's responsible?



Cllr Margaret Griffiths
Portfolio Holder for Housing



Cllr Stephen Holmes
Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration



Mark Gaynor
Corporate Director for Housing and Regeneration

Last year (2010/11)

Council homes stay put

After a thorough look at the different options for managing the Council's housing stock, we decided to keep our tenants' homes under Council management. A new national 'self-financing' arrangement for Council homes, starting in April 2012, will mean we can keep more of our tenants' rents to spend on improvements, instead of paying it to central government.

Instead of Dacorum Council tenants handing over 40p in every pound of their rent

(around £20 million) to central government each year the Council will enter a mortgage-type agreement where it takes on a share of national housing debt and repays it using some of the £20 million it keeps. The remaining cash can then be spent on improving homes.

There should be more money for improvements from day one and this will increase significantly in future years. It is already proposed to increase the housing improvement budgets by £1.6 million next year. The debt can be paid off in 30 years.



Involving council tenants and leaseholders

We have formed a Tenants and Leaseholder Committee (TLC) that gives people living in council owned properties more of a say in the way we manage our housing. The TLC is made up of 21 council tenants and leaseholders from across the Borough and they are working closely with the Council to shape the Housing Service for the future.



Re-letting empty council homes

We've made changes to the way we re-let council homes that become empty and have reduced the time it takes by around 11 days. We now visit the property before it is vacated, gather information we need to advertise it and discuss with the tenants the condition that the property should be left in. Also, if a new kitchen is needed we do this once the new tenant has moved in so they can choose the units and layout. It now takes around 28 days to turn around each

property, which reduces the length of time properties are left unoccupied, finds homes for people on our housing list more quickly, and increases the rental income.

Other achievements this year:

- We met the target for all our homes to reach the government's Decent Homes Standard by December 2010.
- The Dandara scheme at the former Kodak site was completed providing more than 430 homes and a new pedestrian bridge linking them to the town centre



Plans for this year (2011/12)

- Consulting on the core strategy to shape development in Dacorum, including housing targets for the Borough until 2031.
- Provide a sheltered housing service for older people, together with Age Concern, that includes regular contact with Supported Housing Officers according to each resident's needs.
- Investing over £8m in council homes including £2m to replace kitchens and

- bathrooms and investing £1.7m on modern and efficient boiler systems. Other works will see new windows, disability adaptations, structural works and continued insulation work to make homes more energy efficient.
- Identifying opportunities to develop more affordable housing, both on Council land and by regenerating areas of council or private properties that are underused.