

HOUSING ADVISORY PANEL**11 SEPTEMBER 2009**

Subject: **Monitoring of Housing Strategy (2006-2011) -
Review 2008 Action Plan**

Lead Officer: **Renata Mosz**
Contact on 01789 260842

**Lead Member/
Portfolio Holder:** **Councillor S Gray**

Summary

To update the Housing Advisory Panel on the progress that has been made on delivering the Housing Strategy (2006-2011) Review 2008 Action Plan. The Housing Strategy Action Plan incorporates the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan.

Recommendation

That the September 2009 Housing Strategy (2006-2011) Review 2008 Action Plan report is noted, and any necessary corrective actions are identified.

1 Background/Information

- 1.1 The Housing Strategy (2006-2011) Review 2008 was first considered by Housing Advisory Panel in November 2008 and is the Council's existing Housing Strategy. The Panel is responsible for monitoring the Review 2008 Action Plan, which also incorporates the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan. The Homelessness Strategy is currently being reviewed.
- 1.2 Members will be aware that the Council is writing a new Housing Strategy. The public, partners and Members will be consulted on this draft Strategy in September and October 2009, and the Strategy will then be finalised and considered by Housing Advisory Panel in January 2010.
- 1.3 High-level strategic actions in the Review 2008 will be rolled forward into the new Strategy but actions and dates may be modified to reflect changes in policy, local circumstances and strategic priorities. Panel will continue to monitor the Housing Strategy Action Plan; the Housing Service will monitor all other actions.

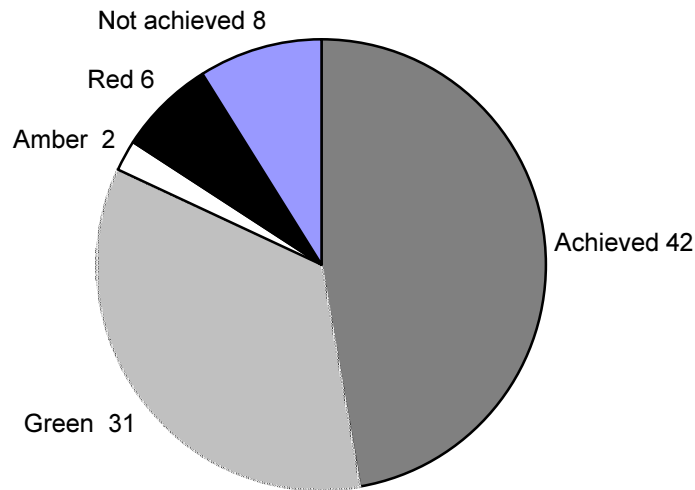
2 Review 2008 Action Plan update as at 18 August 2009

- 2.1 An updated Housing Strategy Action Plan, dated 18 August 2009, is set out in Appendix 1. The previous Action Plan Panel looked at was dated 11 February 2009. Therefore, for actions that are repeated annually, the

18 August 2009 Action Plan sets out both the results for the year 2008/09 and progress since 1 April 2009.

2.2 Progress made against the 89 individual actions in the Action Plan is summarised in the pie chart below.

Progress on Housing Strategy Actions



2.2.1 The table below provides further information about 1) the actions that were either not achieved or which are in danger of slipping 2) other actions and targets that need to be amended. The action numbers in the table are the same as those in the Housing Strategy Action Plan.

Action	Target	Proposed amendments and comments
7. Review the Housing Partnership Agreement to focus partnership activity on delivery of the housing strategy and meeting the Council's broader strategic objectives.	Start January 2007 Complete Sept 2009 Red - will not be achieved	Delete target Housing Partnership Agreements are obsolete. Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing makes it clear that local authorities cannot require developers to work with particular housing associations. Therefore, the Council has set out "Housing Quality Benchmark" standards for all new affordable housing, irrespective of provider, in its Meeting Housing Needs SPD.

Action	Target	Proposed amendments and comments
<p>12. Promote development plan polices aimed at boosting supply of affordable housing in rural areas, i.e. promote 'local choice' and 'rural exception' schemes:</p> <p>Provide guidance for local communities to encourage production of parish/town plans, especially including actions to address local housing needs.</p>	<p>Twenty communities advised annually</p> <p>Red will not be achieved</p>	<p>Delete target</p> <p>Although the target was met in 2008/2009, the guidance provided by the Planning Policy Team and the Rural Housing Enabler to Parish Councils to draw up parish plans has become increasingly 'light touch' over the years and difficult to quantify. The Planning Policy Team does not have the capacity to provide Parish Plan guidance and the promotion of Parish Plans is not the primary role of the RHE.</p> <p>Members will be aware of separate proposals to enable Parish Councils to carry out Parish Plans.</p>
<p>14. Introduce loans options service (to help people maintain their homes in good repair)</p>	<p>April 2010</p> <p>Red - will not be achieved</p>	<p>Set revised target in new Housing Strategy</p> <p>The proposed countywide Home Improvement Agency could facilitate a loans option service, alongside improved adaptations, home improvement and repair services. Therefore, the introduction of a loans options service has been put on hold until the outcome of the HIA review is known.</p>
<p>17. Reduce waiting time for a Disabled Facilities Grant 2008/2009</p>	<p>Waiting time of 5.0 months by March 2009, then review</p> <p>(Achieved target of 5 months)</p> <p>Not achieved setting of target for 2009/10</p>	<p>Delete current action and target. Replace with an action and target for the length of time people have to wait for adaptations. Revised action and target to be set by October 2009.</p> <p>Target waiting times for Disabled Facilities Grants record the time it takes for the District Council to approve a grant.</p> <p>Discussions are underway with County to set a target that measures how long people have</p>

Action	Target	Proposed amendments and comments
		to wait from the time they first contact an agency about an adaptation to the time the adaptation is completed. Such a target will more accurately reflect customers' concerns.
<p>18. Following the review of the Care & Repair service, set a target for the number of people helped to live independently through the work of the handyman.</p>	<p>2009/10 75 people</p> <p>Not achieved 71 people were helped.</p> <p>2009/10 75 people</p> <p>Red - will not be achieved</p>	<p>Proposed target 2009/2010: 35 people.</p> <p>The way Handyman services are recorded, and the number of households they assist to live independently, has changed. This has made it difficult to monitor progress in 2008/09.</p> <p>The target will not be achieved in 2009/10 because the Handyman service lapsed and had to be reconfigured because of cuts in the Council's budget.</p>
<p>23. Distribute newsletter to everyone on the housing waiting list as from June 2007</p>	<p>Twice yearly newsletter</p> <p>2008/09 Not achieved</p>	<p>Target unchanged</p> <p>Only 1 newsletter issued because of the amount of work involved in going live with Home Choice Plus.</p>
<p>29. Undertaking annual diversity audits for front line housing services</p>	<p>Complete by June annually</p> <p>2008/09 Not achieved</p>	<p>Proposed target: October 2009 (for 2008/09)</p> <p>Long term sickness within Private Sector Housing Team and increased demand for Housing Advice Team services.</p>

Action	Target	Proposed amendments and comments
<p>41. Incorporate the views of landlords and tenants into an annual review of the Rent Express Scheme; from 2009 the review will assess the impact of Local Housing Allowances</p>	<p>By end June each year</p> <p>2009 Not achieved</p>	<p>Target unchanged for 2010</p> <p>Review completed 2009 but it did not consider Local Housing Allowances.</p>
<p>50. Identify through research and consultation the optimal package of housing accommodation and support for single homeless people in the District in preparation for commissioning additional improved provision; report findings to Housing Advisory Panel.</p> <p>51. Report Housing Advisory Panel recommendations to LSP Housing Key Group</p>	<p>March 2010</p> <p>Red - will not be achieved</p> <p>March 2011</p> <p>Red - will not be achieved</p>	<p>Action and revised target to be included in new Housing Strategy</p> <p>The award of a Supporting People tender to provide some supported accommodation for single homeless people was delayed. The tender has only just been awarded, and consequently, exactly when services are likely to be up and running is unknown. The scheme will plug some, but not all, of the gaps in provision for this client group.</p> <p>Before determining an optimal housing and support package for this client group it is necessary to assess how the proposed scheme is working and what needs it is or is not meeting.</p>
<p>59. Train Housing Advice Team to increase its awareness of debt advice issues</p>	<p>June 2009 Not achieved</p>	<p>Proposed target: April 2010</p> <p>A training event(s) for a number of local agencies that deal with, or come across, debt advice issues is planned.</p>

Action	Target	Proposed amendments and comments
63. Review the operation of Choice Based Lettings sub-regionally	Start June 2009 Complete Feb 2010 Amber	<i>Target unchanged.</i> The Home Choice Plus Partnership has not yet scoped its sub-regional review of Choice Based Lettings. This matter is not within the sole control of the Council
64. Continue to engage with young people	3 engagements each year with schools, colleges and youth clubs 2008/09 Not achieved 2009/10 Amber	<i>Target to be revised as part of the Homelessness Strategy Review</i> 2 engagements only in 2008/09 because of the introduction of Home Choice Plus. No engagements to date in 2009/10. Relevance of target to be reviewed.
66. Review the homelessness strategy annually, and report to Housing Advisory Panel	June each year Not achieved	<i>Proposed target: December 2009</i> Other work priorities in Housing Advice Team

3 Options available to the Committee

3.1 The Action Plan is for noting only.

4 Implications of the proposal

4.1 *Legal/Human Rights Implications*

4.1.1 There are no legal or human rights implications.

4.2 *Financial*

4.2.1 There are no financial implications.

4.3 *Environmental*

4.3.1 There are no environmental implications.

4.4 *Corporate Strategy*

4.4.1 The delivery of the Housing Strategy Action Plan directly assists the Council to achieve Aim 1 of the Corporate Strategy 2009-2012. Aim 1 is

about having a district where everyone shares in an improved quality of life; it includes the outcome that more housing is available at a price local people can afford.

4.5 Equality Impact Assessment

4.5.1 An equality impact assessment of the complete Housing Strategy was undertaken at the time the Strategy was drafted. The aims of the Housing Strategy are to increase the supply of affordable housing, to enable more people to live independently in better quality homes and to reduce homelessness. These aims, and the actions that underpin them, ensure that all sectors of the community are better able to access and receive services.

5 Risk assessment

5.1 The proposed changes to actions and targets are realistic and timely.

6 Conclusion

6.1 That the Panel notes the report and the progress that has been made in delivering the Housing Strategy Action Plan.

Dave Webb

HEAD OF REVENUES AND HOUSING

Background papers:

None.

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