

**JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TRANSITION –
HOUSING TASK GROUP**

Housing Project Officer Group – Summary of Main Focus

Purpose of Report

1. To update the task group concerning the main focus of the Housing Project Officer Group.

Action Required of the Task Group

2. To note the report.
3. Mindful of the task group's work schedule devised following the August meeting (see Appendix 1), verify with the Service Director that members have correctly identified the key issues they should be focusing on between now and December 2008.

Task Group's Work Schedule

4. Members will have received a copy of the work schedule during the summer recess, (summary version attached for ease of reference at Appendix 1). This has been devised in conjunction with the Housing Service Director, following the August meeting.
5. This work schedule is intended to help the task group in maintaining a clear focus and sense of direction, informed by the views of the Corporate Director and Service Director. So that the task group can also maintain a general overview of the other issues the Housing Project Officer Group is progressing, paragraphs 6 – 9 below provides members with an outline of the group's work in the transition.

Housing Project Officer Group – Summary of Main Focus

6. Activities During Transition - Stage 1 of the Project (Pre April 2009)
 - a) The integration of the District Councils Strategic Housing Services into one county wide Team
 - b) The integration of the IT systems necessary to provide a fully functioning back office function within Housing Services
 - c) Harmonisation of practice and procedures
 - d) Business continuity of core services
 - e) Due diligence work with WCC Community Services
 - f) Review of all district out of hours functions

- g) Changing tenancy and leaseholder agreements
- h) Improving customer access to services
- i) Develop service team plan for 2009
- j) Assessing current IT systems and developing requirements for integrated systems.
- k) Determine customer and member expectations through consultation
- l) Management of housing stock
- m) Amendment to LSVT agreements
- n) Developing a staff support and development strategy
- o) Review of temporary accommodation arrangements
- p) Governance arrangements for the management of the housing stock
- q) Procurement arrangements for delivery of the housing service

7. Anticipated Benefits (Transition – Stage 1)

The benefits to be realised in Stage 1 will ensure that the transition is effectively planned, managed and implemented, will provide assurance that the services will continue unaffected through the change process, and will provide a number of quick wins which in themselves will have benefits, in particular the county wide choice based lettings service.

8. Transformation - Stage 2 of the project (Post April 2009)

- a) Development of new affordable housing policies and Supplementary Planning Document on Affordable Housing for the Wiltshire Core Strategy
- b) A single comprehensive 24/7 emergency contact centre for Wiltshire
- c) Lean review of service to ensure it is effective and efficient and meets customer needs
- d) Reduction on operational costs of service
- e) Managing out of hours home support services
- f) How housing management can benefit services within the county
- g) Explore opportunities to directly provide more affordable housing
- h) Providing maintenance services to a wider area
- i) Adopting CBL policy and computer system across Wiltshire and moving to management of service by one team
- j) Development of a county wide Homelessness Strategy
- k) Developing access points to the service
- l) Developing coherent website and promotional/informative information
- m) Developing relationship with Housing Benefits
- n) Developing relations with Education, Adult and Children's care services

- o) Rationalising access from residents of 4 districts where different services and facilities are available dependent on where you live in the county....e.g. access to hostels, PSLs, Foyers Refuges
- p) Addressing housing need through an Enhanced Housing Options Approach service
- q) Managing the Housing Partnership Board
- r) Developing a single criteria for Registered Social Landlord development in Wiltshire
- s) Determining whether or not to set up a Housing Delivery vehicle
- t) Integrating Supporting People and other housing related services to maximize efficiency savings
- u) Managing the PFI contract
- v) Implementation of the Housing Revenue Account 30 year Business Plan

9. Anticipated Benefits (Transformation - Stage 2)

Customer Satisfaction:

The integration of services will aspire to provide the whole of Wiltshire with the best level of service provided, which is consistently applied throughout the County with a responsive service to tenants within Council Housing Stock. Tenant satisfaction with the overall housing service in Salisbury currently stands at 85%.

Cashable Efficiency Gains:

The 1C4W bid highlighted that the transition and transformation of the Housing Services function will aim to achieve savings to be in the region of £200,000 in year one increasing to £620,000 thereafter year on year. However, these figures were only assumptions and the Sub stream work groups will need to consider full benefit realization.

Non-Cashable Efficiency Gains (Service Improvement at No Extra Cost):

A single integrated Housing Services Team will reduce the local variations and provide a more effective and efficient service at a reduced cost.

Other Cashable Gains (Supplies & Services):

As part of bringing together four housing services there will be certain economies of scale for purchasing goods and services. These will be determined through the Sub stream work groups.

Changes in Working Practices:

- Adoption of harmonised standards and policies
- Adoption of harmonised delivery methodology
- Appropriate flexibility of workforce
- Joint procurement of supplies, equipment and materials
- Shared support services

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SUMMARY OF HOUSING TASK GROUP'S WORK SCHEDULE

8th September

1. Housing Project Officer Group – Summary of Main Focus
2. Draft Housing Service 2009/10 Budget
3. Presentation on new “Homes 4 Wiltshire” Choice Based Lettings Scheme
4. Presentation from the IDEA – Strategic Housing

9th October

1. Draft Housing Service Management & Operational Structure
2. Key Issues & Risks Update
3. Housing Enabling – Key Issues in the Transition
4. Presentation from the Audit Commission

4th November

1. Proposed Budget, Performance & Service Delivery Arrangements for the new Housing Service
2. Report on the Harmonisation of Key Policies, Procedures, Practices and Fees / Charges
3. Second Quarter (2008/09) Performance Update
4. Report on Councillor Nominations to Housing Association Boards
5. Report providing reassurance about how Housing Services will be locally responsive and accountable in the new community governance structure

2nd December

Members to meet and discuss draft final report