

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

HOUSING COMMITTEE – 8 SEPTEMBER 2004

SERVICE IMPROVEMENT REPORT

Report by Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update members on activity and progress in relation to best value within the Housing Service in the last year and to recommend the Housing Continuous Improvement Plan 2004/2005.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Local Government Scotland Act 2003 places on local authorities duties, powers and responsibilities which include

- The duty to promote best value
- The power to advance well being
- Lead responsibility for community planning
- The duty to produce an annual public performance report
- Best value approach to trading accounts

- 2.2 To ensure that local authorities are meeting their responsibilities under the Act the Scottish Executive has given the Accounts Commission statutory responsibility to audit local authorities. The Accounts Commission has developed the New Best Value Audit Process to ensure the local authorities are meeting their responsibilities under the act. Every Council in Scotland will undertake the New Best Value Audit over the 3 year period 2004 to 2007.

- 2.3 In preparation for the New Best Value Audit a report was submitted to the Policy and Resources Committee on the 19 February 2004 requesting that each department submits a report detailing Best Value Activity over the preceding 12 months and proposals for Best Value Activity in the following year. This should include an update on the following areas

- The number of EFQM Pathway Assessments undertaken
- The number of Best Value Service Reviews undertaken
- Performance against statutory performance indicators
- Progress in implementing improvement action plans

3. IMPROVEMENT REPORT

This update report is structured to match the progress areas highlighted in paragraph 2.3 above.

4. EFQM PATHWAY ASSESSMENTS

- 4.1 The Housing EFQM Pathway Assessment was completed in March 2004 and will be reassessed during 2005.

5. BEST VALUE SERVICE REVIEW

- 5.1 The Housing Best Value Service Review is now underway and will be completed by January 2004.

6. STATUTORY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2003 / 2004

- 6.1 The six Housing Statutory Performance Indicators were reported for 2003/2004. A separate report detailing the performance in relation to the Statutory Performance Indicators collected in 2003 / 2004 is on the agenda for this meeting. There is no change in the detail of the six Statutory Performance Indicators to be reported for 2004 / 2005.

7. HOUSING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PLAN

- 7.1 The Annual Service Plan was submitted to the Housing Committee on 15 November 2003. The plan sets out the aims, objectives and actions for the Housing Service for 2003 / 2004.
- 7.2 Progress on service achievements is set out in Appendix 1 of this report which also includes the objectives for 2004 / 2005. 70% of the actions for 2003 / 2004 were achieved within the planned timescale and the balance outstanding have been reprioritised in the light of operational requirements and following the recent departmental restructure. This plan is reviewed and updated annually to measure achievements against the plan and review and refocus the aims and objectives for 2004 / 2005. The outstanding and rescheduled items from 2003 / 2004 and the new additional items have been included into the Continuous Improvement Plan 2004 / 2005.

8. FINANCIAL / LEGAL / POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The proposed Housing Continuous Improvement Plan enables the Council to deliver its obligations under the Local Government Scotland Act 2003.
- 8.2 Any additional cost implications arising from the Continuous Improvement Plan will be reported to Committee as required.

9. CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1 Through the adoption and implementation of the service improvement activities above, the Housing Service has shown commitment to delivering quality and value for money services, in accordance with the Council's aims and objectives as set out within the Community Plan and the Local Housing Strategy.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 It is recommended that Members:

- (i) note the progress made in delivering the Annual Service Plan for 2003/2004.
- (i) approve the Housing Continuous Improvement Plan 2004 / 2005.
- (iii) otherwise note the content of the report.

William Stafford
Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

18 August 2004

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 1. Housing Committee 5 November 2003
Report on Annual Service Plan 2003 / 2004**
- 2. Policy and Resources Committee 19 February 2004
Local Government Scotland Act, 2003 – Review of the Council's Best Value Arrangements**
- 3. Housing Committee 8 September 2004
Report on Statutory Performance Indicators 2003 / 2004**

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers listed above or requiring further information should telephone 01563 57(6678) and ask for Graham Winning.

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**EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL
HOUSING**

Continuous Improvement Plan 2004 / 2005

HOUSING MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Allocations

Context: This service includes waiting list administration, allocations, nominations, operation of the national mobility scheme and void management

NUMBER	OBJECTIVE	LEAD OFFICER	SUCCESS CRITERIA	ACHIEVED
A1	To ensure that the allocations policy and procedures comply with legislative requirements, positively contribute to the prevention of homelessness and ensure equality of access	Operations Manager	Allocations Policy reviewed and approved by Housing Committee.	Yes
A2	To ensure that we have clear relet standards for all our stock, which meet all relevant statutory requirements and reflect good practice in relation to standards of safety and security.	Operations Manager	Lettable Standards introduced for all Council housing in East Ayrshire.	Yes
A3	To support new council tenants and promote sustainable tenancies in East Ayrshire.	Operations Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment procedures in place to determine housing support needs • Introduction of new tenant starter packs 	Yes Yes

NUMBER	OBJECTIVE	LEAD OFFICER	SUCCESS CRITERIA	ACHIEVED
A4	To improve quality of advice and information given to housing applicants.	Policy Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing Options Guide up-dated Introduce information systems analysing re-let trends within areas. 	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>
A5	To ensure that our housing list is accurate and up to-date.	Operations Manager	Initiate “rolling” review of the waiting list applicants.	Yes
A6	To improve marketing of available empty properties for let.	Operations Manager	10% reduction in routine voids between 2002/2003 and 2003/2004.	Yes
A7	To work in partnership with other housing providers to ease access to public sector housing in East Ayrshire and improve choice for housing applicants.	Policy Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure Scottish Executive funding for development of Common Housing Register. Develop Choice Based Letting scheme with partner RSL. Review and update all nomination agreements with partner RSL’s. 	<p>Yes</p> <p>Ongoing Links to A10</p> <p>Yes</p>

Additional objectives for 2004 / 05

NUMBER	OBJECTIVE	LEAD OFFICER	SUCCESS CRITERIA	ACHIEVED
A8	To improve marketing of available empty properties for let.	Operations Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10% reduction in routine voids between 2003/2004 and 2004/2005. Percentage of void rent loss to be reduced by 5% Reduce percentage of re-lets taking over 4 weeks by 10% 	
A9	To ensure current policy reflects changing trends in demand	Operations Manager	Review allocations policy	
A10	To maximize housing options for	Policy	Develop a common housing register in	

	applicants	Manager	conjunction with RSLs by 2006	
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Tenancy and Estate Management

Context: services provided include estate management, Better Neighborhood Funding, Rent arrears, neighbour disputes

NUMBER	OBJECTIVE	LEAD OFFICER	SUCCESS CRITERIA	ACHIEVED
EM1	To contribute to the development of an anti-social behaviour strategy for East Ayrshire with community planning partners.	Head of Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of anti-social behaviour strategy. • Introduction of acceptable behaviour contracts • Development of existing joint mediation scheme with South Ayrshire Council. • Adoption of joint information sharing protocol with Strathclyde Police. • Introduction of new IT based system for managing neighbour disputes. 	<p>Ongoing by March 05</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>
EM2	To maximise rental income and reduce current and former tenants rent arrears.	Operations Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch of welfare benefit take up campaign • Introduction of new IT based system for management of former tenants arrears. • Introduction of new IT based system for management of lock up arrears. 	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Ongoing by Dec 04</p>
EM3	To improve the environment within council estates and promote sustainable neighbourhoods.	Operations Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of ground maintenance arrangements. • Introduction of estate management plans. • Delivery of BNSF projects objectives. • Facilitate peer review of estate management services within East Ayrshire 	<p>Ongoing by Dec 04</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Ongoing by Dec 04</p>
EM4	To implement the terms of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 relative to secure and short secure tenancies.	Policy Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All existing tenants signed to the Scottish Secure Tenancy • Introduction of Short Scottish Secure Tenancy arrangements. 	<p>Ongoing 90% complete</p> <p>Yes</p>

Additional objectives for 2004 / 05

NUMBER	OBJECTIVE	LEAD OFFICER	SUCCESS CRITERIA	ACHIEVED
EM5	To promote BSSAC objectives	Operations Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a community warden service • Develop an anti-social behavior strategy • Introduce a mediation service across all tenures • Introduce an anti-social behavior investigation service across all tenures 	
EM6	To provide regular information to tenants on the status of rent accounts	Operations Manager & Financial Controller	Produce rent balance statements	
EM7	To produce a rent policy that accurately reflects levels of demand for housing	Policy Manager	Submit recommendations to Committee on a new rent setting policy	
EM8	To maximize rental income	Operations Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce arrears as a percentage of rent by 10% • Reduce percentage of tenants owing over 13 weeks rent by 5% 	

Homelessness

Context Services provided include operation of the Homelessness Persons Legislation, management of temporary accommodation and supported tenancies

NUMBER	OBJECTIVE	LEAD OFFICER	SUCCESS CRITERIA	ACHIEVED
H1	To implement the requirements of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and the Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003.	Homeless Strategy and Services Manager	Development and implementation of East Ayrshire's Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan as approved by Housing Committee.	Ongoing 85% Complete

Additional objectives for 2004 / 05

NUMBER	OBJECTIVE	LEAD OFFICER	SUCCESS CRITERIA	ACHIEVED
H2	To establish a system for the provision of furniture to support vulnerable people	Homeless Strategy and Services Manager	Implementation of a furniture grant scheme	
H3	To implement the Homelessness Strategy local outcome agreement 2004 / 2005	Homeless Strategy and Services Manager	Implementation of the action plan as approved by committee	

Repairs

Context: Services provided include response repairs, planned maintenance, and stock improvement

NUMBER	OBJECTIVE	LEAD OFFICER	SUCCESS CRITERIA	ACHIEVED
R1	To review measured term maintenance contract options for implementation by June 2004.	Director of Homes and Technical Services	New contract proposals submitted for P & R Committee approval within agreed procurement timetable.	Yes
R2	To introduce interim measured term maintenance contracts from June 2003.	Head of Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-negotiation of existing term maintenance contracts. • Re-tendering of specialist trade contracts. 	Yes Yes
R3	To develop a structured approach for preventative and planned maintenance for the council public buildings portfolio and Council housing stock.	Operations Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New planned maintenance programmes for gutters, stair lighting and door entry in housing stock. • Introduction of new IT based system for managing planned maintenance programmes. 	Yes Ongoing by Dec 04
R4	To review current partnering arrangements relative to HRA capital programme.	Senior Project Planning Officer	Review existing service level agreements.	Yes
R5	To review communication processes supporting the HRA capital programme.	Policy Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop protocol for the notification of medical needs in modernisation projects. • Develop protocol for the notification of capital programme to tenants and other occupants. 	Yes Yes
R6	To improve delivery of day to day repairs service.	Operations Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct customer satisfaction survey. • Introduce pilot repairs by appointment system. 	Yes Ongoing by March 05

NUMBER	OBJECTIVE	LEAD OFFICER	SUCCESS CRITERIA	ACHIEVED
R7	To introduce arrangements for the management of asbestos in accordance with the Council's Asbestos Strategy.	Asbestos Coordinator	Update asbestos register for council house stock.	Ongoing 15% Complete
R8	To improve quality of council housing stock.	Senior Project Planning Officer	Delivery of the approved housing capital programme within agreed budgets.	Yes

Additional objectives for 2004 / 05

NUMBER	OBJECTIVE	LEAD OFFICER	SUCCESS CRITERIA	ACHIEVED
R9	To improve repairs performance	Operations Manager Head of Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve repairs performance by 5% • Review repairs service with tenant input 	

POLICY AND STRATEGY

Context: Services provided include strategic planning, monitoring and reviewing performance, community care, supporting people, Government initiatives, commissioning of research

NUMBER	OBJECTIVE	LEAD OFFICER	SUCCESS CRITERIA	ACHIEVED
P01	To implement the Supporting People initiative in East Ayrshire.	Head of Housing	Delivery of the Supporting People Strategy and associated action plan approved by Housing Committee.	Yes
P02	To ensure that our stock meets the proposed Scottish Housing Quality Standard.	Head of Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment strategy to meet Housing Quality standards developed within the Local Housing Strategy. Development of a rent setting policy which takes account of affordability and sets out a clear rationale for the rent structures. Application of prudential borrowing code. Funding secured from Communities Scotland for stock options appraisal. 	Ongoing by March 05 Ongoing By March 05 Yes Yes
P03	To implement the requirements of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 relative to the new arrangements for private sector housing grants.	Senior Project Planning Officer	Repairs and improvement grants procedures updated and introduced from October 2003.	Yes
P04	To develop a Local Housing Strategy for East Ayrshire.	Policy Manager	Local Housing Strategy approved and submitted to Ministers by March 2004.	Yes
P05	To develop a fuel poverty strategy for East Ayrshire.	Policy Manager/ Principal Engineer	Fuel poverty strategy approved and submitted to Minister by March 2004.	Ongoing by Nov 04
P06	To direct strategic housing investment priorities to meet identified housing needs.	Policy Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing development programme approved by Housing Committee. Transfer of responsibility for the management of development funding from Communities Scotland to the Council. 	Yes Ongoing by April 05

NUMBER	OBJECTIVE	LEAD OFFICER	SUCCESS CRITERIA	ACHIEVED
P07	To contribute to the development, implementation and the monitoring of community care and joint future planning processes.	Policy Manager	Local housing strategy supports strategic priorities detailed in community care planning, supporting people strategy and joint future planning agreement.	Yes
P08	To implement the East Ayrshire Tenants Participation Strategy.	Policy Manager	Delivery of the strategy and associated action plan as approved by Housing Committee.	Ongoing 90% complete
P09	To identify and address training needs within the department.	Head of Housing	Departmental training plan developed based on outcomes of EAGER assessments.	Yes
P10	To review the service performance management system to ensure compliance with requirements of Local Government in Scotland Act 2003.	Head of Housing	Production of framework for analysing, reviewing and reporting on service performance.	Ongoing by Dec 04

NUMBER	OBJECTIVE	LEAD OFFICER	SUCCESS CRITERIA	ACHIEVED
P11	To maintain Best Value and value for money within Housing	Head of Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a housing service review • Complete a housing stock options appraisal • Implement a review framework 	
P12	To deliver the initial objectives of the LHS	Head of Housing	Review 1 st year of the local housing strategy	
P13	To develop an investment plan to ensure compliance with SHQS	Head of Housing	Develop a service delivery plan to meet the Scottish housing quality standard	
P14	To regenerate areas of low demand	Head of Housing	Produce development briefs for initiative areas	