

Service Improvement Plan *(abridged)*

Development and Neighbourhood Services

Housing Services

2008/09 – 2010/11

Service Improvement Plan (abridged) – Housing Services 2008/09 – 2010/11

Theme: Environment and Housing, Children and Young People, Safer Communities; Health and Wellbeing		
Development Priority: HSG 1 Meet the homelessness prevention agenda nationally and locally		
Key Actions	By when	Outcomes and success criteria
HSG 1.1 Deliver pro-active and preventative housing options services by adopting best practice and innovation.	Ongoing	Provision of settled, stable and secure accommodation for all residents of the borough for all locations they choose to reside. Success Criteria HO 1 Reduction in the proportion of households accepted by Stockton as statutorily homeless in the last two years HO 2 Number of households who consider themselves homeless who approached LA council advice and for whom housing advice casework intervention resolved their situation NI 156 Number of households living in temporary accommodation HO 3 Reduction in the Average length of stay in Bed and Breakfast accommodation of households which include dependent children or a pregnant woman and which are unintentionally homeless and in priority need (weeks) HO 4 Reduction in the Average length of stay in hostel accommodation of households which include dependant children or a pregnant woman and which are unintentionally homeless and in priority need (weeks) HO 5 Reduction in the average number of families which include dependent children or a pregnant woman placed in temporary accommodation under the homelessness legislation in the current financial year compared with the average from the previous year HO 6 Eradicate the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for homeless households by 2010
HSG 1.2 Undertake a strategic review of Homelessness in the borough and produce a strategic action plan.	April 2008	
HSG 1.3 Develop a range of housing to provide temporary accommodation provision that support the Government's target of 50% reduction in the use of temporary accommodation by 2010.	Ongoing	

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Development Priority: HSG 2 Meet the housing and support needs of young people in the borough.		
Key Actions	By when	Outcomes and success criteria
HSG 2.1 Work in partnership to ensure an integrated and holistic service response for young people who are homeless, at risk of homelessness or inappropriately accommodated.	Ongoing	<p><u>Outcomes</u> Provision of appropriate accommodation for young people with the right levels of support in place.</p> <p><u>Success Criteria</u> Reduce the use of temporary accommodation by 50% for young people by 2010. Eradicate the use of Bed and Breakfast for 16 and 17 year olds by 2010. Reduce the incidence and trauma of homelessness for young people</p>
HSG 2.2 Develop in partnership with relevant agencies care pathways for vulnerable groups of young people to respond to identified housing and support needs.	April 2008	
HSG 2.3 Provide a range of housing choices suitable for young people that meet their needs and aspirations.	March 2010	
HSG 2.4 Ensure effective engagement and involvement of young people in meeting the homeless prevention agenda.	Ongoing	
HSG 2.5 Develop and promote best practice frameworks for the prevention of young peoples homelessness.	March 2009	

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Theme: Environment and Housing		
Development Priority: HSG 3 Address affordability in the housing market		
Key Actions	By when	Outcomes and success criteria
HSG 3.1 Maximise affordable housing outputs through section 106 agreements.	Ongoing	<p><u>Outcomes</u> Extend the range of affordable housing options for residents of the borough.</p> <p><u>Success Criteria</u> Number of affordable housing units secured through section 106 agreements NI155 Number of affordable homes delivered (gross) Total amount of funding secured through the National Affordable Housing Programme in 2008/11 (£) Number of affordable units secured through the National Affordable Housing Programme in 2008/11 Number of households assisted into homeownership through the affordable home ownership register Number of homeowners within Housing Regeneration areas benefiting from the range of assisted homeownership initiatives Number of residents benefiting from equity share schemes</p>
HSG 3.2 Continue to provide assisted homeownership initiatives.	Ongoing	
HSG 3.3 Increase access to affordable accommodation by the provision of advice and assistance on housing benefit issues.	Ongoing	
HSG 3.4 Housing Green Paper – internal evaluation of the outcomes	To be determined	
HSG 3.5 Explore the viability of a Housing Regeneration Company	To be determined	
HSG 3.6 Work with RSL/Developers to secure regular ‘market engagement’ (National Affordable Housing Programme)	Ongoing	
HSG 3.7 Undertake an annual Local Housing Assessment update.	December 2009	

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Theme: Environment and Housing, Safer Communities, Health and Wellbeing		
Development Priority: HSG 4 Deliver quality and choice in the housing market and address housing market failure		
Key Actions	By when	Outcomes and success criteria
HSG 4.1 Continue progress of prioritised Housing Market Renewal (HMR) schemes. - Mandale - Hardwick - Parkfield		Outcomes Provision of quality accommodation, which meets the housing needs and aspirations of residents of the borough. Success Criteria 200 clients per year provided with advice or assistance to help them maintain safe, healthy and independent living within their own home through a Home Improvement Agency (HIA)
HSG 4.2 Support the long-term work of Tees Valley Living Housing Market Renewal	Ongoing	133 properties demolished in areas of housing market failure in 2008/09
HSG 4.3 Introduce a Home Improvement Agency (HIA) to assist elderly and vulnerable households maintain safe and independent living.	April 2008	Number of private sector dwellings that are returned into occupation or demolished as a direct result of action by the Local Authority.
HSG 4.4 Explore the feasibility of a Landlord Accreditation Scheme within the Parkfield / Mill Lane area of the borough to support the ongoing Housing Market Renewal and homelessness agendas.	September 2008	Implement Choice Based Lettings within Government timescale of December 2010
HSG 4.5 Undertake a Private Sector Stock Condition Survey through the borough.	June 2008	Following completion of an Option Appraisal exercise, sign off preferred option with CLG by September 2008.
HSG 4.6 Explore the feasibility of the introduction of enforced sale procedures and empty dwelling management orders	December 2009	Implement new regional loans policies for private sector housing
HSG 4.7 Introduce a sub regional Choice Based Lettings scheme with a common allocations policy across the Tees Valley	September 2008	Successful implementation of preferred option following the completion of the future of Council Housing Option Appraisal exercise.
HSG 4.8 Explore the opportunity for providing a 'one stop shop' in central Stockton for the delivery of housing advice and allocations services	April 2009	

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HSG 4.9 Support the development of the Tees Valley Unlimited Housing Board	Ongoing	
HSG 4.10 Option Appraisal – actions to be determined once 'preferred options' have been agreed	Ongoing (through to potentially March 2009)	
HSG 4.11 If successful in initial Growth Area expression of interest, make a formal application.	To be determined	

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Theme: Environment and Housing, Safer Communities, Health and Wellbeing		
Development Priority: HSG 5 Promote Strong and prosperous communities		
Key Actions	By when	Outcomes and success criteria
HSG 5.1 Build new state of the art primary school at Hardwick contributing to the wider Housing Regeneration activity	January 2009	<p><u>Outcomes</u> Build sustainable communities where people want to live and work, both now and in the future.</p> <p><u>Success Criteria</u> Hardwick Primary School complete by January 2009. 100% of residents involved in the planning or remodelling of their homes (<i>Equality Action Plan target</i>) Catalyst Board fully established and work programme agreed by June 2007 12 community and voluntary organisations receiving a tailored and individual package of support in 2008/09</p>
HSG 5.2 Develop and establish Catalyst as the key co-ordinating agency for the third sector in the Borough – Board Member and Advisor to the Board	Ongoing	
HSG 5.3 Review the provision of community buildings as part of the Capital Strategy and Asset Management Group Review	March 2009	
HSG 5.4 Commission Catalyst to secure services to support 3rd sector organisations (Human Resources, Legal, Financial)	April 2008	

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Theme: People Development and Learning, Performance and Resource Management		
Development Priority: HSG 6 Deliver modern, efficient and customer-focused services		
Key Actions	By when	Outcomes and success criteria
HSG 6.1 Ensure a continuing high standard of advice following transfer of the Benefits helpline to the new Customer Services Division.	Ongoing	<p>Outcomes The provision of a quality housing service accessible to all.</p> <p>Success Criteria All housing Best Value Inspections to achieve a 2 star and 'promising prospects for improvement' rating. Amount of funds secured from SHIP Round 3 (£) New DWP 'Right Time' Performance Indicator (in consultation) New DWP 'Right Benefit' Performance Indicator (in consultation) Procurement of sub regional adaptation contracts</p>
HSG 6.2 Continue to review service delivery to promote choice and equitable access to services.	Ongoing	
HSG 6.3 Review Benefit Service following reduction in administration subsidy and to take account of recommendations from DWP performance development team.	September 2008	
HSG 6.4 Explore the potential of introducing electronic Benefit claim forms	March 2009	
HSG 6.5 Continue to introduce new methods of working to improve work life balance and performance.	March 2009	
HSG 6.6 Self assess the Benefit Service against the new DWP Performance Standards and develop action plan	July 2008	
HSG 6.7 Ensure the Benefit Service can meet the requirement to provide statutory returns to the DWP in the required electronic format	April 2008	
HSG 6.8 Implementation and procurement of disabled adaptations contracts across the sub region	April 2009	

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Theme: Environment and Housing, Safer Communities, Health and Wellbeing		
Development Priority: HSG 7 Assist in tackling poverty and social and financial exclusion		
Key Actions	By when	Outcomes and success criteria
HSG 7.1 Implement Local Housing Allowance, proposed in the Welfare Reform Bill.	Implementation date anticipated April 2008	<p><u>Outcomes</u> Income maximisation and greater financial stability for those in our community on low incomes</p> <p><u>Success Criteria</u> Implement the Local Housing Allowance by 7 April 2008 80% Local Housing Allowance cases paid direct to tenants 90% of rent allowance cases paid by BACS Increase the number of Credit Unions using community venues as collection points</p>
HSG 7.2 Ensure the provision of specialist independent housing advice is available to all	Ongoing	
HSG 7.3 Identify opportunities to work in partnership to reduce the number of young people not in education, employment and training.	Ongoing	
HSG 7.4 Work in partnership to identify opportunities to deliver on the Government's commitment to 'In work, better off: next steps to full employment'.	Ongoing	
HSG 7.5 Promote the work of Credit Unions and the take up of basic bank accounts in community centres	March 2009	
HSG 7.6 Continue to maximise the use of Discretionary Housing Payments	Ongoing	

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Theme: Corporate Health – Organisational Development – All Themes

Development Priority: Organisational Development

Outcomes and success criteria

All services are subjected to a number of Organisational Development objectives. These demonstrate how the service contributes to the achievement of the organisation's 'corporate health'.

SICKNESS ABSENCE

Sickness absence remains high across the Council compared to other local authorities and therefore it is imperative that sickness is targeted for reduction. Sickness absence is measured via ex-BVPI12 and all services need to contribute to the corporate target of a reduction of at least 0.5 days lost per FTE due to sickness.

ON CONTRACT SPEND

All services contribute to making savings via better procurement. Value for money contracts have been arranged for areas of corporate spend such as mobile phones and stationery. In order to maximise savings, services have been set a target of 97% for 'on contract' spend for these contracts.

PAYMENT OF INVOICES

The Council is measured for the time taken to pay invoices. Prompt payment is important to our supply base and helps improve their cash flow, which in turn keeps them profitable and helps economic development of the locality. Payment of invoices is measured by ex-BVPI8 and all services contribute to the corporate target of at least 85% of invoices paid within 30 days, by Q4.

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APPRAISALS

Highly trained and motivated employees are necessary for the delivery of modern, effective and efficient services. Consequently the employee appraisal scheme has been revised and improved to ensure staff have the relevant skills and development opportunities. All services have been set a target of undertaking appraisals for at least 90% of employees.

GERSHON EFFICIENCY SAVINGS

The Council is subject to an annual 3% cashable efficiency target and many services contribute in one way or another. Services will set their targets via the forward looking Annual Efficiency Statement (April) which includes both the financial targets and any associated quality cross checks.

VALUE FOR MONEY REVIEWS

Council services are subject to the requirement to demonstrate value for money in order to show the public that money is spent effectively. The process also feeds into the Use of Resources service block in CPA. Services subject to reviews are those with apparent high costs compared to other local authorities and the initial focus of reviews is to determine why this is the case.

PARTNERSHIP HEALTHCHECKS

New government policies and legislation frequently involve partnership working. The major policy initiatives for local government all depend for their success on effective joint working. There is a growing policy focus on area governance and service delivery at regional, sub-regional and the neighborhood level; this may involve local authorities and a variety of partners at each level. Consequently, well-developed and effective partnerships are becoming an essential feature for Stockton Borough Council's success.

DATA QUALITY

The Council is assessed against its corporate management arrangements for Data Quality. Good quality data is essential in supporting effective decision making at all levels across the organisation. All services are working towards improving data quality further by responding to the recommendations made following the Data Quality Audit 2007 and implementing the actions highlighted within the Data Quality Strategy.

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CUSTOMER FIRST

Customer First Stage II launched in June 2007 aims to encourage services to strive for excellence in customer service. The programme requires every service to adopt the latest service standards and compare how it measures up against five key components. All services should aim reach the Stage II standard by March 2009.

DIVERSITY

Equality Impact Assessment

- Ensure all appropriate reports submitted to Cabinet have been subject to Equality Impact Assessment.
- Carry out Equality Impact Assessments of existing services. 50% in 2008/09 and 50% in 2009/10, including Impact Assessments of contracted services where appropriate.
- Include actions developed as a result of Equality Impact Assessment in SIP or BUP as appropriate.

Training

- Ensure all employees attend corporate diversity training in line with Council Plan targets.

Single Equality Scheme

- Achieve all relevant targets within the race, gender and disability equality action plans

Procurement

- Utilise new procurement procedures to ensure equality is embedded in procurement activities.