

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

HOUSING COMMITTEE – 7 SEPTEMBER 2005

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 Housing in the last year.

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 East Ayrshire Council will be subject to Best Value Audit at the end of 2005.

- 2.3 In preparation for the 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. BEST VALUE ACTIVITY IN HOUSING

3.1 EFQM Pathway Assessments

The Housing EFQM Pathway Assessment was completed in March 2004 and was reassessed in February 2005

3.2 Best Value Service Review

The Housing Best Value Service Review 2005 was completed in March 2005 and the outcomes reported to a Special Meeting of the Housing Committee

held on 20 April 2005. Members approved a series of proposals to re-align the service to meet the challenges identified by the review and implementation of these changes is now well underway.

3.3 Statutory Performance Indicators 2003/2004

The six Housing Statutory Performance Indicators were reported for 2004 /2005. A separate report detailing the performance in relation to the Statutory Performance Indicators collected in 2004 / 2005 is on the agenda for this meeting. A report detailing the half year Statutory Performance Indicators collected between April and September 2005 will be reported to Committee in due course. There is no change to five of the six Statutory Performance Indicators to be reported for 2005 / 2006. However, Statutory Performance Indicator 3 - Managing Tenancy Changes will change to include a return examining re-let times for difficult to let stock.

4. HOUSING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PLAN

4.1 At the meeting held on 8 September 2004, members of this Committee approved the Continuous Improvement Plan 2004 / 2005 for the Housing Service. Progress on service achievements against those agreed objectives is set out in Appendix 1 of this report. 61 of the 71 objectives for 2004 / 2005 were fully or partly achieved within the planned timescale and the balance outstanding have been reprioritised in light of operational requirements following the recent Best Value Service Review and the Housing Stock Option Appraisal.

4.2 Following the Council's decision to improve the quality of the Council's housing stock to the new Scottish Housing Quality Standard by 2015 based on a strategy of stock retention, work is now underway to develop and produce a business plan for Housing which will set out detailed proposals on how the service will meet the Council's objectives as set out within the Community Plan and LHS and deliver services to meet the needs of Best Value and drive forward performance and continuous improvement.

4.3 As part of this process, and to complement similar discussions with Tenants Groups, it is proposed to hold a planning day for all Housing staff in late October to enable them to contribute to and influence the business plan. Their contribution will help the plan focus on making services better for the people who use them, while clearly linking budgets and expenditure to agreed priorities.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Anticipated costs arising from the Continuous Improvement Plan and the business planning process will be managed within existing housing budgets.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The proposed Housing Continuous Improvement Plan enables the Council to deliver its obligations under the Local Government Scotland Act 2003.

7. CONCLUSIONS

7.1 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 aims and objectives detailed in the Community Plan and the Local Housing Strategy.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) note progress made in delivering service plan objectives during 2004/2005;
- (ii) note that a business plan for Housing will be submitted to a future meeting for members approval;
- (iii) authorise the Head of Housing to make the necessary arrangements for the business planning event for Housing staff; and
- (iv) note the contents of this report.

William Stafford
Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

CMCA/LA

17 August 2005

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 1. Policy and resources Committee 19 February 2004
Local Government Scotland Act, 2003 – Review of the Council's Best Value Arrangements
- 2. Housing Committee 26 January 2005
Report on Performance Indicators 1 April to 30 September 2004
- 3. Housing Committee September 2005
Report on Statutory Performance Indicators 2004 / 2005
Service Improvement Report including the Housing Continuous Improvement Plan 2005 / 2006

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers listed above should telephone 01563 57(6617) and ask for Joe Cassidy

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**EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL
HOUSING**

Continuous Improvement Plan 2004/2005 – Progress Report

This plan includes actions completed in 2005/06 & previous actions still incomplete by June 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 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% between 2003/2004 and 2004/2005. • Reduce percentage of re-lets taking over 4 weeks by 10% between 2003/2004 and 2004/2005. 	<p>Performance Improvement 4.5% reduction achieved</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p>
A2	To ensure current policy reflects changing trends in demand	Operations Manager	Review allocations policy	Yes
A3	To maximize housing options for applicants	Policy Manager	Develop a common housing register in conjunction with RSLs by 2006	Ongoing April 06

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	Development of anti-social behaviour strategy.	Yes
EM2	To maximise rental income and reduce current and former tenants rent arrears.	Operations Manager	Introduction of new IT based system for management of lock up arrears.	Ongoing Dec 05
EM3	To improve the environment within council estates and promote sustainable neighbourhoods.	Operations Manager	Facilitate peer review of estate management services within East Ayrshire	Yes
EM4	To implement the terms of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 relative to secure and short secure tenancies.	Policy Manager	All existing tenants signed to the Scottish Secure Tenancy	Yes
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 	Yes Yes Yes Yes
EM6	To provide regular information to tenants on the status of rent accounts	Operations Manager & Financial Controller	Produce rent balance statements	Yes
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	Ongoing Dec 05

EM8	To maximize rental income	Operations Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce arrears as a percentage of rent by 10% between 03/04 and 04/05 • Reduce percentage of tenants owing over 13 weeks rent by 5% between 03/04 and 04/05 	<p>Performance Improvement 6.1% reduction achieved</p> <p>Yes</p>
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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.	Yes
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	Yes
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	Yes

Repairs

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

NUMBER	OBJECTIVE	LEAD OFFICER	SUCCESS CRITERIA	ACHIEVED
R1	To develop a structured approach for preventative and planned maintenance for the council public buildings portfolio and Council housing stock.	Policy Manager	Introduction of new IT based system for managing SDP.	Ongoing March 06
R2	To improve delivery of day to day repairs service.	Operations Manager	Introduce pilot repairs by appointment system.	Ongoing March 06
R3	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.	Yes
R4	To improve quality of council housing stock.	Senior Project Planning Officer	Delivery of the approved housing capital programme within agreed budgets.	Yes
R5	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 	Ongoing April 06 Yes

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
PS1	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. 	<p>Yes</p> <p>Ongoing Dec 05</p>
PS2	To develop a fuel poverty strategy for East Ayrshire.	Policy Manager/ Principal Engineer	Fuel poverty strategy approved and submitted to Minister by March 2004.	Yes
PS3	To direct strategic housing investment priorities to meet identified housing needs.	Policy Manager	Housing development programme approved by Housing Committee.	Yes
PS4	To implement the East Ayrshire Tenants Participation Strategy.	Policy Manager	Delivery of the strategy and associated action plan as approved by Housing Committee.	Yes
PS5	To review the service performance management system to ensure compliance with requirements of LGSA 2003.	Head of Housing	Production of framework for analysing, reviewing and reporting on service performance.	Ongoing Dec 05
PS6	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 	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>
PS7	To deliver the initial objectives of the LHS	Head of Housing	Review 1 st year of the local housing strategy	Yes
PS8	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	Yes

PS9	To regenerate areas of low demand	Head of Housing	Produce development briefs for initiative areas	Ongoing Sept 06
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