



**HOUSING SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**7 September 2005**

Report of the Director of Housing Services  
**DRAFT DECENT HOMES STRATEGY**

**purpose of the report**

To seek Committee's approval of a Draft Decent Homes Strategy as attached in Annex 1.

**background**

- 1 As members will be aware, the Council have been set the task of bringing all their council owned stock up to a minimum standard, known as the Decent Homes Standard, by 2010.
- 2 To achieve this target, the Council has undergone an extensive stock option appraisal to establish the preferred vehicle to access the required level of finance. The Housing Services Committee of 24 September 2004 agreed that the preferred option would be through the establishment of an Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO).
- 3 The Audit Commission have issued Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOEs) that the Housing Services Department have used to identify gaps in service delivery. One of these gaps has highlighted the requirement to develop and implement a 'Decent Homes Strategy'.

**decent homes strategy**

- 4 The Strategy, attached in Annex 1, outlines the commitment of the Housing Services Department to achieve the decent homes standard by 2010. Supporting the Strategy are a number of corporate documents, such as procurement and asset management plans.
- 5 The delivery of decent homes is central to the overall regeneration of areas. This Strategy seeks to achieve the decency target based on receiving additional funding from a successful ALMO inspection. Until this funding is secured, it is proposed to continue with the current major repairs programme funded from the Major Repairs Allowance and supported by some of the Council's other capital resources.

## **consultation**

- 6 The Strategy attached in Annex 1 is, at present, in draft format. It is proposed that staff, contractors, customers and members have the opportunity to comment and feed into the final document. Following receipt of comments and observations, the final document will become one of the Council's key service delivery documents.

## **financial implications**

- 7 Delivery of the works required would be managed and overseen by existing staff within the Capital Programme Team and undertaken by external contractors. As members will be aware, the Decent Homes Standard will only be achieved by accessing additional funding streams. A successful 'two star' ALMO inspection will allow this Council to access this funding. Members should be aware that a further reassessment of the delivery of Decent Homes will be required should the two star rating not be achieved.

## **timescale**

- 8 Progress on achieving the decent homes standard has been ongoing since 2002. The strategy highlights the required levels of finance and works from the date of the establishment of the ALMO up to and including 2010. Individual works programmes have not yet been developed. However, work will progress shortly in partnership with customers, repairs staff and contractors on addressing this.

## **RECOMMENDED**

- 1 Committee recognises the need to produce a Decent Home Strategy.
- 2 Committee instructs the Director of Housing Services to make any necessary alterations to the draft strategy following consultation.

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<b>Officer responsible for the report</b>	<b>Author of the report</b>
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**HOUSING SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**7 September 2005**

Report of the Director of Housing Services  
**HOUSING SERVICES VULNERABLE PERSONS STRATEGY**

**purpose of the report**

To seek Committee's approval of the proposed Vulnerable Persons Strategy for the Housing Services department as attached in Annex 2.

**background**

- 1 Supporting People is a partnership programme that was set up in April 2003 to monitor the quality of existing housing-related support services for vulnerable adults and to plan what needs to be done to meet their housing needs.
- 2 The document explains the Council's priorities and how we propose to achieve them. It gives direction to those who provide support and shows our partners where we can work together to achieve common aims.

**proposal**

- 3 'Vulnerable adults' describes people who, for a variety of reasons need extra support to live in the Community. The document provides a detailed analysis of existing service provision, identifies gaps in service provision and outlines the types of scheme developments and strategic direction for the future.
- 4 The Strategy will be published on Wear Valley District Council website under Supporting People.

**financial implications**

- 5 There are financial implications to the report. A growth bid to fund an additional Customer Services Officer in the Homeless Section will be applied for through the normal budget process.

**legal implications**

- 6 The Council has legal duties in this area covering equalities, community safety, and housing.

## **human resource implications**

- 7 The human resource implication would be in the provision of an additional Customer Services Officer to assist in the homeless section to include managing the emergency accommodation unit.

## **equalities implications**

- 8 There are equalities issues to this report particularly to minority groups such as Gypsies and Travellers, returning prisoners, disabled and people suffering with mental health problems.
- 9 Rigorous policies on equality and strong action against harassment are already in place. The problem of age discrimination relates to more planning for and commissioning of services, including housing. It is important that we continue to assess the need of all vulnerable client groups in order to protect their best interest.

## **conclusion**

- 10 Providing housing related support is important for many vulnerable people so they can continue to live independently in their own homes for longer periods of time.
- 11 A wide range of priorities is clearly outlined in the document. The validity of these priorities appears complimented by actions identified from the content of the overall strategy. It offers a detailed insight into procedures for further partnership development to meet the needs across the Wear Valley district.

## **RECOMMENDED**

- 1 Committee approves the proposed Housing Services Vulnerable Persons Strategy.

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**HOUSING SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**7 September 2005**

Report of the Director of Housing Services  
**HOUSING SERVICES DEPARTMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT FIRST QUARTER  
(APRIL – JUNE 2005)**

**purpose of the report**

To update members on performance in the Housing Services Department during the first three months of 2005-06.

**background**

- 1 As previously agreed, performance across a range of indicators is to be reported to committee on a quarterly basis. Communication of how the Housing Services Department is performing is an essential aspect of the previously agreed performance framework.
- 2 The report at Annex 3 is a detailed outline of our performance in June against a range of indicators. It also shows cumulative performance for the first three months together with plans on how we intend to improve performance. Targets have been developed in consultation with the Customer Panel and these are also shown.
- 3 The report at Annex 4 shows details of performance for each individual month, and highlights trends in performance across the period.

**results**

- 4 Generally, performance in the Housing Services Department is reasonable when measured against the indicators. We are on target (Green) or within 10% of target (Amber) in 17 of the 27 indicators. This equates to 63%. However there are 10 of the indicators (Red) in which we need to improve in order to achieve more satisfactory performance.
- 5 Groups of managers and officers are being developed to examine these failing indicators in more detail. Plans will be formulated to promote improvement.

**conclusion**

- 6 Performance management is a fundamental aspect of our service. It is now high on the agenda amongst management, staff and workforce. The measurement of performance indicators helps us to establish how well we are doing, and highlights those areas in which we need to concentrate our efforts for improvement.
  
- 7 Individual performance targets are currently being developed within the Personal Development Plans and these will be closely monitored. Improvement plans will be developed where performance is found to be unsatisfactory.

**RECOMMENDED**

- 1 Committee receive the report and endorse the higher profile that is placed upon performance within the Department.

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