

Report to Housing Scrutiny Panel

Date of Meeting: 3 July 2008

Portfolio: Housing



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Subject: Housing BVPI and LPI Performance Indicators – Out-turn 2007/08

Recommendations:

- (1) That the Council's housing performance in relation to Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) and Local Performance Indicators (LPIs) in 2007/08 be considered; and**
- (2) That consideration be given to whether or not the information provided in this report should be considered by the Scrutiny Panel at its July meeting on an annual basis in future.**

Report:

1. Up to March 2008, all councils have been required to record, monitor and publish Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) for a range of Council services, including Housing. In addition, local authorities are encouraged to record, monitor and publish Local Performance Indicators (LPIs) for services which the local authority considers important. From the range of BVPIs and LPIs, the Council has selected Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), which it considers particularly important indicators to monitor. From April 2008, the lengthy number of BVPIs have been replaced by a smaller number of National Indicators. As a result, from April 2008, the Council has re-designated some of the former BVPIs as LPIs, so that they continue to be monitored and reported.

2. Performance against all the Council's BVPIs and LPIs is monitored on a quarterly basis by the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel. However, the Chairman of the Housing Scrutiny Panel has asked that performance on the Housing BVPIs and LPIs be reported to, and considered by, the Housing Scrutiny Panel.

3. Attached as an Appendix is a table listing all of the Housing BVPIs and LPIs, which provides the following information in respect of each one:

- **The KPI/BVPI/LI Reference number**
- **Summary of the indicator's definition** – BVPI definitions are set nationally. Reference to "High" means that the higher the figure, the better the performance. Conversely, reference to "Low" means that the lower the figure, the better the performance.
- **The target for 2007/8** – These were set by the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel. In most cases, for BVPIs, this was set at the "Top

Quartile” level achieved across all district councils in England in 2005/6 (i.e. the level above which a council’s performance was within the best 25% of all district councils). Where performance was already above this level, the target was often set higher. Where it was well below, the target was sometimes set lower.

- **The out-turn for 2007/8** – This gives the performance out-turn for last year
- **The Top Quartile for 2006/7** – This was the Top Quartile level for all district councils in 2006/7 (the more recent year that comparative data is available). This is useful to compare the performance out-turn in 2007/8 against. The table shows both the Top Quartile level and whether the Council achieved the 2006/7 Top Quartile level.
- **The out-turn for 2006/7** – This gives the performance out-turn for the previous year, which is provided for comparative purposes with the latest year’s performance.
- **Improvement in 2007/8** – This shows whether the Council’s performance in 2007/8 was better (“Yes”) or worse (“No”) than the previous year (2006/7).
- **Traffic Light (versus Target for 2007/8)** – This shows whether the performance in 2007/8 achieved the target set for 2007/8.

Green = target achieved
Red = target not achieved

4. From the table in the Appendix, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- The Council’s housing performance **improved** in 2007/8 in respect of 14 indicators (58%)
- There was **no change** in housing performance for 4 indicators (17%)
- The Council’s housing performance **worsened** in 2007/8 in respect of 6 indicators (25%)
- Housing performance **met or exceeded** the target in respect of 16 indicators (67%)
- Housing performance **failed to meet** the target in respect of 8 indicators (33%)
- Housing performance **was in** the Top Quartile for all district councils in respect of 3 BVPIs (25%) and **was not in** the Top Quartile in respect of 9 BVPIs (75%)

5. It is interesting to note that, in respect of the 6 indicators that did not improve in 2007/8, 2 still met the target. The following explanations are given for the 6 indicators that did not improve in 2007/8:

Indicator	Comments
Percentage of tenants evicted as a result of rent arrears	This is considered by officers to be an inappropriate indicator. The Audit Commission’s assumption is that a high number of evictions represents poor performance; a low number represents good performance. In officers’ view, the most important factor is the Council’s performance on collecting rent and minimising rent arrears. It will be noted from the Appendix that the Council excelled in both the rent collection rate (well into the Top Quartile) and the level of arrears in 2007/8. It is inevitable that, to achieve low rent arrears, evictions will be necessary as a last resort. This does not represent poor performance, but effective rent arrears management.

<p>Average length of stay in hostel accommodation of households that are unintentionally homeless and in priority need</p>	<p>This is considered by officers to be another inappropriate indicator. Whilst it is acknowledged that it is not ideal for homeless households to be accommodated in hostel accommodation, the reality is that they need to be accommodated somewhere. It is quite usual for appropriate accommodation not to be available at the time of homelessness, and accommodating homeless households in hostel accommodation on a temporary basis is considered far better than bed and breakfast accommodation. Moreover, since the Council does have a hostel, it is considered better to make use of this facility, rather than keep rooms empty – this enables more non-homeless households on the Housing Register to be accommodated in Council housing with secure tenancies. The Top Quartile is zero. Therefore, to be in the Top Quartile, the Council would have to use other forms of temporary accommodation and/or provide homeless households with permanent Council (or RSL) accommodation straight away. In any event, it should be noted that the Council's target for this indicator was met.</p>
<p>Average number of days to re-let Council dwellings</p>	<p>It is accepted that performance with this important indicator is poor. In response, a Voids Working Party has been set up, chaired by an Asst. Director of Housing, to look a ways of reducing the void period. Two main problems have been identified. Firstly, the average period includes a number of difficult-to-let properties, particularly bedsits and some flats in sheltered accommodation, which inflate the average time and are, to a large extent, outside of the Council's control. Secondly, the period of time repairs are undertaken at void properties by the Works Unit is higher than acceptable. Under the recent Top Management Restructure, responsibility for the Works Unit passed to the Housing Directorate in May 2008, and a strategy to improve performance has already been devised and is being implemented.</p>
<p>Former tenant rent arrears</p>	<p>The main reason for the reduction is due to an abnormally high amount of former tenant arrears collected in the previous year. This was due to a significant increase in the number of occupiers who were identified as "tolerated trespassers" (i.e. tenants who breach a court order) and were therefore classed as former tenants. Any payments they then made, including whilst they were in occupation, were therefore former tenant arrears. However, due to a change in the law, the number of tolerated trespassers reduced dramatically in 2007/8. In any event, it should be noted that the Council's target for this indicator was met.</p>
<p>Routine repairs undertaken within target time</p>	<p>It is accepted that performance with this important indicator is poor. Indeed, it is accepted that the target time for the completion of routine repairs is quite lengthy. As explained above, responsibility for the Works Unit, which is responsible for the completion of most response repairs passed to the Housing Directorate in May 2008 and a strategy to improve performance is being implemented.</p>
<p>Number of affordable homes completed and ready for occupation during the year</p>	<p>The target was set, based on the expected number of completions in 2007/8. However, for various reasons, slippage occurred with the commencement of a number of affordable housing developments, and the out-turn was lower than the previous year. This was mainly due to a dearth of development sites in the District generally. However, it should be noted that the average % affordable housing agreed in</p>

	Section 106 (planning) agreements for large housing developments during 2007/8 was 71%, far more than the target of 40%, and higher than the 30% achieved in the previous year. Moreover, it should be noted that there are around 460 affordable homes in the pipeline (with planning permission) for future years, with a further 325 affordable homes that may also come to fruition.
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- 6. A copy of this report will be provided to the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation at its next meeting for information.

- 7. The Scrutiny Panel is asked to consider whether the information provided in this report on housing performance should be considered by the Scrutiny Panel at its July meeting on an annual basis in future.