

STRATEGIC HOUSING
SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN
2008-09



Inspection Improvement Plan

<u>Inspection Recommendation</u>	<u>Responsible Officer (s)</u>	<u>Milestones</u>	<u>Progress</u>	<u>Performance Indicator</u>
<p>R1 Strengthen the focus on customers</p> <p>Improving access to services by assessing how well the current arrangements meet customer needs, taking customers' views into account and seeking to meet identified needs.</p>	<p>Julie Cope Louise Tandy David Chaplin</p>	<p>Progress required by Q1 08/09</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and update the Strategic Housing section of the Council's web-site <p>Progress required by Q2 08/09</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular engagement with Strategic Housing Customer Focus Group • Consult the customer focus group on access arrangements and information leaflets. <p>Progress required by Q4 08/09</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake a review of access to services including outreach provision, incorporating the views of customers and make recommendations that meet identified needs 	<p>The Strategic Housing section of the web-site is reviewed bi-monthly.</p> <p>A multi-agency customer focus group has been established. The next meeting will take place in Quarter 4.</p> <p>Feedback on access to services and information leaflets will be discussed at the meeting in Quarter 4.</p> <p>A full review will take place following the next group meeting.</p>	<p>SHLP 24 – Monitor success in meeting the Strategic Housing Service Improvement Plan milestones</p>

Involving customers in determining service standards and monitoring performance against these.	Julie Cope Louise Tandy David Chaplin	Progress required by Q4 08/09 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Level Agreement reviewed in respect of B&B establishments. • Revise service standards following feedback from partners and customers. 	<p>Reviewed on an Annual Basis by the Temporary Accommodation Officer. Currently there are a total of 7 establishments who have signed a SLA with the Authority.</p> <p>Service standards are in place for each service area. Service Level Agreements are currently in the process of being reviewed (commenced November 2008).</p>	SHLP 24 – Monitor success in meeting the Strategic Housing Service Improvement Plan milestones
Gathering customer feedback across all aspects of the service and using this to improve services.	Julie Cope Louise Tandy David Chaplin	Progress required by Q1 08/09 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private Sector Housing team to establish and update a central customer profile database • Report service improvement outcomes of customer feedback, profile and complaints to the Head of Service and Cabinet Leader 	<p>JC/LT reviewed Customer Satisfaction surveys. Referred to Consultation Officer (PR & Marketing) for feedback to meet KLOE/Audit Commission recommendations and report back to DC.</p> <p>Private sector housing team will gather and monitor the customer feedback information that is received onto a central database and report to Head of Service and Cabinet Leader.</p>	SHLP 24 – Monitor success in meeting the Strategic Housing Service Improvement Plan milestones
Continuing to work in partnership towards significantly improving	David Chaplin	Progress required by Q1 08/09 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a monitoring and review 	Continuing review of waiting times for	LPI – The

<p>waiting times for customers needing adaptation work, ensuring that all available budgets are spent.</p>		<p>process to assess the outcomes of the DFG service including waiting times and the quality of life and independent living for residents.</p> <p>Progress required by Q3 08/09</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree reviewed Service Level Agreement with Spirita Care & Repair • Agree joint Service Level Agreement between the Council and County Council on OT waiting times for DFG clients 	<p>DFG activity with partners to encourage the smooth processing of work applications. All applications made to Cannock Chase are dealt with within the 6 month period allowed by the legislation, most within 28 days.</p> <p>LPI April to November 2008 – grants approved - 62</p> <p>Completed – 2007 and in operation</p> <p>Further discussion is being undertaken to try to reach an agreement, SCC Legal service unhappy with concept of SLA and want to have a contract, this is inappropriate for the situation as the work is mandatory and the purpose of the SLA was to define terms of activity. Work will have to be done with SCC Social Care & Health to address means of providing an equivalent agreement. On 29/09/08 DC met with Staffs CC to again consider the possibility of developing an agreement. Further work will be undertaken during the Autumn/Winter 2008/09 to define priorities to work towards an effective service. Member</p>	<p>number of DFGs given in the year. Target is 62. With spend of £481,000 (includes 40% CCDC element)</p> <p>Achieved</p>
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R2 Strengthen the Council's approach to diversity				
Providing clear leadership at Member and Senior Management level to demonstrate a commitment to diversity and to ensure that work	Deputy Chief Executive Mike Edmonds Anne Bird	<p>Progress required by Q3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete Corporate and Service area Self-Assessment against Level 3 and Level 4 of the Equality Standard. 	Led by members of the Equality and Diversity PAT. Currently at Level 2 and assessing implications/work	

to take forward diversity is fully supported and progress monitored			involved to reach Level 3.	
<p>Developing comprehensive customer profile information and using this to ensure that services are appropriately designed and delivered to respond to customers needs.</p> <p>Comprehensively monitor services by diverse needs and use the information to improve services and show that services are being delivered fairly to all groups.</p>	<p>Julie Cope Louise Tandy David Chaplin</p>	<p>Progress required by Q1 08/09</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private Sector Housing team to establish and update a central customer profile database Report service improvement outcomes of customer feedback, profile and complaints to the Head of Service and Cabinet Leader 	<p>JC/LT reviewed Customer Satisfaction surveys. Referred to Consultation Officer (PR & Marketing) for feedback to meet KLOE/Audit Commission recommendations and report back to DC.</p> <p>Private sector housing team will gather and monitor the customer feedback information that is received onto a central database and report to Head of Service.</p>	<p>SHLP 24 – Monitor success in meeting the Strategic Housing Service Improvement Plan milestones</p>
<i>R3 Strengthen the strategic approach to housing</i>				
Establishing robust monitoring arrangements to assess that the strategic approaches adopted are delivering the intended outcomes	<p>Julie Cope Louise Tandy David Chaplin</p>	<p>Progress required by Q1 08/09</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cabinet approval of Private Sector Housing Strategy 2008-2011 Agree SLA with Hestia to ensure priorities of the Affordable Warmth Strategy 2007-2012 are met Monitor and review delivery of the Housing Strategy Action Plan 	<p>Approved in June 2008.</p> <p>Agreed in June 2008.</p> <p>Monitored by Strategic Housing Group and linked to the Service Improvement Plan.</p>	<p>NI 187 – Tackling Fuel Poverty (awaiting baseline date to enable target to be set)</p> <p>SHLP 24 – Monitor success</p>

		<p>Progress required by Q2 08/09</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet approval of Southern Staffordshire and North Warwickshire Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment • Update and review key local housing data 	<p>Approved with reservations in July 2008.</p> <p>Approval of C3 Strategic Housing Market Assessment – July 2008</p> <p>Local housing market assessments are carried out twice a year to update local housing data.</p>	<p>in meeting the Strategic Housing Service Improvement Plan milestones</p>
R4 Make best use of existing housing				
<p>Identifying options and working with partners to provide alternative forms of temporary accommodation to avoid the use of Bed and Breakfast, seeking to eliminate its use in accordance with government targets.</p>	<p>Julie Cope Louise Tandy</p>	<p>Progress On-Going</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To continue to access up to 6 temporary accommodation units from Council stock in line with Temporary Accommodation agreement in place 	<p>On-going. 4a Festival Court also available. When repairs are completed to be utilized as a unit of temporary accommodation to reduce reliance on B&B accommodation .To investigate the possibility of taking over the management of 3 additional units from Council stock. Discussion to be arranged with tenancy services in Q4.</p> <p>NII56 - Performance reported Qtrly , Qtr 1 reported 2 households in T/A. The target is 4. Qtr 2 – reported 2 households in T/A</p>	<p>NI156 – Number of households living in temporary accommodation</p> <p>BVPI 183a – Average length of stay in B&B</p> <p>BVPI 183b – Average length of stay in hostels</p>

		<p>Progress required by Q2 08/09</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To investigate the option of securing the use of private sector accommodation. To arrange meeting with Local Estate Agent/s. To retain the option of liaising with RSL's with a view to accessing accommodation for use as temporary accommodation 	<p>BVPI 183a - Performance Q3 is 1.83 weeks. Target is 6 weeks. BVPI 183b – Performance (mthly) December reported 0, Target 0, Target met.</p> <p>Meeting took place on 25/06/08. Good demand for PS properties locally due to downturn in housing market sales, therefore unlikely that landlords will consider homeless households given present economic conditions. Agents interested in attending a future meeting and also attended the Landlord Forum. Further meeting to take place during Q4 with Estate Agents.</p> <p>Meeting in October with Midland Heart HA who said they would look towards finding a suitable property.</p>	
Gathering and analysing performance information that can clearly demonstrate the impact that homelessness prevention activities are having, and in particular to understand the relationship between the level of acceptances and the housing	Julie Cope Louise Tandy	<p>Progress required by Q2 08/09</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A database of all customers of the Housing Options Service has been established to track outcomes of applicants not accepted as homeless. <p>Progress On-going</p>	<p>Report outcomes to bi-monthly Strategic Housing Group BVPI 213 – Performance April to October 2008 is 2.8. Target 3.25. (calculation = No of cases/No of households).</p>	<p>BVPI213 – Housing advice service resolved homelessness. Target of 3.25</p>

<p>outcomes for those households not accepted as homeless.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Success of homeless prevention initiatives monitored and reported on a quarterly basis. • The service implications of prevention outcome reviews are reported to the Head of Service and Cabinet Leader. <p>Progress required by Q1 08/09</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To commence <i>pilot</i> fast track money advice project with CAB (Rugeley) 01/06/08 	<p>April to October 2008 – 112 cases where homelessness was prevented. This is a significant improvement on April to October 2007 when 30 cases were prevented from becoming homeless.</p> <p>Bi-monthly Strategic Housing Group monitors homelessness information, including those not accepted as homeless. Regular meetings are now being held with the Portfolio Holder for Housing where homelessness is discussed.</p> <p>BVPI 214 – Reported yearly (calculated using total of Qtr1 – Q4) April to October 2008 – no reported cases of repeat homelessness. Target met.</p> <p>Partnership agreement with CAB to help reduce homelessness through re-possession due to bad debt. To review in 3months. June to August 08 – 5 cases referred (1 ongoing, 2 homelessness prevented, 2 financial situation unsustainable).</p>	<p>BVPI 214 – Statutory homelessness – repeat homelessness. Target of 2.55</p>
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Implementing the private sector housing strategy to provide a comprehensive approach to delivering the service and increasing the numbers of decent homes in the private sector for vulnerable households.	David Chaplin Julie Cope	<p>Progress required by Q1 08/09</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approval of Private Sector Housing Strategy 2007-2010 <p>Progress required by Q2 08/09</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To review property accreditation scheme 	<p>Private Sector Housing Strategy approved by Cabinet in June 2008. LPI number of requests for assistance for Housing Act Part 1 – April to October 2008 – 235</p> <p>Further work is being carried out to review the scheme and a meeting of the working group will be arranged in Q4. The Rugg report November 2008 suggests that one way forward would be for all landlords to be accredited before they could be landlords.</p> <p>Landlord Forum held 15th July. Next</p>	<p>LPI – number of requests for assistance for Hsg Act Part 1 activity.</p> <p>SHLPI19 – Hold 2 landlord forums per year</p> <p>SHLPI20 –</p>

		<p>Progress required by Q3 08/09</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the possibility of a coordinated approach to deal with empty properties with other local authorities <p>Progress required by Q4 08/09</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To have encouraged owners of empty properties to bring them back into use through monitoring, advice and support • Prioritise housing renewal towards properties in the worst condition first and assist vulnerable owners by means of Healthy Homes grant or loan to meet the Decent Homes Standard 	<p>Forum planned for Qtr 4.</p> <p>Begin discussions with neighbouring authorities to assess if this is a viable option by April 2009.</p> <p>Bring 15 units back into use with Council intervention. LPI - April to October 2008 – 11 units</p> <p>New grant scheme commenced June 2008 to offer 40 grant packages to properties where vulnerable groups have been identified in occupation and where either Decent Homes or Housing Act 2004 matters occur. LPI –July to October 2008 applications - 23</p> <p>Work to commence – November 2008 on integration of the Kick Start scheme into Cannock Chase. The Regional Assembly are supporting the Kick Start scheme to provide capital funding for improvements in the private sector in future years rather than direct support to local authorities. This Council will have to be part of the West Midlands scheme</p>	<p>Undertake a monthly mail shot to all empty properties throughout the District</p> <p>LPI – Empty property units returned to use by intervention of the Council. Target of 15 properties during 2008/09.</p> <p>LPI – Number of applications for Healthy Homes Grants – Target of 40</p>
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			to enable them to provide support to local private residents. Meeting to be held to discuss a joint process with South Staffs, Lichfield Cannock and Tamworth for the Kick Start scheme rather than one scheme for each authority – economies of scale are suggested as a benefit.	
R5 Enable the provision of more housing				
Increasing the number of affordable homes delivered to meet agreed targets and establishing robust monitoring arrangements to assess progress and ensure that targets are met	Louise Tandy	<p>Progress required by Q1 08/09</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to work with planners, Housing Associations and the Housing Corporation to exploit all opportunities to build new affordable housing throughout the District. Provide supporting information to any bids made through the Housing Corporation Continuous Market Engagement Clinics. Affordable Housing Monitoring database is regularly updated and progress reported. 	<p>The Council's Cherry Tree Road and Cornwall Road sites are being developed by South Staffordshire Housing Association and are due to start on site in January 2009 providing 20 family homes in total.</p> <p>Supporting information for developments is provided to the Housing Corporation.</p> <p>Affordable housing starts and completions are monitored quarterly and reported to Affordable Housing Group and Strategic Housing Group. There were 86 affordable units provided in the District during 07/08.</p>	<p>NI155 – Number of affordable homes delivered (gross). CCDC target of 50 for 2008/09.</p> <p>SHLP10 – Provide 100 new affordable housing units in the District per annum by 2010/11</p>

		<p>Progress required by Q1 08/09</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin to utilise Council funding for subsidising new affordable housing. 	<p>June 08 Cabinet approved the use of £1.5m to support the purchase of Existing Satisfactory Dwellings with partner RSLs during 2008-2010 to increase the affordable housing stock. To date, SSHA have made a successful bid to the Hsg Corp to purchase 15 properties. A further 37 via Waterloo and BJHA have yet to receive funding confirmation from the Housing Corp.</p>	
R6 Improve value for money and integrate it into working practices				
<p>Establishing cost information across all the strategic housing service functions and comparing these, along with performance, with appropriate comparator authorities to assess value for money and identify areas for improvement.</p>	<p>Julie Cope Louise Tandy David Chaplin</p>	<p>Progress required by Q2 08/09</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collate a breakdown of all service costs • Identify appropriate benchmarking comparators <p>Progress required for Q3 08/09</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review costs and service performance against comparator authorities to assess VFM and highlight areas for improvement. 	<p>Tamworth BC is leading on a VFM exercise with other Staffordshire LAs. A meeting was held in July and a further meeting is scheduled for September. Initial areas identified for benchmarking are temporary accommodation, affordable housing and bringing empty properties back into use. Tamworth are seeking guidance on developing a model to work from. Proposal from HQN to assist with this work is currently being assessed.</p>	<p>SHLP24 – Monitor success in meeting the Strategic Housing Service Improvement Plan milestones</p>

At a corporate level develop a strategic framework for value for money to ensure a systematic approach, and help embed value for money as a way of working in the organisation.	Bob Kean Judith Aupers	Progress required by Q4 08/09 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic Housing is assessed under the corporate strategic framework for VFM, which includes findings of review of costs and service performance against comparator authorities. 	Strategic Housing to be assessed following resolution of Manager post.	SHLP24 – Monitor success in meeting the Strategic Housing Service Improvement Plan milestones
<i>R7 Strengthen improvement planning and performance management</i>				
Adopting a comprehensive approach to improvement planning using a variety of means to identify areas to improve including customer feedback and comparison information from other organisations.	Julie Cope Louise Tandy David Chaplin	Progress required by Q1 08/09 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A SMART Strategic Housing Improvement Plan 2008/09, which incorporates the Inspection Improvement Plan and the Housing Strategy Action Plan along with improvements identified through customer feedback or benchmarking. 	A SMART Strategic Housing Improvement Plan 2008/09 has been produced and is monitored through Strategic Housing Group.	SHLP24 – Monitor success in meeting the Strategic Housing Service Improvement Plan milestones Target – 8 (Key changes resulting from the Improvement Plan (April-December) are: -Commencement of money advice project with CAB - Approval of Private Sector

				Housing Strategy - Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment - Approval of C3 Strategic Housing Market Assessment - Use of council funding to subsidise new affordable housing - Service Level Agreement with Hestia - Implementation of grant scheme to assist vulnerable people to meet the Decent Homes Standard
Making full use of the performance management framework to ensure that performance for key service areas is appropriately reported on and escalated as necessary, and that timely action is taken to address any performance issues.	Julie Cope Louise Tandy David Chaplin	Progress required by Q1 08/09 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All key services have appropriate performance targets and monitoring in place. 	Performance targets have been identified and are part of the Corporate performance management framework.	SHLP24 – Monitor success in meeting the Strategic Housing Service Improvement Plan milestones

R8 Strengthen capacity in the service				
Assessing the capacity of the strategic housing service to ensure that it is sufficient to deliver and sustain the planned service improvements.	Head of Service for Strategic Housing	<p>Progress required by Q4 08/09</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of capacity of Strategic Housing section to deliver the statutory duties, Housing Strategy Action Plan and Inspection Improvement Plan incorporating reviews of VFM, performance partnerships, training and the actions within the Strategic Housing Service Improvement Plan. 	Assessment of capacity will be undertaken on resolution of the vacant Manager post.	SHLP24 – Monitor success in meeting the Strategic Housing Service Improvement Plan milestones
Evaluating the outcomes of partnership working to assess the contribution and added value made to the delivery of services.	Julie Cope Louise Tandy Head of Strategic Housing	<p>Progress required by Q2 08/09</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a review of all current partnerships to assess value for money. Head of Planning & Regeneration will evaluate the outcomes of partnership reviews and recommend to withdraw from those that do not increase capacity to deliver or add value or improve efficiency. 	An assessment will be carried out of partnerships based on the model developed through the Safe As Houses scheme. JC/LT meeting in January 2009.	SHLP24 – Monitor success in meeting the Strategic Housing Service Improvement Plan milestones
Ensure that training and development is being effectively planned and used to support the	Julie Cope Louise Tandy David Chaplin	<p>Progress required by Q2 08/09</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce and implement a Strategic Housing Training Plan linked to 	Training Plan completed November 2008. Revised future training plan to	SHLP24 – Monitor success in meeting the

skills needed to effectively deliver services.		delivery of milestones within the Strategic Housing Service Improvement Plan.	be established for 2009/10.	Strategic Housing Service Improvement Plan milestones
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