

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET – 12 OCTOBER 2010

HOUSING: AUDIT COMMISSION INSPECTION & SCRUTINY REVIEW REPORTS – FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

JOINT REPORT OF THE HEADS OF COMMUNITY PROTECTION, ADULT SOCIAL CARE (COMMISSIONING), PLANNING & SUSTAINABILITY, AND HOUSING, REGENERATION & PROSPERITY

1.0 SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

- 1.1 To inform Members of:-
- (i) the outcome of a recent Audit commission inspection of “strategic housing services”; and
 - (ii) the proposed response to a scrutiny review of housing & homelessness
- 1.2 For Cabinet to approve a high level consolidated housing improvement plan to take forward recommendations from the both the inspection and scrutiny review.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That Cabinet:

- 2.1.1 note the outcome and recommendations from the Audit Commission inspection as summarised in Appendix 1**
- 2.1.2 note recommendations made by the scrutiny review group and approve responses to each recommendation as set out in Appendix 2B**
- 2.1.3 approve a high level housing improvement plan attached as Appendix 3 and proposals for monitoring its implementation as set out in the report.**

3.0 SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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| COMMUNITY IMPACT | Do these proposals contribute to specific Priority Plan objective(s)? | |
| | Yes | Recommendations from the Audit Commission inspection of the Council’s strategic housing services and the Scrutiny Review have links to all of the Council’s priorities. |
| | Will the proposals impact on specific groups of | |

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| | people? | |
| | Yes | The audit commission inspection report recognises some positive practice of the Council and partners to meet housing needs of people with disabilities. It also makes specific recommendations for embedding E&D in service planning & delivery. The scrutiny review was in part directed towards improving services that help to address inequalities. Actions set out in the improvement plan will help to tackle these inequalities and is consistent with the Council's Equality & Diversity Policy. |
| TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE | The Audit Commission have identified a completion date of August 2011 however a large majority of actions identified in the housing improvement plan will be completed earlier. | |
| FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT | Yes | The housing improvement plan has been considered, and identified developments will be implemented within the existing budgetary framework and will not be affected by the restructure (EC 09/09/2010). |
| LEGAL ISSUES | Yes | the Council must exercise its housing function in accordance with the law and in light of statutory guidance and best practice. Any changes to planning policy should be in accordance with the appropriate planning guidance. With regard to recommendation 17 of the scrutiny review report there is no statutory provision to license young persons' accommodation. However, as noted, an accreditation scheme could be investigated and implemented as appropriate |
| OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES | Yes | Opportunities & risks arising from this report are addressed through development and review of relevant housing strategies & sub-strategies, the housing services improvement plan, & service area action plans. |
| IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS | No | <i>Borough-wide impact</i> |

4.0 INFORMATION

(A) Audit Commission Inspection of 'Strategic Housing Services'

- 4.1 The Audit Commission inspection of strategic housing services was triggered by the comprehensive area assessment (CAA) carried out in 2009. The inspection was notified in February 2010 with a request for a self-assessment to be carried out and submitted along with a wide range of supporting information.
- 4.2 On-site inspection work was carried out by inspectors during the period 20th – 27th May 2010. They interviewed Members, officers, partners and community representatives, viewed facilities & development sites across the borough, cross-referenced policy / procedural documents, and scrutinised performance returns and supporting information.
- 4.3 The inspection report makes judgements about how well the Council and our partners are performing with a further judgement on our capacity to improve. Council's can be rated poor, fair, good, or excellent in terms of delivering services; and poor, uncertain, promising or excellent for capacity to improve.
- 4.4 An overall assessment of 'fair' services, with 'promising' prospects for improvement affords a reasonably accurate judgement given that the Council's housing functions are in a process of transformation. However, it is felt that this judgement does not:-
- accurately reflect progress made to form effective development partnerships in order to deliver new affordable housing in the borough despite very challenging market conditions;
 - take account of influence that the former governmental body English Partnerships had over a long period of time in controlling the supply and value of development land in ways that have contributed to a shortfall in supply of affordable housing.
 - Also, a majority of areas identified for improvement within the Audit Commission report are already acknowledged as work in-progress;
 - And, there are inconsistencies both in content and weighting attached to some of the Audit Commission's recommendations.
- 4.5 The inspection report identifies several areas of good practice and offers useful prompts for service improvement. Cabinet is therefore recommended to accept the report and approve an improvement plan

- 4.6 A summary of the main findings are attached at appendix 1. This includes a summary of service strengths and areas where the AC inspectors believe there is scope for improvement. A copy of the report has been posted on the Council's website and is also accessible on the Audit Commission's web-site through the following link:-

<http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/housing/inspection/localauthority/pages/default1.aspx>

(B) Scrutiny Review of 'Housing & Homelessness'

- 4.7 Cllr Derek White, chair of the Scrutiny Review Group, will provide a verbal report on findings & recommendations from their wide-ranging review of housing & homelessness carried out over an extended period. A copy of the Review Group's report is attached at Appendix 2A.
- 4.8 The scope of the scrutiny review is summarised below:-
1. To review the Choose Your Home choice based lettings scheme, and feed conclusions and recommendations into the officer review of the Council's housing allocations scheme (policy).
 2. To assess the extent of housing needs and homelessness – including statutory homeless and those who do not fit within the priority needs group.
 3. To investigate the barriers and opportunities in the supply of housing, and consider innovative design solutions.
 4. To understand the eligibility criteria for accessing housing support for different groups within the community.
 5. To make recommendations to Cabinet for improvement.
- 4.9 In responding to recommendations the two lead Cabinet Members ask Cabinet to note that the Council's housing functions are currently organised to reflect a 'people' and a 'places' approach and therefore sit across two priority plans (Adult Care & Support; and Housing, Regeneration & Prosperity).
- 4.10 Housing services are both diverse and complex linking to a wide range of other Council and external services. It is evident from the summary report that the review has been extensive and makes a valuable contribution to further improving housing services.
- 4.11 The Cabinet's response is attached at Appendix 2B. A majority of the recommendations are agreed. Some have already been implemented and other actions are in progress. Where recommendations are noted this is because there are technical, legal or financial issues still to be resolved. None of the recommendations are rejected.
- 4.12 The housing improvement plan consolidates recommendations from the AC report and a scrutiny review (see Appendix 3). Monitoring will

be coordinated by an officer level housing monitoring board and then via the Council's mainstream performance management processes.

5.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

5.1 All relevant information is summarised at section 3 of the report.

6.0 PREVIOUS MINUTES

6.1 No previous minutes

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 The audit commission Inspection of “strategic housing services” and the scrutiny review of “housing & homelessness” had regard to a wide and extensive range of documents and other relevant information. A large majority of these documents (policies, strategies, reports, performance returns, etc) are already published and accessible to the public.

Report prepared by Mike Atherton, Head of Community Protection email: mike.atherton@telford.gov.uk or tel: (01952) 381800 in consultation with Katherine Kynaston, Strategic Housing Manager, Kathy Jones, Housing & Personalisation Commissioning Manager, and Chris Winter Strategic Regeneration Manager

Audit Commission Inspection of Strategic housing Services

Summary of Findings

Extracts from the Audit Commission report:-

We have assessed the Borough of Telford & Wrekin as providing a 'fair', one-star service that has promising prospects for improvement. Our judgements are based on evidence obtained during the inspection and are outlined below.

We found the service to be fair' because it has a range of strengths:

- the vision for Telford makes strong links between social, economic and environmental factors, is clearly stated in the Council's plans and there is strong support and consensus over this vision between partners;
- the council has shown strong leadership and is committing significant resources in delivering the housing vision;
- the Council is generally working effectively with its partners to develop and deliver the strategic approach;
- the Council has effectively consulted and engaged with the community in the development of its policies and the delivery of some of its major regeneration schemes;
- joint working arrangements with housing associations have seen much improvement in recent months;
- the Council has a detailed understanding of its housing markets;
- a range of housing sub-strategies provide direction for some areas of service and the strategic plans for private sector housing and homelessness are strong;
- effective initiatives have enabled the service to sustain the delivery of new housing during the recession;
- new homes are of high quality;
- strong regeneration work is targeting the worst housing and related socio-economic conditions;
- home improvement assistance is adequately provided for, well promoted and helping people to live in better housing conditions. There is strong support for improving the energy efficiency of homes and this work is having significant impact in the area;
- the council has helped to stimulate growth in the private rented sector;
- the service is performing well in returning empty homes back into use;

- there is strong performance in reducing / preventing homelessness and reducing the use of temporary accommodation; and
- the service is effectively addressing the needs of some diverse and vulnerable groups including young people, victims of domestic violence, some older persons and people needing help with home improvements or adaptations.

However, there are some areas which require improvement. These include:

- the vision for housing in Telford is not clearly described in the sustainable Communities Strategy and some aspects of the housing vision, especially on how it will meet diverse needs, are not well articulated;
- there are some gaps in the understanding of housing needs which often results from weak engagement with some diverse groups or a failure to gather and analyse information;
- some aspects of private sector housing are not well understood;
- the service lacks a current over-arching Housing Strategy and a clear strategic approach to empty homes. There are no strategic housing plans in place to provide a focus and a direction for some diverse groups and so they are not currently having their needs met;
- planning policies are not currently aligned to new evidence on housing needs, viability and land supply and planning policy documents have not been developed to provide interpretation of existing policies;
- a robust understanding of equality and diversity issues is not available and so equality and diversity is not embedded in service planning and delivery;
- there is an absence of a robust value for money framework and the approach to benchmarking and performance to inform value for money conclusions is weak. While there are examples of initiatives to improve value for money in services, there are also opportunities that have not been taken;
- new housing delivery has not met identified need;
- the planning application process is not performing strongly;
- the approach to regulating housing conditions in the private rented sector is not well developed;
- housing association performance is not consistently helping to relieve pressures on housing markets; and
- too many people are in temporary accommodation and some households are staying there too long.

The service has promising prospects for improvement:

- the sustainable Communities Strategy is being updated to provide a sharper focus on housing;

- a draft housing Strategy which addresses the main challenges facing Telford is currently consulted upon;
- there are proposals in place to align planning policy with new evidence on housing needs and viability;
- the restructuring of the Council and the establishment of a new strategic housing team has strengthened the Council's ability to plan and deliver services;
- there is a clear willingness and track record of developing skills of the service teams, acquiring external expertise where this is appropriate and learning from other providers to ensure that the service is well placed to meet its challenges;
- even better external partnership working and better joined up working between service teams is increasing capacity;
- a better approach to equality and diversity in the strategic housing service is being developed through improved support for Equality Impact Assessments and a more robust approach to understanding communities and responding to their needs;
- a clear and comprehensive hierarchy of performance reporting and new monitoring arrangements are helping the Council to understand progress against its objectives;
- performance management is generally effective and the approach to scrutiny, audit and risk management are all improving;
- systems for tracking, understanding and unblocking new housing delivery are being improved;
- financial and business planning processes are robust; and
- plans are in place to improve the approach to value for money.

However, there are a number of barriers to improvement. These include:

- the service has not fully exploited learning opportunities from its own service delivery and customer feedback
- sub-regional partnership working is not well developed and has a limited track record of strong outcomes;
- appropriate performance indicators or processes in place to help it monitor delivery and assess service quality and impact and there is not a comprehensive independent process in place to help the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) monitor the delivery of its housing ambitions by each of its partners; and
- action plans are not consistently SMART or outcome focused.

Cabinet Response to Scrutiny Report

| <p>Scrutiny Committee: Report:</p> <p>Lead Scrutiny Member: Lead Scrutiny Officer:</p> <p>Cabinet Member: Cllr Jacqui Seymour, Adult Care & Support Cllr Eric Carter, Housing Regeneration & Prosperity</p> <p>Response prepared by: Mike Atherton, Head of Community Protection Katherine Kynaston, Strategic Housing Manager</p> <p>Date of Cabinet meeting: 12 October 2010</p> | | | |
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| <p>Scrutiny Recommendation</p> | <p>Response and summary of action being taken to implement, or reason for rejection</p> | <p>Date by which action will be taken</p> | <p>Person responsible for action (name and title)</p> |
| <p>Support and Services for Non-Statutory Homelessness</p> <p>1. Homelessness Strategy should provide more detailed information on the full range of homelessness in the Borough including data on non- statutory homelessness figures (this is available from the KIP project) and the services available. Service outcomes for this for non- statutory homelessness should be monitored.</p> <p>Indication of Cost: low / ongoing</p> | <p>This recommendation is agreed.</p> <p>We are in the process of finalising the Supporting People needs analysis with a view to developing a new Supporting People Strategy 2010-2013 through the summer. The needs analysis will inform our future commissioning of housing related support services from April 2011to ensure we are meeting the needs of the most vulnerable</p> | <p>31/03/11</p> | <p>Kathy Jones, Housing & Personalisation Commissioning</p> |

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| <p>2. Members support the continued funding of the KIP project and recommend that this should be developed into an ongoing Service Level Agreement.</p> <p>Indication of Cost: high / ongoing</p> | <p>groups in the Borough</p> <p>Whilst recent case-law and previous government targets have led to an increasing focus on meeting the needs of homeless 16 and 17 year olds, we have recognised the need to ensure that this does not impact in a detrimental way upon young people over the age of 18 who are also in housing need. Accordingly the recently developed single allocation panel for young persons supported housing allocates to all young people who need supported housing between the ages of 16 and 25, and up to the age of 32 in the STAY resettlement accommodation.</p> <p>This recommendation has been implemented.</p> | <p>complete</p> | <p>Kathy Jones, Housing & Personalisation Commissioning</p> |
| <p>Supply of Housing</p> <p>3. The fundamental problem of RSLs not being able to compete on an equal footing for land with private developers needs to be addressed by the HCA.</p> <p>Indication of Cost: low / one-off</p> | <p>This recommendation is currently being implemented</p> <p>A Housing & Regeneration Partnership Board (HRPB) has been formed by bringing together key funding agencies to commission new market and affordable housing development and regeneration programmes</p> | <p>ongoing</p> | <p>Katherine Kynaston Strategic Housing Manager</p> |

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| | <p>through a Local Implementation Plan (LIP). This is the first partnership of its kind in the region.</p> <p>The Homes & Communities Agency (HCA) and the Council are working actively to engage RSLs in developments locally. This includes the procurement of a partner to build c.200 affordable homes on TWC/HCA land provided at nil value and also work in the rural area to bring forward small scale affordable housing schemes with local RSLs. In rural areas all new development given planning consent under an 'exceptions' policy (to meet local needs) must be affordable, which is likely to mean that the developer will be a RSL.</p> <p>RSLs are different types of organisations to private developers and, in many cases; it is inevitable they will not be able to compete in an open market for the acquisition of specific development sites. This is due to the different parameters under which each sector operates.</p> <p>RSLs are 'not for profit' organisations, principally concerned with the provision and management of affordable housing.</p> <p>They may build themselves in the form of relatively small 100% affordable schemes, often with a mix of tenures such as social rent and low cost home ownership. They will also</p> | | |
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| <p>4. The Council should develop a policy that prioritises affordable housing above all other Section 106 planning obligations over the medium term.</p> <p>Indication of Cost: low / ongoing</p> | <p>often commonly work with a private developer to acquire the affordable housing that is provided as part of a mixed tenure scheme (under a s106 agreement). In the past RSLs have also developed schemes which contain some homes for outright sale, mainly to help support the cost of affordable homes. While this has been difficult to achieve in the last few years, there are signs that RSLs are now starting to become active in this field again.</p> <p>There is no fundamental reason why an RSL cannot acquire a specific site. However the business model under which they operate is likely to limit their ability to compete against private developers. All purely affordable schemes require some form of 'gap funding' to be viable, which may come from RSLs own resources/borrowing, public sector grant or a combination of these.</p> <p>This recommendation is noted</p> <p>The Council has a policy to seek a certain percentage of affordable housing on every scheme, but has to consider the financial viability of schemes and competing community requirements triggered by the development. The Council has successfully negotiated some 140 units via S106 (full planning consent only) over the last year in difficult economic circumstances. It is anticipated that the government will announce changes to the approach to s106</p> | | <p>Sally Hall, Development Plans & Sustainability Manager</p> |
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| <p>5. If an RSL applies for a development containing 100% affordable housing then the Council should have an overarching policy that allows planning officers to make a decision to waive the need for a Section 106 agreement for further contributions where possible.</p> <p>Indication of Cost: to be determined</p> <p>6. Members would like to see the Council exploring and supporting more non-traditional development builds on land that is not suitable for traditional builds. Members would like to see more of a strategic steer from the HCA.</p> <p>Indication of Cost: to be determined</p> | <p>arrangements nationally in autumn 2010. This will require a review of TWC's approach and policy arrangements, which can consider this issue further. This will be reflected in the forthcoming review of the Council's Core Strategy. It may also include the production of an Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document, which will set out in more detail the approach to affordable housing and other developer contributions.</p> <p>This recommendation is noted.</p> <p>Where a 100% affordable housing scheme is proposed, the Council does not seek education or highway contributions (which tend to be the largest cost within a S106). However the Council must still consider the impact of a development on the existing community and may seek a contribution e.g. to play equipment. However, in some recent cases no additional contribution has been sought. The Council will always consider the viability of the requirements of a S106 on an 'open book' basis, with developers and a RSL.</p> <p>This recommendation is being implemented</p> <p>As mentioned earlier, a HRPB has been formed to ensure that a strategic approach to housing development and regeneration is achieved across the borough. Partners are all</p> | | <p>David Fletcher, Development Management Manager</p> <p>Katherine Kynaston Strategic Housing Manager</p> |
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| | <p>funding and commissioning agencies and they have agreed a local implementation plan to guide investment.</p> <p>Through the HRPB, the Council, HCA and other partners are committed to delivering a range of housing developments and welcome proposals for non-traditional build. It should be noted that such schemes may be more costly to deliver and in the current market this may reduce the proposals that are coming forward.</p> <p>It is also possible that non-traditional methods may be used as part of overall construction, which may have an impact on scheme cost or the speed of delivery.</p> | | |
| <p>Choose Your Home</p> <p>7. The partner organisations look at the urgent banding to allow partners some flexibility to enable those people who have the greatest needs being dealt with accordingly. This should link with the work of the Safer Communities Partnership and the Think Family Programme to support the development of balanced communities.</p> <p>Indication of Cost: low / ongoing</p> | <p>This recommendation is noted.</p> <p>The urgent band within CYH already allows some flexibility for those with the most urgent housing needs, however finding suitable accommodation in all cases can be occasionally be difficult due to a shortage of affordable housing in the borough.</p> <p>The Council's housing allocations policy is currently being reviewed to ensure that it reflects housing needs within the borough and allocates available housing in an open, fair and transparent way.</p> | <p>31/03/11</p> | <p>Kathy Jones, Housing & Personalisation Commissioning</p> |

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| <p>8. The bidding system should be reviewed so that if someone logs on to the system this should be recognised as actively seeking accommodation to help avoid inappropriate bids.</p> <p>Indication of Cost: low / ongoing</p> <p>9. The Wrekin Housing Trust continues to monitor the number of bids for accommodation via electronic, postal and telephone and the success of these applicants for accommodation. This information should then be used to ensure that Choose Your Home is accessible to all customers.</p> <p>Indication of Cost: low / ongoing</p> | <p>WHT as administrators of the choose your home scheme are represented on the project board, and both policy and systems changes for CYH have been identified. Costs for any related systems changes are likely to be medium rather than low.</p> <p>This recommendation is noted.</p> <p>Scope to implement this recommendation will be explored through the housing allocations policy review and any related systems changes.</p> <p>This recommendation is agreed.</p> <p>WHT already publish statistical information concerning the operation of CYH on their web-site, and feedback is provided to individual bidders within the scheme.</p> <p>The joint strategic needs assessment (JSNA) and the supporting people (SP) needs analysis will supplement information provided by the sub-regional housing market assessment to better inform on housing needs within the borough.</p> | <p>31/03/11</p> <p>ongoing</p> | <p>Kathy Jones, Housing & Personalisation Commissioning</p> <p>Kathy Jones, Housing & Personalisation Commissioning</p> |
| <p>Information and Co-ordination of Existing Services</p> <p>10. The existing bond schemes are co-ordinated</p> | <p>This recommendation has been</p> | <p>complete</p> | <p>Ginny Hickman,</p> |

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| <p>and this is communicated to partner organisations. The Council should review its financial commitment to the scheme to increase the number of bonds available.</p> <p>Indication of Cost: high / ongoing</p> | <p>implemented.</p> <p>Information about the bond schemes has been provided to representatives of the Wrekin Landlords Association and to landlords through their newsletter.</p> <p>The general bond scheme and the substance misuse bond scheme operate essentially the same but differ in the type and extent of support provided. The scope of these schemes has recently been extended to provide a rent guarantor scheme which is intended primarily but not exclusively for young people in housing need.</p> <p>Increased cover has been provided to enable the bond schemes to develop further and meet new and emerging needs. Actual costs are minimal because costs are only incurred where those housed through the scheme default on their rent payments or cause damage. This occurs in a very low proportion on cases and so the indication of cost should be amended to low / medium.</p> | | <p>Hsg Services Manager</p> |
| <p>11. (a) Members have been pleased that First Point has helped to act as referral point to signpost to relevant services Members recommend that role of First Point in helping to address housing and homelessness issues is monitored. (b) It is not acceptable, that housing assessments are carried out in the foyer at Darby House when interview rooms located on the ground floor are already in</p> | <p>These recommendations have been implemented.</p> | <p>complete</p> | <p>Ginny Hickman, Hsg Services Manager</p> |

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| <p>use. This needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency – interviews must be held in a secure and confidential space.</p> <p>Indication of Cost: low / ongoing</p> <p>12. There also appears to be a lack of joined up working between CAMHS and adult mental health services and the homelessness team in finding accommodation for those people suffering from mental health problems. The PCT and Council should explore whether men's health initiatives could be delivered via Mark's Pitstop, YMCA and KIP.</p> <p>Indication of Cost: medium / ongoing</p> <p>13. The staffing of Housing Services is already under pressure and this should be looked at sympathetically in the service review and restructure.</p> <p>Indication of Cost: to be determined</p> | <p>This recommendation is agreed.</p> <p>The Homelessness Strategy identifies actions to improve coordination of housing and support services for people with mental health conditions. A sub-group for vulnerable persons is now in place and active in securing resources and promoting health initiatives for homeless people.</p> <p>This recommendation is noted.</p> <p>Concerns of the Scrutiny Members are acknowledged however in light of current economic pressures on public finance every service needs to be reviewed to achieve efficiencies whilst seeking to protect front-line services.</p> | <p>31/12/10</p> <p>31/12/10</p> | <p>Kathy Jones, Housing & Personalisation Commissioning</p> <p>Mike Atherton, Head of Community Protection</p> |
| <p>Young People</p> <p>14. The referral pathway for homeless young people is monitored to ensure the needs of young homeless people are met. This should include the views of young people who have used the service.</p> | <p>This recommendation is currently being implemented.</p> | <p>31/10/10</p> | <p>Kathy Jones, Housing & Personalisation Commissioning</p> |

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| <p>Provider organisations should be engaged in the referral pathway for homeless young people.</p> <p>Indication of Cost: low / ongoing</p> | | | |
| <p>15. Members support the work of the Council with the Regional Offenders Accommodation Pathway and support further work through the development of an integrated offender management process to assist offenders to find suitable accommodation. The work of this group should be monitored to ensure the housing needs of offenders, including young offenders, are met.</p> <p>Indication of Cost: low / ongoing</p> | <p>This recommendation is currently being implemented.</p> | <p>31/12/10</p> | <p>Kathy Jones, Housing & Personalisation Commissioning</p> |
| <p>16. Homelessness services and Youth services work with the benefits agency to ensure as far as possible young people's accommodation is not put at risk if they start temporary employment.</p> <p>Indication of Cost: medium / ongoing</p> | <p>This recommendation is partially implemented.</p> <p>A recent Audit Commission inspection of strategic housing services recognised the proactive approaches of the Council's revenues & benefits service as 'excellent practice'.</p> <p>Further work is underway to explore creative options for use of discretionary housing payments or other options to help tackle this issue.</p> | <p>31/03/11</p> | <p>Kathy Jones, Housing & Personalisation Commissioning</p> |
| <p>17. All accommodation for homeless young people regardless of size should be licensed to ensure it is appropriate and provides appropriate support.</p> | <p>This recommendation is noted.</p> <p>The housing health & safety rating system</p> | <p>ongoing</p> | <p>Ginny Hickman, Hsg Services Manager</p> |

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| <p>Indication of Cost: high / ongoing</p> | <p>(HH&SRS) provides a statutory basis for regulating minimum standards for housing conditions. There are no statutory provisions for licensing young persons' accommodation however there is scope to explore accreditation.</p> <p>Regardless the housing services continues to ensure that housing standards for homeless households and young people are at least of a minimum acceptable standard and that they meet HH&SRS standards</p> | | |
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Appendix 3

Consolidated Housing Services Improvement Plan

| | Report Recommendation | Action | Target Date ¹ | Lead | Resources required ² | Comments/Progress |
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| R1: Improve the strategic approach to meeting housing needs by: | | | | | | |
| a) | Following through on plans to sharpen the focus on housing in the Sustainable Communities Strategy | Complete update of Local Investment Plan (LIP) | 31/03/11 | SHM | A | |
| | | Respond to consultation on draft revised SCS. | 31/01/11 | SHM | A | |
| | | Publish revised SCS | 31/03/11 | PPM | A | |
| b) | Following through on plans to adopt a new overarching Housing Strategy and to review planning policies in the Core Strategy in the light of new information. (paras 37, 42), | Prepare draft Housing Strategy And complete consultation. | 13/08/10 | SHA | A | |
| | | Updated draft Housing Strategy to be considered by Cabinet. | 12/10/10. | SHA | A | Draft Strategy approved for Consultation May 2010. |
| | | Publish/launch new Housing Strategy | 31/10/10 | SHA | A | Timetabled for CMT on 21/09/10 & CAPs 27/09/10. |
| | | Review Vision and options for Core Strategy policy | 31/12/10 | DPM | A | |
| | | Undertake consultation on revised policy options. | 31/12/11 | DPM | A | This work is anticipated to lead to a revised 'Spatial Plan'. The subsequent timetable/actions for this work Will be updated in the light of revisions to national guidance & review of policy options. |
| c) | Producing a Supplementary Planning Document which sets out | Review and consult upon strategic policy options for | 31/12/12 | DPM | A | |

| | Report Recommendation | Action | Target Date ¹ | Lead | Resources required ² | Comments/Progress |
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| | in detail the council's requirements for affordable housing provision on qualifying development sites. (44) | affordable housing. | | | | |
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| d) | Engaging with stakeholders, particularly housing associations, to develop robust housing sub-strategies where gaps or weaknesses have been identified (in this report) such as empty homes , addressing the needs of some diverse groups and proactive regulation of the private rented sector . [23, 25, 30, 35, 40, 41, 95, 97, 98,110). | Review housing needs of migrant workers as part of: update of Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) | 31/12/10 | SHA | A | |
| | | Review housing needs of key workers as part of new update of Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) | 31/12/10 | SHA | A | |
| | | Finalise proposals for 'The Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) | 30/11/10 | HED | A | Timetable subject to further advice from CLG. |
| | | Finalise LEP Delivery Plan | 01/04/11 | HED | A | Timetable subject to further advice from CLG. |
| | | Review needs and options for meeting identified needs of gypsies & travellers (40, 110). | 31/12/12 | DPM | A | |
| | | Develop single comprehensive plan to meet housing needs of older people. (40). | 31/03/11 | SHA | A | To be undertaken as part of sub regional study (with Shropshire & Herefordshire) |
| | | Develop Action Plan for regulation of the private rented housing sector. | 31/03/11 | SDM (H) | A | |
| | | Work with partners to develop 'under occupation' strategy', including use of customer incentives (97) | 30/09/11 | SDM (H&P) | A | To be led by sub group of Homeless Strategy Group, including housing association partners. |

| | Report Recommendation | Action | Target Date ¹ | Lead | Resources required ² | Comments/Progress |
|--|--|---|--------------------------|-----------|---------------------------------|--|
| | | Update Empty Property Strategy | 31/12/10 | SDM (H&P) | A | |
| | | Update Supporting People (SP) Strategy | 31/03/11 | SDM (H&P) | A | |
| | | Develop plans to meet needs of customers aged 18 and over (110) | N/A | N/A | N/A | Single housing allocation panel already set up. |
| e) | Following through with plans to undertake a programme of rural housing needs and development opportunity surveys. (33) | Complete full programme of rural parish housing needs surveys | 31/03/12 | SHM | A | 3 surveys completed to date. |
| f) | Analysing the take-up of service across a range of diverse community groups and using this information to identify and address any barriers to service access. (35, 110) | Complete update of Supporting People Needs Analysis (110) | 31/03/11 | SDM (H&P) | A | |
| | | Consider need to develop direct access provision for non-statutory homeless (110) | 31/3/11 | SDM (H&P) | A | To be assessed by Homeless Strategy Rough Sleepers Sub Group |
| | | Develop formal partnership protocol for hospital/prison leavers (110). | 31/12/10 | SDM (H&P) | A | Draft proposal ready to be circulated for consultation. |
| R2: Improve the performance management arrangements by: | | | | | | |
| a) | Introducing and analysing the outcomes from comprehensive customer feedback surveys and using this information to deliver | Obtain customer feedback from HA partners six monthly | 31/03/11 | SHA | A | |
| | | Formulate customer research Survey programme. | 31/12/10 | SDM (H&P) | A | Additional resource to be Provided by Community |

| | Report Recommendation | Action | Target Date ¹ | Lead | Resources required ² | Comments/Progress |
|----|--|--|--------------------------|---------|---------------------------------|--|
| | service improvements (49) | | | | | Development Apprentice. |
| b) | Introducing comprehensive service standards and using an analysis of performance against these standards to assess service quality and identify improvement opportunities. (61) | Develop and consult on service Standards for housing operational services. | 31/12/10 | SDM (H) | A | |
| c) | Ensuring that action plans are SMART and outcome focused (61, 62) | Identify published 'Check List' against which to assess future action plans. | 30/10/10 | SHA | A | To review Audit Commission and other guidance on this topic. Proposed Check List to be agreed by Housing Monitoring Board (HMB) |
| | | Assess new Action Plans through HMB. | 31/03/11 | HCP/SHM | A | |
| | | Develop 'SMART' Action Plan for new Housing Strategy | 12/09/10 | SHA | A | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | Update Delivery Statement for Local Investment Plan as part of Annual review (to include clear set of scheme targets/outcomes. | 31/03/11 | SHM | A | |
| | | Review Housing Services Improvement Plan. | 02/09/10 | HCP/SHM | A | N.B. This is this document. |
| d) | Establishing an independent forum to represent the LSP in monitoring and reporting on the performance of | Complete internal review of Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) | 31/03/11 | ACE | A | Review dependent on a range of external factors & influences |

| | Report Recommendation | Action | Target Date ¹ | Lead | Resources required ² | Comments/Progress |
|--|---|--|--------------------------|---------|---------------------------------|---|
| | the strategic housing services. (56, 57,61, 64, 67) | | | | | |
| | | Review Terms of Reference of Housing & Regeneration (HRPB) and Health & Well Being Partnership Boards, to ensure full reporting of performance of strategic housing services | 12/12/10 | HCP/SHM | A | |
| | | Develop and report on suite of housing performance Indicators (PIs) to HRPB | Quarterly | SHM | A | The first quarterly report on the 2010-13 LIP was reported to HRPB on 8/8/10. This will be extended to cover all Housing PIs. |
| | | Introduce new arrangements to monitor and report on housing delivery. | 12/12/10 | SHM | A | |
| | | Develop formal partnership protocol between TWC and HA partners(67) | 31/03/11 | HCP/SHM | A | |
| | | Establish formal two-way performance management arrangements between the Council and its main housing Association partners. | 31/03/11 | SHM | A | Initiated with Bromford and in planning stages with Sanctuary. |
| | | Invite representative of independent housing association forum to attend HRPB meetings and present joint report. | Quarterly | SHM | A | Initiated in June 2010. |

| | Report Recommendation | Action | Target Date ¹ | Lead | Resources required ² | Comments/Progress |
|--|--|---|--------------------------|---------|---------------------------------|--|
| | | | | | | |
| | | Hold annual development partner forum as part of the refresh of the Local Investment Plan (to include review of progress and forward view). | 28/02/11 | SHM | A | Undertaken as part of the development of the initial LIP. Contact with partners maintained via 'Task & Finish' Groups and one to one Meetings. |
| R3: Further develop the capacity of the strategic housing service by: | | | | | | |
| a) | Identifying ways to strengthen current sub-regional working including improving opportunities for shared service delivery (45, 51), | Join West Housing Partnership (WHP) | 01/07/10 | HCP/SHM | | Attended first formal meeting on 23/07/10. |
| | | Obtain formal CAPs/Cabinet Agreement to join WHP | 31/12/10 | HCP/SHM | A | Need to confirm type of approval required (outside bodies?) and programme meeting. |
| | | Complete joint (WHP) review of housing for older people. | 31/03/11 | SHA | B | |
| | | Through WHP, review opportunities for shared Intelligence gathering, service delivery, liaison and improvement. | 31/03/11 | HCP/SHM | A | |
| | | Develop overarching Housing Strategy Statement for WHP Area. | 31/03/11 | SHA | A | This will enable individual strategies to be linked and key cross-cutting issues to be identified. |
| b) | Improving the approach to | Participate in current WHP- | 31/03/11 | SHA | A | |

| | Report Recommendation | Action | Target Date ¹ | Lead | Resources required ² | Comments/Progress |
|--|--|---|--------------------------|-----------|---------------------------------|---|
| | benchmarking and using the outcome to inform service improvements and value for money (VfM) (68, 75,76,77) | benchmarking exercise | | | | |
| | | Take forward the corporate VfM Framework (76) | 31/03/11 | PVM | A | |
| | | Develop corporate procurement Strategy (77) | 31/03/11 | HICTP | A/B | |
| | | Complete Supporting People VfM and financial modelling Toolkits. | 31/12/10 | SDM (H&P) | A | |
| c) | Following through with plans to carry out service reviews of the strategic housing services to identify ways of improving services and value for money | Complete strategic review of Strategic Housing Unit | 31/03/11 | HPS | A | To follow review of Heads of Service structure |
| | | Complete strategic review of Community Protection (Housing) | 31/03/11 | HCP | A | To follow review of Heads of Service structure |
| R4: Further improve outcomes for customers: | | | | | | |
| a) | Adopting a comprehensive and robust approach to completing Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) (45, 52, 54) | Complete pilot Multi Impact Assessment (MIA) of draft Housing Strategy | 10/09/10 | SHA | A | |
| | | Complete EIAs/MIAs for all new housing-related strategies. | 31/03/11 | HCP/SHM | A | Assessments to be 'signed-off' by Housing Monitoring Board. |
| b) | Following through on plans to improve the understanding of local communities and using it to address the issues identified in this report. (31, 45, 53, 55, 104,105) | See actions in R1 d) and R3 a) above. | Various | Various | A | |
| | | Reduce no. in temporary accommodation, impact on young people (104/105) | 31/01/11 | SDM (H) | A | |
| c) | Improving the planning application process to address the issues identified in the report. | Implement 'Development Team Surgeries' with internal consultees to streamline | 12/12/10 | DM | A | |

| | Report Recommendation | Action | Target Date ¹ | Lead | Resources required ² | Comments/Progress |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|--------------------------|------|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| | (80, 88, + some references above) | responses to developers on Section 106 requests. | | | | |

Resources required.

A = Within Existing Budgets,

B = External Funding (grant of partner organisation money) in place

C = External funding grant to be applied for

D = New service income/charging strategy (only include income generated from new services being provided. Existing income generation activities or charging strategies should be included as category A)

E = Resources not yet identified

Notes

1. The report specifies a target date of August 2011 for the implementation of all recommendations.
2. Assume all recommendations will be implemented using existing internal resources.

Key

| | | |
|-----------|--|--------------------|
| HCP | Head of Community Protection | Mike Atherton |
| HPS | Head of Planning & Sustainability | Michael Barker |
| HED | Head of Economic Development | Peter Smith |
| HICTP | Head of ICT and Procurement | Mike Weston |
| SHM | Strategic Housing Manager | Katherine Kynaston |
| DM | Development Manager | David Fletcher |
| DPSM | Development Plans & Sustainability Manager | Sally Hall |
| SDM (H) | Service Delivery Manager (Housing) | Ginny Hickman |
| SDM (H&P) | Service Delivery Manager (Housing & Personalisation) | Kathy Jones |
| SHA | Strategic Housing Advisor | Chris Winter |
| ACE | Assistant Chief Executive | Richard Partington |
| PPM | Partnership & Performance Manager | Jonathan Power |
| PVM | Policy & VfM Manager | Felicity Mercer |