

**Meeting of the Executive Members for
Housing and Adult Social Services and
Advisory Panel**

4th June 2007

Report of the Director of Housing and Adult Social Services

Housing General Fund Service Plan Outturn Report 2006/7

Summary

1. To provide the Executive Member with an overview of progress on the General Fund Service Plan agreed in April 2006.

Background

2. The Executive Member agreed the General Fund Service Plan in February 2006 for the following areas:
 - Housing Revenue Account
 - Housing General Fund

The process and structure followed guidelines set out by the Corporate Centre. It was agreed that the Executive Member would receive monitoring reports in September & December 2006. It was also acknowledged that both the creation of service plans and the method of monitoring were an evolving process.

3. This report covers the following areas:
 - Achievements over the year 2006/2007
 - Updates on Critical Success Factors (CSF's)
 - 2006/2007 performance on Key Performance Indicators (KPI's)
 - New external priorities or demands identified
 - Significant organisational issues
4. There are a number of aspects of the service plan for functions in the Corporate Services element of the Adult Social Services plan that relate to housing. Rather than repeat what is included in another report on the agenda the Executive Member is referred to the companion report for Adult Social Services.

Consultation

5. The report is for information and no formal consultation has been undertaken.

Options

6. This report is an overview of progress against agreed objectives and a report on the actual expenditure for 2006/7. Specific options are not being recommended to the Executive Member as part of this report.

Analysis

7. Achievements between April 2006-March 2007

- The Council adaptations work is now included in the Repairs Partnership with a new Schedule of Rates agreed.
- Peasholme relocation- Plans to relocate the Peasholme re-settlement Centre to 4 Fishergate were approved during April 2007.
- The Housing Strategy and Older Peoples Housing Strategy were published in September 2006. Quarterly monitoring systems have been set up to ensure delivery against the objectives and this is managed through the Housing Services Management Team.
- Year 1 of the refurbishment works programme has been completed on the Travellers Sites with joint funding obtained from Government Office for Yorkshire and The Humber (GOYH).
- Phase 2 of an extensive refurbishment has been carried out to Howe Hill Hostel during 2006/07, 10 units of accommodation have been upgraded or improved bringing additional units into use. When completed the total number of units will have increased from 13 to 27 and will include a wheelchair accessible unit. The homeless hostel at Ordnance Lane has benefited from increased security following the installation of CCTV cameras
- Extensive self assessments against the Audit Commission's Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE) have been carried out for Strategic Housing, Private Sector Housing and homelessness. Detailed action plans for improvements have been drawn up
- The average time spent in hostel accommodation has almost halved to 5.67 weeks in 2006/7 from 10.71 weeks in 2005/6. No families have remained in Bed and Breakfast accommodation over six weeks, other than those housed under discretionary powers, and these numbers have reduced from last year. The average time spend In bed and breakfast has also reduced from 4.66 to 3.33 weeks, which has also led to a significant reduction in costs.

- A review of the Homelessness Strategy is underway and is due for publication in July 2008
- Resources in the Homelessness Service have been redirected away from casework into prevention services and this has contributed to an increase in the number of cases of homelessness prevented via intervention from the homelessness service. Prevention cases have more than doubled from 126 in 2005/6 to 288 last year.
- The increase in homelessness prevention has also been a significant factor in the service being on track to meet the target to halve the numbers in temporary accommodation by 2010. In 2006/7 numbers reduced from 260 households to 206, and we are on course to meet the 2010 target of 130 households.
- Work has started on the Private Sector Renewal Strategy, with the Private Sector Stock Condition Survey to be commission in summer 2007 depending on funding. This will provide baseline data for the investment decisions for the future and help set priorities.
- 100% of staff received an appraisal during 2006/7, following the re-structure of Housing Service during 2005/6.
- A 'Homebuy Plus' scheme has been developed with Golden Triangle partners and has so far enabled 17 households in York to buy a home. A bid for £3.6m further funding from the Regional Housing Board has been submitted for the period 2008/09 to 2010/11. It is anticipated that this sum will be match funded by a Registered Social Landlord
- The Housing Development Team continue to work closely with colleagues in City Strategy to maximise the delivery of affordable housing. We are monitoring the impact of the new planning policy to secure 50% affordable housing on qualifying development sites and will shortly be presenting proposals to ensure a greater number of developments meet this target.

Critical Success Factors (CSFs)

8. The following actions have contributed to the Critical Success Factors set out in the 2006-7 Service plan:
 - **Reprovision of Arc Light:** Planning application for the reprovision of Arc Light has been approved on Union Terrace car park site. The land has been transferred to York Housing Association and the building contract started at end March. The project is due for completion by end of March 2008.
 - **Housing Act 2004:** Licensing of houses in Multiple Occupation has been successfully implemented with 305 full licences issued and a further 7

licences drafted and sent to landlords in accordance with the legislation. The team is now focusing on:

- Identifying properties which require licensing
 - Carrying out full inspections of the properties to ensure that there are no category 1 hazards as defined by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System- 40 such inspections were carried out 2006/07 and a further 80 inspections are planned for this year
 - Carrying out unannounced monitoring visits to ensure that the licence conditions are being adhered to; 100 such visits are planned for 2007/08
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- **Housing Needs information (including Gypsy and Traveller Needs):**
The Housing Market Assessment (HMA) is due to report back in June/July 2007. This will include information on housing need in the city and include work with specific groups. Sub regional research, funded by The Regional Housing Board, into the needs and aspirations of Gypsy and Traveller communities across North Yorkshire and East Riding was commissioned during May 2007. The findings will be reported back to the sub regional Board during January 2008.

Areas for Improvement

9. Delivery of 200 affordable homes in 2006/7 has not been achieved due to changes in planning policy (the rush of applications prior to the changes in the affordable housing policy) and delays on major housing schemes due to planning inquiries. It is anticipated that the council could exceed the target in future years given the favourable outcome from two recent planning inquiries for proposed schemes at Derwenthorpe and Germany Beck which will yield a total of 461 affordable units from 2010-16 and the Regional Spatial Strategy which is recommending housing targets of 640 per annum until 2011 and 850 per annum from 2011.
10. However, it is increasingly difficult to identify sites in York for affordable housing due to market pressures on the price of residential land. It is therefore essential that the council takes a central role in maximising all opportunities for affordable housing, which is one of the corporate objectives, and works with sub regional partners on the release of publicly owned land.
11. There have been difficulties agreeing a standard S106 agreement that meet the needs of all parties as borrowing rules, local and regional policies of developers and housing associations do change from year to year and even scheme to scheme. Nevertheless key aspects of S106 agreements have been standardised including a nomination deed with housing associations which is key to ensuring that nominations for those in housing need from the council waiting list are assured in perpetuity
12. HASS is developing an approach to reducing staff sickness absence across the Directorate. Monthly reports will be produced for Housing Services in order

for line managers to better manage absence including monitoring trends and initiating action promptly as appropriate.

13. Staff turnover increased slightly to 15% from 13.4%, this is due in part to the restructure which commenced late in 2005.
14. Work has commenced on updating the formal induction process, initially looking at HASS overall induction as part of the Workforce Development Group. This needs to be complemented with detailed work with housing staff, however this has not been progressed due to the training co-ordinator post being vacant since October 2006. It is hoped that a replacement will be appointed during May and this will be a priority area for work for them.

New External Priorities

15. None

Significant Organisational Issues

16. None

Corporate Priorities

17. The service plan reflects a number of the councils objectives and priorities found in the '13 Improvement Statements' . Specific links can be made to the following:

“Outward facing”

- Improve the actual and perceived condition and appearance of city's streets, housing estates and publicly accessible spaces
- Reduce the actual and perceived impact of violent, aggressive and nuisance behaviour on people in York
- Improve the life chances of the most disadvantaged and disaffected children, young people and families in the city
- Improve the quality and availability of decent affordable homes in the city

“Improving our organisational effectiveness”

- Improve our focus on the needs of customers and residents in designing and providing services
- Improve the way the Council and its partners work together to deliver better services for the people who live in York

Implications

Financial

18. The original budget estimate for Housing General Fund, approved by Members, was £1,333k. After approval of savings and growth and other approvals including insurance and recharge adjustments, the approved budget is now £1,209k. The net draft outturn is £1,069k. The outturn figure is £140k less than the latest approved budget of £1,209k. The reasons for the main variations between the approved budget and the draft revenue outturn are as follows:-

		Budget £'000	Variance £'000	Variance %
a)	<u>Private Sector Grant Fee Income</u> Increased income due to providing a higher number of grants than forecast	-94	-13	-13.83
b)	<u>Private Sector Housing</u> Saving mainly due to employee vacancies	149	-12	-8.05
c)	<u>Homelessness – Property Leases</u> Mainly due to a lower number of properties than forecast.	64	-17	-26.56
d)	<u>Homelessness – Howe Hill Hostel</u> Mainly employee savings due to vacant posts offset by use of temporary staff (-£29k), decreased expenditure on repairs (-£18k) and increased supporting people income (-£7k)	-13	-54	-415.38
e)	<u>Homelessness - Provision for Bad Debts</u> Decrease in provision for homelessness as bad debt levels are lower than expected.	5	-18	-360.00

		Budget £'000	Variance £'000	Variance %
f)	<u>Bed and Breakfast</u>			
	Lower than forecast number of customers	371	-189	-50.94
	Offset by reduction in income	<u>-321</u>	<u>+185</u>	+57.63
		50	-4	-8.00
g)	<u>Homelessness Casework Team</u>	322	-12	-3.73
	Saving mainly due to employee vacancies			
h)	<u>Strategy and Enabling</u>	254	-24	-9.45
	Employee savings (-£33k) due to vacancies, savings on printing (-£7k), market research (-£4k) contribution to the golden triangle lower than forecast (-£7k) offset by a reduction in the amount recharged to the HRA (+£27k)			
i)	<u>Travellers Sites</u>	-3	+25	+833.33
	Employee savings (-£5k) due to vacancies, rental/supporting people income (-£16k), other minor savings (-£8k) offset by increase in utility costs due to prior year billing problems (+£11k) and increased repairs expenditure across all sites (+£43k)			
j)	<u>Recharges</u>			
	Underspends in several areas throughout HASS, have resulted in a reduction in the amount charged.	276	-17	-6.16
k)	<u>Other minor variations</u>	199	+6	+3.02
	Total	1,209	-140	-11.58

19. In order to promote good management, and allow planned 2006/07 projects to proceed, it is proposed to continue the arrangements to permit under spending

to be carried forward where the service under spends are due to genuine slippage. There is one carry forward request which meets the criteria:-

		£
i)	To fund delayed element of the Housing Market Assessment / Housing Needs Assessment which will focus on the housing needs of specific groups	15,000

20. There are no Human Resources (HR), Equalities, Legal, Crime and Disorder, Information Technology (IT), Property or other implications.

Risk Management

21. The most significant risks that have been managed during the year are:

- increasing budget pressures and the overall financial position

Recommendations

22. The Executive Member is asked to

- Note the progress and achievements made in delivering the General Fund Service Plan at the end of 2006/07
- Agree the carry forward outlined in paragraph 19 and refer this to the Executive for approval
- Reason: to inform the Executive Member on progress on the service plan and progress against objectives

Contact Details

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Report Approved

Date 14th May 07

Bill Hodson
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Report Approved

Date 14th May 07

Specialist Implications Officer(s) Finance as above (co-author)

Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

All relevant background papers must be listed here:

Housing General Fund Service Plan 2006/07

Housing General Fund Service Plan Monitor Q1 2006/07

Housing General Fund Service Plan Monitor Q2 2006/07

Annexes

Annex 1 – Housing General Fund Key Performance Indicators at Outturn 2006/07