

JOINT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY TRANSITION – HOUSING TASK GROUP
13TH FEBRUARY 2009

KEY ISSUES AND RISKS UPDATE

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To update the task group about the current key issues and risks currently facing the Housing Directorate as it progresses through transformation to the new one council.

Action Required of the Task Group

- 2 To ascertain the updated position regarding key issues and risks affecting the transition for housing services.

Previously Reported Housing Top Ten Risks in the Transformation Process

- 3 The Service Director for Housing listed the following in a report to the task group on the 1st August, as the top ten risks for housing being monitored as part of the transition process. Where these risks are represented in the updated situation (please see below) this is stated in brackets:
 - (i) drop in standards and performance (*represented below*)
 - (ii) resources / capacity - unable to give the time necessary to support the transition (*represented below*)
 - (iii) staff leaving / retention (*represented below*)
 - (iv) inability to agree new policies (*now perceived a 'Low' risk*)
 - (v) loss of geographical knowledge of housing service (*now perceived a 'Low' risk*)
 - (vi) staff health, motivation and morale (*now perceived a 'Low' risk*)
 - (vii) communication with key stakeholders (*now perceived a 'Low' risk*)
 - (viii) failure to obtain delegated powers (*now perceived a 'Low' risk given the sign off of the draft constitution in relation to delegated authority progressing well*)

- (ix) other work streams in the transition that housing depends upon – fall behind the agreed timetable (*considered a 'Low' risk*)
- (x) lack of priority given to capital funding schemes (*focus on this has been escalated and therefore now considered a 'Low' risk*)

In addition, the IC4W Day 1 Plan and the Transformation Programme (Critical Path) identified the following key issues and risks associated within Housing leading up to one council:

- (xi) contractual arrangements including service level agreements and IT support contracts (*represented below*)
- (xi) the credit crunch and its impact on affordable housing schemes for the next capital programme 2009-12 (*represented below*)
- (xii) strategic housing governance arrangements to be agreed by the IE before the 31st March 2009, so that there is a clear understanding of the decision making process, reporting arrangements and accountability (*not a risk more a statement of position – governance arrangements are being prepared for submission to IE in March 2009*)

Updated Position on Risks – February 2009

3.1 Housing Risk Register

A risk register for Housing, in the Wiltshire County Council (WCC) format, has now been defined and is undergoing review. 38 risks have been identified, the split between 'High', 'Medium' and 'Low' risk being:

High	Nil
Medium	25
Low	<u>13</u>
Total	38

3.2 Risk Register Review Process

The following actions are now required to complete the risk register:

- Risk owners need assigning
- Direction of travel needs agreeing
- Additional control measures need to be defined with the risk owner

The target timing for the completion of this work is Friday 27th February 2009.

3.3 Medium Risks (scoring 9 or more)

There are 15 'Medium' risks with a combined risk score of 9 or more (details of the risk mitigation is stated in brackets and italics). These are detailed below:

- (i) Increased Homelessness (*investment commitment from WCC capital bidding process just commenced*)
- (ii) No Investment in Social Housing - (*use of previous county council and SDC land disposed of at less than market value to provide affordable homes*)
- (iii) SAP - new housing post holders identified too late to meet SAP deadlines for input into SAP (*interim solution has been identified and needs approving as soon as possible*)
- (iv) SAP – training is not complete for users before 01st April 2009 (*interim solution above should ensure all training can be accommodated*)
- (v) SAP – SIMDELL interface is behind schedule and cannot be recovered within deadline timing (*in-house testing is now happening and results look favourable*)
- (vi) Service / Performance – Service Heads are not recruited in a timely manner to allow lower level roles to be concluded thereby risking drops in performance (*JEQs are nearly finalised and interview dates have been provisionally reserved*)
- (vii) Resources – housing resources are at full capacity and unable to commit to transformational project tasks on time (*regular review with project leads ongoing*)
- (viii) Customers – do not know what is going on that effects them leading up to and after 01st April 2009 (*Customer Access / Frontline housing transactions are in the process of being signed off*)
- (ix) Contracts / Service level agreements – legal issues get escalated as the review process commences with the legal team (*fortnightly reviews with the housing legal representative are being set up*)
- (x) Contracts / Service level agreements – insufficient time and resource available to review all key contracts / SLAs (*monitor progress during fortnightly legal review*)

- (xi) Funding – reduction in level of tenant participation & right to buy applicants / leaseholders results in loss of activity and therefore funding (*planning is ongoing for the continuity of the service under the new council with adequate resources*)
- (xii) Sheltered Housing – reduction in service standards a possibility (*training in place to constantly review policies and standards and to maintain staff morale*)
- (xiii) IT Software – Libra housing software staff leave which results in a depletion of key staff maintaining the system (*training is in place to ensure flexible cover*)
- (xiv) Homelessness Strategy – may not be in place and approved before the next CAA inspection – planned Oct 09 (*review progress at newly formed WHRP & WHSG*)
- (xv) Staff - Temporary and Consultancy resources – cannot be retained or replacements recruited in time for 01st April 09 (*all temp and consultancy staff are being reviewed and advised of whether they are required beyond 01st April 09*)

Conclusion

4. The task group is invited to discuss the above key issues and risks with the Service Director for Housing and the Interim Housing Project Manager.

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