

AGENDA ITEM NO

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT BOARD

19th April 2010

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL - HOUSING STRATEGY 2006 -2011 –
'Unlocking the Door To Meeting Housing Needs in The District' –
PROGRESS REPORT, MID TERM REVIEW AND NEW ACTION PLAN**

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Cllr Peter Whittaker
Responsible Head of Service	Angie Heighway
Non Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 In March 2006, the Council received a 'Fit For Purpose' accreditation from the Government Office for it's new Housing Strategy Document covering the 5 year period 2006 – 2011.
- 1.2 Four years into the life of the strategy, this report is the fourth update upon the progress that has been made upon the strategic actions set. Members may recall that a Mid Term Review was carried out in November 2008 and a new action plan formulated for the remaining two years of the strategy.
- 1.3 Attached at Appendix I to this report is the Mid Term Review Housing Strategy Action Plan, updated as at April 2010.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That Members consider the progress detailed within the Mid Term Review Housing Strategy Action Plan attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 This report provides members with an update on the progress being made against the action plan set out in the Council's Housing Strategy document.

- 3.2 Local authorities are required to produce a Housing Strategy Statement as an over-arching document that reviews housing-related issues in the local authority's area, setting out housing objectives, establishing priorities for action both by the local authority and by other service providers and stakeholders, and providing a clear Action Plan in agreement with the Council's local partners.
- 3.3 Bromsgrove District Council's Housing Strategy 2006–2011 was the first to be produced by the Council since it transferred its housing stock in March 2004. The document which was developed in 2006, following thorough review and consultation upon housing issues in the District, set out a comprehensive strategy for the Council to focus on its strategic role to meet a broad range of housing objectives. The original document details the local context, looks at national and regional housing policy and outlines the housing needs / survey information that we held back in 2006. The Housing Strategy then set out the Council's four key Housing Priorities:
- **PRIORITY 1 – ADDRESSING THE SHORTAGE OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING**
 - Focusing on achieving a well balanced Housing Market and a consistent and appropriate supply of affordable housing to meet urban and rural needs, making best use of planning powers and the resources available
 - **PRIORITY 2 – IMPROVING THE QUALITY AND AVAILABILITY OF PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING**
 - To achieve sustained decent housing conditions, a strong, well managed private rented sector, improved energy efficiency of domestic homes and increased availability and accessibility of privately rented accommodation offering people more choice.
 - **PRIORITY 3 – ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS**
 - Promoting a continued co-ordinated approach to the ongoing provision of early intervention preventative and support services for the homeless and an improved supply of permanent accommodation to reduce the use of temporary accommodation. Increased access to privately rented housing for the homeless is targeted to help achieve this and to maintain our minimal use of Bed & Breakfast accommodation. The strategy also focuses upon providing an improved standard and type of temporary accommodation.
 - **PRIORITY 4 - ASSISTING VULNERABLE GROUPS TO LIVE INDEPENDENTLY**
 - Aimed at enabling people who are vulnerable through age, disability or life experience to live independently, within the community. Promotion of healthy, safe and independent

living through improved housing conditions, home safety & security checks and by creating the right environment through improvements and adaptations and linked action to enable older people to be discharged from hospital more rapidly through more efficient home adaptation.

The Strategy concluded with Action Plans for all four priorities detailing the link with the resources available and the arrangements that are in place to monitor progress.

4. HOUSING STRATEGY REVIEW AND REFRESH - NOVEMBER 2008

- 4.1 Between the time of the original Housing Strategy Document being published in 2006 and the time of the Mid Term Review in November 2008 there had been a considerable amount of energy and commitment invested in implementing the strategy and in achieving over 83% of the actions that were originally set.
- 4.2 In carrying out the Mid Term Review in November 2010 we re-consulted with stakeholders, took into account the results of the 2008 Bromsgrove Housing Market Assessment and developed a new set of actions (across all 4 priority areas) for the remaining life of the strategy and beyond.
- 4.3 The Mid Term Review and Refreshed Action Plan was approved by The Executive Cabinet on the 4th February 2009 and was reported to Performance Management Board in March 2009.
- 4.4 The Action Plan at Appendix 1 has been further updated to indicate progress up until March 2010:
- Actions in Black Font are actions carried forward from the original 2006 Action Plan for ongoing consideration.
 - Actions in Mauve Font are newer actions developed at the Mid Term Review stage.
 - Actions shaded grey are completed or no further action deemed appropriate.
 - The traffic light inserts indicate progress:
 - Green – Within target, completed or ongoing.
 - Orange – Not fully achieved or falling behind target.
 - Red – No progress or progress significantly delayed.

5. WHAT DOES THE HOUSING STRATEGY COVER?

- 5.1 The Council's strategy is formulated to address the identified housing needs of the District. It is a partnership strategy to guide all partners, RSLs, voluntary agencies etc to help address the identified needs through a set of priorities and actions. It's not just about delivering affordable housing, it is also about:

- preventing homelessness and providing support and assistance to those who are homeless;
- Improving the standard and promoting the availability of private sector housing to supplement the lack of affordable housing in the District;
- addressing the housing and support needs of vulnerable clients such as the elderly and mentally and physically disabled.

6.0 FOCUSING UPON THE DELIVERY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- 6.1 With specific reference to the part of the strategy that focuses upon the 'delivery of affordable housing' we set a target of achieving the provision of 400 new units over the 5 year life of the strategy. Four years into the strategy, 351 units have been delivered by our RSL partners. During the final year of the strategy (2010/11) we currently project the delivery of in excess of 70 additional units, so we are currently on course to achieve the target.
- 6.2 The Council works in partnership work with a number of Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). Whilst the BDHT/ West Mercia Housing alliance were selected as the Council's Principal Preferred Partners the Council also works with Bromford Housing and Servite Houses as preferred partners and Strategic Housing officers meet regularly to advise them of the needs of the district to guide and develop a partnership approach to the joint commissioning of affordable housing schemes.
- 6.3 Historically, a considerable amount of larger sized private family housing has been developed in the district leading to an imbalance in the housing market resulting in a low level of smaller affordable housing. The imbalance in the housing market is what the affordable housing element of the Council's Housing Strategy aims to address.
- 6.4 The scarcity of sites, cost of land and competition from private developers has historically presented difficulties to local authorities and RSLs in delivering affordable housing. The over supply of housing and introduction of the planning moratorium in the Bromsgrove District has exacerbated the situation as the lack of private development sites coming forward has meant that Bromsgrove as a local authority has been limited in its ability to use planning powers to require 'on site' affordable housing within private developments.
- 6.5 The Council's Housing Strategy operates alongside its developing Planning Strategy. During the past 12 months, the Regional Spatial Strategy has clarified the amount of overall development to be provided in the District (4,000 plus 3,000 around the periphery of Redditch to meet the needs of Redditch BC) up to 2026. The Council has been consulting upon its Draft Core Strategy in which key areas of potential growth are identified. The developing Core Strategy will include

affordable housing policies requiring affordable housing provision within all new developments above 5 units which will enable a more planned approach to the provision of affordable housing integrated within private development with the aim of providing sustainable communities also taking into account the needs of the community in terms of demographics and special needs client groups.

7. FUTURE HOUSING STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

- 7.1 The Bromsgrove Housing Strategy currently links to the main threads and priorities of the Housing Strategy for the West Midlands Region which sets out long term goals for the socially and economically effective functioning of the Region's housing markets.
- 7.2 From the 1st April, the functions of the West Midlands Regional Assembly are being replaced by a West Midlands Leaders Board which will develop an all encompassing Strategy for the West Midlands and sub regional strategies which will likely be based upon Worcestershire.
- 7.3 The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) who have replaced the Housing Corporation are communicating upon housing investment proposals with local authorities across housing, transport and economic regeneration through the 'Local Conversation' at County level with a view to developing county and district investment plans.
- 7.4 The Sub Regional Partnership known as the South Housing Market Area Partnership between RSLs, Local authorities with GOWM and HCA membership has been reviewed to strengthen the governance arrangements and delivery of affordable housing. In recent weeks a decision has been taken by both Warwick and Stratford upon Avon District Councils to disengage from this partnership and focus their attention locally. Although disappointing, it creates an opportunity to develop new arrangements within co-terminus boundaries of the Worcestershire Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Area Agreement.
- 7.5 A Worcestershire Housing Strategy is being developed and a Housing Theme Group for Worcestershire is being proposed to sit under the Stronger Communities Theme.
- 7.6 Accordingly, when the current Bromsgrove Housing Strategy expires in 2011, it will be matter for members to decide whether it is fully renewed or in future takes the form a local Housing Strategy Action Plan for Bromsgrove under the developing Countywide Housing Strategy.

8. KEY STRATEGIC HOUSING PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- 8.1 The following Key Performance Indicators summarise the progress being made by Strategic Housing Services up to the end of March 2010.

KEY STRATEGIC HOUSING PIs	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10
Achieve delivery of 400 additional units of affordable housing over period 2006–2011 (= 80pa)	26	75	72	46	145	88
Reduce the use of temporary accommodation by 50% from 2004 – 2010. (2004 baseline figure = 68 therefore target =34)			63 clients in temp accom	16 clients in temp accom (Gov't target achieved two years ahead of schedule)	13 clients in temp accom	20 clients in temp accom including newly available accom for DV.
To increase housing energy efficiency by 30% from 1996 - 2010	20.69 %	22.68%	24.64%	25.94%	Now replaced by NI 187. (2009/10) 7.55% < SAP 35 42.32%> SAP 35	
BV 064 - Number of private sector vacant dwellings returned into occupation or demolished during the year.	2 (Target 3)	3 (Target 3)	8 (Target 4)	19 (Target 4)	33	38 (Target 25)
BV 202 - Number of people sleeping rough on a single night within the area.	0 (Target <10)	0 (Target <10)	0 (Target <10)	0 (Target <10)	0 (Target <10)	0 (Target <10)
Reduce Homelessness through preventative action		52 cases prevented	76 cases prevented	147 cases prevented	173 cases prevented	164 Cases prevented

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no immediate financial implications associated with the review of the Housing Strategy Mid Term Strategy and Refreshed

Action Plan as the implementation of the actions will be carried out within existing Strategic Housing staff resources.

- 9.2 Certain actions within the action plan are set to assess and investigate the potential implementation of certain new services. In the event of a completed action supporting the implementation of a new service, a bid would have to be submitted for consideration under the Council's corporate annual budget process.

10. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

- 10.1 The Housing priorities and actions within the document link with the following Corporate Objectives and Priorities:

Council Objective One - Regeneration – CO1 Priority Housing

Council Objective Three – Sense of Community and Wellbeing

Council Objective Four – Environment – CO4 Priority Climate Change

11. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 11.1 The main risks associated with the details included in this report are:

The ability to retain suitably qualified and experienced staff to implement the strategy and action plan.

The ability to maintain continued commitment and support from partners in addressing the actions identified.

- 11.2 These risks are being managed as follows:

Risk Register: Environment and Planning

Key Objective Ref No: 4 - Effective, efficient and legally compliant Housing Service

Key Objective: 4.1 - Monitor, manage and implement the recommendations from the Audit Commission Housing Inspection Report and Housing Strategy Action Plan.

12. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 The actions set out within the document are designed to enhance the Council's response to the identified housing needs of the community and to improve the quality, standard and accessibility of housing services provided.

13. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 The Mid Term review and consultation process was been carried out in accordance with corporate equality and diversity policy and where appropriate, housing services undergo impact assessment.

14. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

14.1 The Housing Strategy is based upon bringing together partners and resources to maximise the benefit to the community. The vision that we have since developed; ***“Making best use of existing accommodation by improving the quality and accessibility and addressing the imbalance in the housing market through the provision of more affordable housing”***, has helped us to focus our efforts to achieve the greatest impact by making better use of existing stock across all tenures.

15. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Procurement Issues None
Personnel Implications None
Governance/Performance Management All PI's and targets set out in the action plan accord with those detailed in service business plans and the corporate performance monitoring process.
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998 None
Policy None
Environmental None

16. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	Yes
Chief Executive	No
Executive Director - Partnerships and Projects	N/A

Executive Director - Services	N/A
Assistant Chief Executive	Yes
Head of Service	Yes
Head of Financial Services	No
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	No
Head of Organisational Development & HR	No
Corporate Procurement Team	No

17. WARDS AFFECTED

All Wards.

18. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Mid Term Housing Strategy Review Summary and Refreshed Action Plan.

19. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Bromsgrove District Council – Housing Strategy 2006 – 2011.

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