

BUSINESS SUPPORT
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
17 JULY 2008

AUDIT COMMISSION REPORT ON STRATEGIC HOUSING

Report from: Neil Davies, Chief Executive
Author: Deborah Upton, Assistant Director (Housing & Corporate Services)

Summary

This report sets out the results of the Audit Commission inspection of the Council's strategic housing function.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

1.1 This was a matter for Cabinet to decide, as it is within the budget and policy framework. The improvement plan is, however, being presented to this Committee for comments.

2. Background

2.1 The Audit Commission inspected the Council's strategic housing function in January 2008. The result of the inspection was a zero star rating, with the judgment being a poor service with poor prospects for improvement. The Audit Commission is the independent body responsible for ensuring public money is spent economically, efficiently and effectively. Overall, it rates Medway Council as a good and improving authority.

2.2 A copy of the report is attached as appendix one. The Audit Commission rated the council as 'poor' in strategic terms, after examining issues such as monitoring diversity, planning policies and impact assessments. The report does not relate to the authority's actual housing stock, which is of good quality, meeting Decent Homes standards. The weblink to the Audit Commission site is as follows:

- 2.3 The report identifies a number of weaknesses, and it is important that these are addressed as a priority. These include areas such as:-
- No private sector housing policy in place, with little statutory enforcement
 - Houses in multiple occupation not being effectively regulated
 - Limited focus on rural housing.

3. Current Position

- 3.1 The Council has already made significant organisational changes to help address all the recommendations contained in the report. There have been significant staffing changes and the housing department has now moved to the Chief Executive, under the management of the Assistant Director (Housing & Corporate Services).
- 3.2 A comprehensive improvement plan, which identifies areas to be strengthened, is attached as appendix two. It covers all the areas which the Audit Commission have asked the Council to improve, together with targets to be achieved. Officers are already working towards the listed targets, and a number of these have already been delivered, including: -
- The Council has met Government targets for 2010 for reducing the number of homeless people living in temporary accommodation
 - Reception facilities for housing customers have been improved by our move to the Chatham Contact point
 - Recruitment to key empty posts has now taken place.

4. Monitoring of the improvement plan

- 4.1 A senior officer group has been set up to ensure that the improvement plan is monitored on a regular basis, and this group will in turn report to the portfolio holder and other members. Dedicated project management support is also in place to support the improvement plan.

5. Financial and legal implications

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report, although a number of the actions in the improvement plan contain legal implications, and advice will be provided on these individual actions.
- 5.2 Funding to implement the improvement plan will be met from existing budgets. However, it is likely that this will be augmented by additional funding from the Improvement and Efficiency Partnership for the South East.

6. Recommendations

6.1 Members are asked for any comments on the improvement plan.

Lead officer contact

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Background Papers: None

Medway Housing Services Strategic Housing Improvement Plan 2008/09

Version 5 - June 2008

Action no	AC Ref	AC Pg No	KLOE No	PI	Action plan req?	Area	Actions	Outputs/Outcomes	Resources	Target Imp date	Progress/comments	Status	Lead Officer
Strategic Leadership, Management and Performance													
1	R7	Pg 12	K1	N/A	N	Submit the Audit Commission Report to the Councils Cabinet	Submit the report to the next meeting of the Council's Cabinet	Members provide Political leadership and ownership of housing and the actions and resources required to meet at least the 'Fair' 1* rating in housing services .	Within existing resources	Jul-08			Deborah Upton
2	R6	Pg 44 : Par 138	K2	N/A	N	Improve the understanding of the Strategic housing role by Elected Members	Develop training and organise specific events, seek peer group support from other high performing LA's.	Members understand and are clear about their strategic role, responsibilities and accountabilities. Training and events have been delivered and peer group support considered.	Within existing resources	Dec-08			Deborah Upton
3	R6	Pg 44 : Par 138	K1	N/A	N	Develop regular policy and good practice briefings for Elected Members and Staff	Develop a policy and good practise briefing paper which is regularly sent out to Members and Staff.	Members and Staff are well informed of any proposed national policy changes and guidance on good practise through regular briefing papers.	Within existing resources	Oct-08			Deborah Upton
4	R6	Pg 24 : Par 59 Pg 42 : Par 130	K2	N/A	N	Housing Features in the Councils Strategic Plans		Housing is seen as key priority for the council which is clearly demonstrated in its key strategies and plans.	Within existing resources	Dec-08	Stephanie to confirm timetable for changes to key strategies		Stephanie Goad
5	R6	Pg 41 : Par 128 26: Par 89	K1	N/A	N	Strategic Monitoring of the Housing Improvement Plans	Develop and agree process with Lead Member for Housing.	Robust arrangements are in place which will make improvements and deliver outcomes . Demonstrated sustained improvements in many areas over a period of time has led to achieving targets and timescales in accordance with those set out in the improvement plans.	Within existing resources	Jun-08	Draft Process chart to be developed for consideration based upon Member group monthly, officers meeting fortnightly and DMT fortnightly. New Performance Manager will take over the responsibility for monitoring the Improvement plan once appointed.		Deborah Upton
							Set up the systems and lines of reporting .	Members and managers, are involved in managing performance, are active and clearly understand their roles. Corrective action is taken in response to variations in performance, and this is consistent with driving improvement.	Within existing resources	Jun-08			Deborah Upton
							Agree TOR with the improvement groups.	TOR agreed and published	Within existing resources	Jun-08			Deborah Upton

6	R4	Pg 40 : Par 125	K2	N/A	Y	Agree and publish the strategic approach to housing in consultation with key stakeholders, and including service users	Develop through the Strategic Housing Partnership Board (SHPB) and include in the housing strategy.	The Strategic Approach to housing has been developed and agreed with Partners and Stakeholders and has been published.	Within existing resources	Dec-08			Deborah Upton
							Action plan with key milestones to be completed			Jun-08			Deborah Upton
7	R4	Pg 24 : Par 61	K2	N/A	N	Ensure that all housing related strategies have SMART action plans that are regularly monitored by senior managers and councillors	Develop monitoring arrangement through the SHPB and the Homeless forum as part of this process. Set up monitoring systems and ensure this takes place on a regular basis.	Housing Strategy actions and targets are met in accordance with those set out in the Strategies. Monitoring takes place on a regular basis by Members and Senior Managers to ensure tasks are completed and outcomes achieved.	Within existing resources	Dec-08	Flow chart of monitoring arrangements should be produced as part of this work		Deborah Upton
							The Homelessness Strategy should be regularly monitored by the Homelessness forum.	Homeless strategy actions and targets are met in accordance with those set out in the Strategy.	Within existing resources	Jul-08			Deborah Upton
							Develop a work plan for the Homelessness Forum and review the TOR.	The Homelessness Forum is the lead group for work around homelessness issues. The forum has a well developed and focused work plan which will deliver improvement for service users.	Within existing resources	Jun-08			Deborah Upton
8	R6	Pg 44 : Par 138/141	K1	N/A	N	Develop the Strategic Housing Board	Draft a 12 month work plan focused on the key housing priorities emerging from the housing strategies .	The Board has a vision of what it wants to achieve . It has translated its vision into a set of aims and objectives and targets which aspire to improve the service for users.	Within existing resources	Jul-08			Deborah Upton
							Review membership including representation for rural housing.	Group membership reflects all areas of housing need including those who represent minority groups.	Within existing resources	Jun-08			Deborah Upton
							Develop a training and briefing programme for members of the board following consultation . Include succession training if appropriate.	Members receive training and briefings which enables them to full participate and contribute to the work of the Board.	Within existing resources	Oct-08			Deborah Upton

9	R6	Pg 42 : Par 133	K1	All	N	Set up a robust Performance Information Team	Appoint to vacant posts.	The team has the skills and capability needed to deliver service priorities and maintain the performance management systems.	Within existing resources	Jul-08	Job vacancies out to advert - consider interim arrangements.		Deborah Upton	
10	R6	Pg 42 : Par 133	K1	All	N	Introduce a performance monitoring framework for housing	Develop and Implement a robust performance framework for housing.	Performance is regularly monitored through Housing DMT and reported upwards through the reporting framework of the council. The service shows that it has delivered significant improvements in outcomes and key performance indicators.	Within existing resources	Aug-08	Framework being considered. by DU. The target relates to the implementation of the new framework, outcomes will only be demonstrated once the new framework is operational and has become 'embedded.'		Deborah Upton	
11	R4	Pg 42 : Par 133	K1	All	N	Embed performance monitoring across the service, to ensure comprehensive coverage of key strategic housing issues.	Ensure accountability for performance areas by Service Managers. Regular reporting by Performance and Service Managers to AD and DMT	National and local indicators have resulted in improved performance that compares well with other service providers. Indicators show that performance is improving and user satisfaction is increasing and there are measurable changes on the ground in areas that matter to users.	Within existing resources	Dec-08	Improvement in PI's will need to be monitored on a monthly/quarterly basis to ensure sustained improvement. This links with the above action .		Deborah Upton	
12	R6	Pg 42 : Par 133	K1	All	Y	Evaluate existing data collection and reporting arrangements and consider its effectiveness	Evaluate existing IT systems and the data collection routes	ICT is used effectively to deliver service objectives and improvements. It is used to achieve efficiencies in operations as well as to provide management information. Staff are trained on the systems and understand the need to use the system. Data collections through other software outside the main systems cease to exist.	Within existing resources	Sep-08			Deborah Upton	
							Ensure effective IT support for the private sector team. Consider IT options and comparisons with the systems other LA's use.	The Private Sector Housing Team have effective ICT systems which contribute to the efficiency of the team and provide the management information required.		Sep-08	Now using M3 but on administrator use for HMO		Deborah Upton	
							Action plan with key milestones to be completed				Jul-08			Deborah Upton
13	R6	Pg 27 : 72 Pg 42 : Par 133	K1	N/A	Y	The Housing Service have up to date policies and procedures	All service Managers to 'map' policies and procedures. And put in place a revolving review process. Ensure staff training is in place and is evidenced.	Policies and Procedures have been mapped and reviewed and reflect the priorities identified in the housing strategy. They comply with the law and guidance from central government and have been developed through stakeholder and service user consultation.	Within existing resources	Dec-08	Homechoice complete homeless/options awaiting feedback		Deborah Upton	
							Action plan with key milestones to be completed				Jun-08			Deborah Upton

14	R6	Pg 42 : Par 132	K1	N/A	N	Ensure all service areas have completed their service plans and set personal targets for staff	Service plans are completed and need to take account of this improvement plan and incorporate all the various housing strategies actions. All Managers to set personal targets with staff through individual work plans.	All Service plans are completed and reflect housing strategy and improvement plans actions and targets. All staff have individual work plans and these are reviewed in one 'to ones'.	Within existing resources	Jul-08		Deborah Upton
15	R6	Pg 43 : Par 136	K1	N/A	N	Develop risk management arrangements for the service	Ensure all key risks are mapped. Consider risk map update as part of the DMT agenda	Risks are mapped and considered by Managers on a regular basis. Management approach to managing the risks is well embedded and effective.	Within existing resources	Aug-08	Risk Management is managed Corporately .	Deborah Upton
							Ensure risk management log is regularly evaluated and updated		Within existing resources	Aug-08	Each Housing Service and Team Manager is responsible for their area.	Deborah Upton
16	R6	Pg 43 : Par 137	K1	N/A	N	Develop a continuous learning cycle from high performing organisations	All Managers need to develop a learning log .This should include Training courses attended, visits made to organisations, conferences attended as well as areas of good practise and how these have been applied and improved the service.	The service has developed a greater understanding of what constitutes a good quality housing service through learning from other high performing organisations. The learning log reflects the investment of training and support to staff and the outcomes achieved from this investment which provides benefits for the service and its users.	Additional resources of £30,000 has been identified of the non HRA part of the service to meet training needs	July 08	Each Housing Service and Team Manager is responsible for their areas. Workforce and Development Plan should be kept centrally by the Performance Team and each Manager contributes to this. This should be reviewed along with learning logs, quarterly by the Performance Manager to ensure this is being completed.	Deborah Upton
17	R6	Pg 44 : Par 138 Pg 45 : Par 144	K1	N/A	Y	Develop a framework of skills shortages and actions to address these	Work with Ann-Louise Clarke as part of the work on core competencies	The housing Service has staff which have the necessary skills to enable an effective and quality service to be delivered which is also able to meet targets and deadlines set out in the housing strategy and improvement plans.	Within existing resources	Aug-08	Each Housing Service and Team Manager is responsible for their areas. Gap analysis has been identified and draft training programme for proposed training has been completed.	Deborah Upton
							Action plan with key milestones to be completed			completed	Anne Louise to provide the programme for evidence	Deborah Upton
18	N/A	N/A	K1	N/A	N	Carry out a self assessment against KLOE 1 (prospects for improvement)	Assess/bench mark against the KLOE and develop an action and implementation plan	Achieve Promising Prospects for Improvement on the AC Judgement 2 on the inspection of the housing service	Within existing resources	Jan-09		Deborah Upton

							Access, Customer Care and User Focus						
19	N/A	Pg 17 - 20	K30	N/A	Y	Develop a Customer Engagement and Consultation Strategy	Develop a cohesive strategy which includes Service User feedback and inclusion . Develop a consultation events timetable to ensure a joined up approach across the council.	A Customer Engagement and Consultation Strategy is published and customers are actively engaged in the process.	Budget issues need to be considered	Jan-09	The strategy should address all weaknesses through a co-ordinated approach and with robust monitoring arrangements put in place.		Stephanie Goad
							Action plan with key milestones to be completed			Sep-08			Stephanie Goad
20	R6	Pg 17: Par 31	K30	N/A	Y	Ensure clear signposting to housing services at reception and other points of contact	Undertake a Review and consult with Service Users to obtain feedback (possibly through a snapshot survey)	Service Users are able to understand and be guided through the reception and other points of contact easily.	Within existing resources	Sep-08			Deborah Upton
							Action plan with key milestones to be completed			Jun-08			Deborah Upton
21	R6	Pg 17 : Par 32	K30	N/A	N	Ensure roll out of appointment system at Riverside 1	All people should be seen by appointment unless they are actually 'roofless'	Service Users no longer have to wait for long periods in the reception area. They are given an appointment which suits their needs and circumstances.	Within existing resources	Jul-08	Reception is not yet 'fit for purpose' people are still waiting a long time to be seen even to make an appointment or to have documents photocopied		Deborah Upton
22	R1	Pg 17: Par 32	K30	N/A	Y	Work with Partners to strengthen face-to-face access arrangements for specialist housing services, including local surgeries	Develop more effective referral and access arrangements with partners through the Homelessness and other forums. These should include specific requirements of minority groups and those with special needs.	Access arrangements are more effective and waiting time for referrals has improved . The number of access points has increased .	Within existing resources	Jan-09	Expand the HRA surgeries on estates to include all housing services is a first step to increasing access points.		Deborah Upton
							Action plan with key milestones to be completed			Jul-08			Deborah Upton
23	R6	Pg 17: Par 32	K30	N/A	Y	Develop and implement a policy and system for home visits	Prepare policy and ensure this include issues of Health and Safety such as lone working. Consider alerts on the IT system for high risk situations.	Home visits form part of the service provided to service users and these are undertaken through the support of clear policy and procedures.	Within existing resources	Aug-08			Deborah Upton
							Action plan with key milestones to be completed			Jun-08			Deborah Upton
24	R6	Pg 17- Par 34	K30	N/A	Y	Develop an ongoing programme of customer care training for all staff (including temporary staff) and monitor and review outcomes	Set up and maintain a customer care training programme. This should be included in the induction of all staff (including temporary staff) . This must include follow up report after training to evidence improvement.	Staff understand customer care and the standards that they are expected to maintain and this can be evidenced through increased customer care satisfaction surveys.	Within existing resources	Sep-08			Richard Hicks/Deborah Upton
							Action plan with key milestones to be completed			Jul-08			Deborah Upton

25	R6	Pg 18: Par 35	K30	LCH1	Y	Develop a system to monitor and report housing calls in the service and report these to the housing services management team	Ensure existing IT is able to deliver a breakdown and that systems are clear about how calls should be logged and designated	The system is able to provide management information which enables Managers to identify any areas requiring improvement or enhancing.	Within existing resources	Sep-08	Consideration needs to be given to this work as not all housing calls go thorough the call centre.		Richard Hicks
							Action plan with key milestones to be completed			Jun-08			
26	R1	Pg 18 : Par 37	K30	N/A	Y	Improve the content and quality of published information about strategic housing services and taking steps to increase the range of publicity in corporate publications.	Include portfolio of information list and rolling review. Appoint lead Officer (Admin) to lead and take responsibility across the service	A full range of good quality information is available and this covers the full range of housing services. Corporate publications include housing services information that is available.	Within existing resources	Jan-09	AC report refers specifically to gaps in Information for landlords and tenants of HMO's . All Managers will be required to carry out and audit of information and produce the information, to fill the 'gaps'. Performance Manager will co-ordinate the process.		Deborah Upton/Stephanie Goad
							Action plan with key milestones to be completed			Jul-08			Deborah Upton
27	R1	Pg 18: Par 38	K30	N/A	Y	Publicise and monitor specific strategic housing service standards that have been agreed with service users	Review service standards against good practise (including other LA's). Consult with service users groups as part of this process. Consider whether changes to standards have a budget implication	Standards are clear and easy to understand by service users. This is demonstrated through consultation and feedback from service users.	Within existing resources	Jan-09	Each Housing Service Manager is responsible for their areas. Consideration needs to be given as to whether changes to standards has a budget implication.		Deborah Upton
							Action plan with key milestones to be completed			Jul-08			Deborah Upton
28	R6	Pg 19: Par 39	K30	N/A	Y	Develop reporting and monitoring systems for complaints within the service	Review the present arrangements and improve and streamline the business processes. Ensure that Housing DMT receive regular reports on actions and outcomes.	Complaints are managed effectively and consistently and these are considered at housing DMT on a regular basis.	Within existing resources	Oct-08			Richard Hicks
							Action plan with key milestones to be completed			Jul-08			Richard Hicks

29	R1	Pg 19: Par 39	K30	LX2, 3, 4a, 4b & 8	Y	Introduce a clear compensation policy to provide redress to customers when complaints are upheld	Develop the policy for housing taking account of the councils policy and existing procedures. Check what other LA's are doing as a point of good practise. Produce information leaflets for customers.	A compensation policy is in place and customers are able to receive compensation when complaints are upheld.	Budget issues need to be considered	Jan-09		Richard Hicks
							Action plan with key milestones to be completed			Jul-08		Richard Hicks
30	R1	Pg 19: Par41	K30	N/A	Y	Establish systems to capture service user feedback across all strategic housing services provided by the Council and its partners	Set up the systems and lines of reporting including mapping of existing systems and groups. This should include the 'feedback' cycle to service users and customers who contribute.	Stakeholders and Service User feedback is captured and used to improve the service and this can be clearly demonstrated and evidenced.	Within existing resources	Jan-09		Richard Hicks
							Action plan with key milestones to be completed			Jul-08		Richard Hicks
31	R6	Pg 19: Par 41	K30	N/A	Y	Review the customer experience at Riverside 1 to ensure experience is improved from that at Gillingham	Carry out a six month review, possibly through a specific customer survey during one 'snapshot' week. Review to be carried out in October with results and plans for any improvements by Dec 08.	Customer survey demonstrates an improvement in satisfaction from that experienced at the Gillingham Office.	Within existing resources	Dec-08		Richard Hicks
							Action plan with key milestones to be completed			Jul-08		Richard Hicks
32	R6	Pg 19: Par 41	K30	N/A	Y	Introduce a procedure for the ongoing monitoring of customer satisfaction across the service and ensure that improvements can be demonstrated.	Consider a variety of ways in which to seek customer satisfaction and develop an plan and procedure to deliver this.	Customer satisfaction is increased from the present baseline.	Within existing resources	Aug-08	Could a Service User Forum act as 'critical friend?'	Richard Hicks
							Action plan with key milestones to be completed			Jun-08		Richard Hicks
33	R1	Pg 29: Par75	K30	N/A	Y	Improve access to specialist housing and debt advice in consultation with key partners	Explore if corporate debt advice services can be rolled out to include housing. The Homelessness Forum can undertake some research to understand where the 'gaps exist.	Access to specialist housing and debt advice is increased from the present baseline.	Budget issues need to be considered	Jan-09		Deborah Upton/Mick Hayward
							Action plan with key milestones to be completed			Jul-08		Deborah Upton/Mick Hayward
34	N/A	N/A	K30	N/A		Carry out a self assessment benchmarking against KLOE 30 (Access and Customer Care)	Assess/bench mark against the KLOE and develop an action and implementation plan	Housing achieves and maintains at least a fair 1* standard against the Audit Commission KLOE standards		Jan-09		Deborah Upton

							Diversity							
35	R2	Pg 20 : Par 43	K31	BVPI: 2a	Y	Ensure equality and diversity strategies cover the six strands of diversity identified in the Local Government Equality Standard (ethnicity;gender;disability;sexuality; religion and age)	Ensure that these are clear and explicit within the strategies and set out how/what action is needed and by when	Diversity and Equality Strategy includes the six standards of Diversity.	Within existing resources	Jan-09				Stephanie Goad
							Action plan with key milestones to be completed			Jul-08				Stephanie Goad
36	R6	Pg 20 : Par 44	K31	N/A	N	Set clear targets for the disability equality action plan 2006 (Corporate) and ensure these are met.	Target to be set	Targets are set and monitored	Within existing resources	Jan-09				Stephanie Goad
37	R2	Pg 21 : Par46	K31	N/A	Y	Carry out equality impact assessments across all strategic housing services and address any issues that are identified	Scope list. reconsider template in the light of AC comments around the robustness of approach. Look at good practise from other LA's considered to be leaders in this area of work	All EIA's completed. Service Users needs and the barriers to achieving these have been considered which enables them to have equal access to services	Within existing resources	Jan-09	All Housing and Team Services Managers to be responsible for their areas. Corporate Lead to be identified.			Deborah Upton
							Action plan with key milestones to be completed			Jul-08				Stephanie Goad
38	R2	Pg 21 : Par47	K31	N/A	Y	Introduce diversity monitoring across all strategic housing services, address any issues that are identified	Scope list of areas to monitor. Produce action plan for Service Manager to implement. Include outcomes and build these into a review of service delivery	Diversity monitoring is fully implemented and issues identified and actions taken.	Within existing resources	Jan-09	All Housing Services Managers to be responsible for their areas. Performance Team to provide strategic lead			Stephanie Goad
							Action plan with key milestones to be completed			Jul-08				Stephanie Goad
39	R2	Pg 21 : Par48	K31	N/A	Y	Ensure developing housing strategies explicitly address diversity issues identified in the Council's data collection and research	Include this action on the Housing Strategy action plan	Data collection and research within the service is used to effectively identify gaps and the service development needs in the housing strategies.	Within existing resources	Jan-09				Deborah Upton
40	R6	Pg 21 : Par49	K31	N/A	N	Translate information about the diversity needs of the community into fully tailored services (for example people with long-term limiting illness targeted for supported housing services - housing stock condition survey, to priorities action areas.)	This information should be included in the housing strategy and form part of the action plan.	Diversity needs and the actions required to develop tailored services of the community have been identified in the housing strategy and the action plan.	Within existing resources	Jan-09	Matt's team to lead on ensuring consistency			Deborah Upton

41	R6	Pg 22 : Par 54	K31	N/A	Y	Ensure all information for customers includes the option for the information to be available in different languages	Review all publications and the website - set a system of information review and master copies to be managed by one person	All published information for service users includes the option for the information to be available in different languages	Within existing resources	Jan-09			Deborah Upton
						Action plan with key milestones to be completed				Jul-08	This task to be reassigned until the Performance Manager is in post		Deborah Upton
42	R6	Pg 21 : Par 47	K31	BVPI 164	Y	Comply with the CRE code of practise in housing	Implement all the recommendations from the CRE review report (carried out by HQN)	All recommendations implemented and are operational	Budget issues need to be considered	Jan-09	PI report states 'Yes' to meeting the code but HQN and AC reports confirm that this is not being met. All Housing Service and Team Managers must agree the target deadline.		Deborah Upton
						Action plan with key milestones to be completed							Deborah Upton
43	N/A	N/A	K31	N/A	N	Carry out a self assessment benchmarking against KLOE 31 (Diversity)	Assess/bench mark against the KLOE and develop an action and implementation plan	Housing achieves and maintains at least a fair 1* standard against the Audit Commission KLOE standards		Jan-09			Deborah Upton

							Private Sector Housing						
44	R3	Pg 10	K1	N/A	N	Address capacity issues in the private sector housing team so that it can take forward all of its key areas of work	Appoint to vacant posts and consider any interim arrangements necessary to deliver the improvement plan.	A fully staffed Private Sector Housing Team is in place which can deliver the service requirements.	Budget issues need to be considered	Jan-09	Appointment to Private Sector Housing Manager still under negotiation. May need to introduce allowances and incentives to attract staff to the vacant posts.		Deborah Upton
45	R6	Pg 25 : Par 63	K9	N/A	Y	Use the detailed information on the house condition survey to develop plans to meet known levels of disrepair or to target resources.	Ensure category one hazards action plan is developed as part of this process. Develop policy on how the joint North and West Kent authority bid for the renovation programme will be implemented.	A plan is in place to target resources to the known levels of disrepair	Budget issues need to be considered	Jan-09	Establishing plans can be contained within the existing budget but delivery may have cost implications.		Deborah Upton
							Action plan with key milestones to be completed			Jul-08			Deborah Upton
46	R3	Pg 31 : Par 83	K9	N/A	Y	Agree a policy on housing and renewal and publish and distribute a summary in line with legal requirements	Develop a policy and publish and distribute a summary.	The Housing Service meets legal requirements for housing and renewal	Within existing resources	Jan-09			Deborah Upton
							Action plan with key milestones to be completed			Jul-08			Deborah Upton
47	R3	Pg 31 : Par 83	K9	BVPI: 62 & 184a	Y	Make better use of the full range of powers available to tackle poor housing conditions in the private sector; with a more proactive approach to poor housing conditions	Improve enforcement action and ensure this is risk based. Take action on category 1 hazards. Ensure complaints by council tenants to Environmental Health are tracked and responded to.	Poor housing conditions are improved through the use of statutory powers.	Within existing resources	Jan-09			Deborah Upton
							Action plan with key milestones to be completed			Jul-08			Deborah Upton
48	R3	Pg 31 : Par 84	K9	N/A	Y	Set and meet challenging targets to complete the statutory licensing of homes in multiple occupation	Develop and implement a programme of inspection . Put in place a comprehensive / up to date list of all HMO's and ensure these have been licensed in accordance with the adopted policy / standards.	All HMO's are licensed. Private landlords / partner agencies understand the licensing procedure and have access to information / advice that helps them understand the standards that need to be achieved	Consultants budget	Jan-09	In progress at the present time. 2.5 consultants are carrying out the work at present.		Deborah Upton
							Action plan with key milestones to be completed			Jul-08			Deborah Upton
49	R6	Pg 31 : Par 85	K9	N/A	Y	Adopt a standard and protocol for fire safety in HMO's in consultation with Kent Fire and Rescue Service.	Develop a standard and a protocol with Partners	HMO fire safety standard and protocol is adopted and operational. This is published and freely available.	Within existing resources	Jan-09	This work is being carried out by the Kent wide Tec Officer group.		Deborah Upton
							Action plan with key milestones to be completed			Jul-08			Deborah Upton

50	R6	Pg 31 : Par 85	K9	N/A	Y	Review the HMO Policy and ensure this meets the legal requirements	HMO policy on the website is incomplete and in some places wrong with four missing appendices dealing with amenity and fire standards and calculation of fees.	HMO Policy is complete and meets legal requirements and has been approved by Members.	Within existing resources	Dec-08			Deborah Upton
						Action plan with key milestones to be completed				Jul-08			Deborah Upton
51	R6	Pg 32: Par 87	K9	N/A	Y	Use Financial Flexibilities under the Regulatory Reform Order (RRO) 2002 to tackle poor housing conditions	Ensure full budget is allocated and spent to improve the living conditions of vulnerable people.	Poor housing conditions are improved through the use of statutory powers and the numbers of people benefiting has increased from the present baseline.	Budget issues need to be considered	Jan-09	Does this need additional Financial resources?		Mick Hayward
						Action plan with key milestones to be completed				Jul-08			Deborah Upton
52	R3	Pg 32 : Par 88	K9	BV/PI:56	Y	Strengthen the home adaptation service to provide choice for clients, and ensure compliance with government guidance	Scope the end to end process and develop and action plan to meet the target.	Service Users have a greater choice which meets their needs. Adaptations waiting times meets the government guidance of 15 days	Budget issues need to be considered	Jan-09	Amanda to confirm if there is sufficient capacity and budget for the work to be undertaken.		Amanda Rogers
						Action plan with key milestones to be completed				Jul-08			Amanda Rogers
53	R6	Pg 32 : Par 89	K9	N/A	Y	Seek alternative ways of doing adaptations (e.g. home repair assistance)	Consider the options and produce a paper for consideration by Senior Managers/Commissioning Body	An increase in the number of people helped through a variety of ways.	Within existing resources	Jan-09			Amanda Rogers
						Action plan with key milestones to be completed				Jun-08			Amanda Rogers

54	R3	Pg 32 : Par 91	K9	N/A	Y	Introduce robust arrangements to monitor standards of caravan and park homes	Develop and implement a programme of inspection	Standards are set and monitored and Owners/landlords have been given information and guidance to assist them to understand the standards and what is expected.	Within existing resources	Jan-09	There are new national standards being introduced and consideration needs to be given to the timescale so as not to duplicate work.		Deborah Upton
							Action plan with key milestones to be completed			Jul-08			Deborah Upton
55	R3	Pg 33 : Par 92	K9	N/A	Y	Introduce an accreditation scheme, with incentives for private sector landlords	Develop through the Private Sector Landlords Forum. Consider good practise in other LA's. and partnership arrangements .	All Private Sector Landlords used by the council are accredited.	Budget issues need to be considered	Jan-09	Check with West Kent Authorities how they have progressed this and consider partnership arrangements.		Deborah Upton
							Action plan with key milestones to be completed			Jul-08			Deborah Upton
56	R6	Pg 33 : Par 93	K9	N/A	Y	Develop clear targets for Kent Energy Centre (KEC) and provide assistance from the council's resources	Develop targets	Increase the number of people supported	Budget issues need to be considered	Jan-09	Can this be delivered within existing resources?		Deborah Upton
							Action plan with key milestones to be completed			Jul-08			Deborah Upton
57	R3	Pg 33 : Par 94	K9	BVP1:64	N	Adopt a strategic approach to reduce the number of empty homes	Develop an Empty Property Strategy and a data base. Review the target set from the present base line of 15 per annum.	Increased number of empty homes borough back into use from the present baseline and a more challenging target has been set.	Within existing resources	Jan-09			Deborah Upton
58	N/A	N/A	K9	N/A	N	Carry out a self assessment against KLOE 9 (Private Sector Housing)	Assess/bench mark against the KLOE and develop an action and implementation plan	Housing achieves and maintains at least a fair 1* standard against the Audit Commission KLOE standards	Within existing resources	Jan-09			Deborah Upton

							Housing Strategy and Development (Including Planning)							
59	R6	Pg 26 : Par 69	K2	N/A	N		Ensure all strategies draw on the experience of Partners, Stakeholders and Service users.	Develop a route map to demonstrate how and when and with whom all strategy consultation happens .	Evidence can be demonstrated that Partners, Stakeholders and Service Users have been involved and consulted on the development of the Strategies.	Within existing resources	Jun-08	Framework completed		Deborah Upton
60	R6	Pg 23: Par 68 & Pg 21 : Par 48	K2	N/A	N		Ensure all needs that have been identified are included in the development of the strategies	Evidence that surveys undertaken have been used to develop plans or target resources, for example Rural needs, BME residents, Gypsies and Travellers	The production of evidenced based strategies	Within existing resources	Jun-08			Deborah Upton
61	R6	Pg 25 : Par 65	K2	N/A	Y		Review and publish the Homelessness Strategy	Develop strategy through a review of homelessness and in consultation with Service Users and Stakeholders.	A Homelessness Strategy is published	Consultants budget	Dec-08	This work should be progressed through the Homelessness Forum .		Consultant - Mel Cant
								Action plan with key milestones to be completed			Jun-08			Consultant - Mel Cant
62	R6		K13	BVPI:109a	Y		Improve the speed of handling planning applications (this is currently below average)	Performance needs to be improved in line with government targets.	The speed of planning applications has improve to the average of 60% of major planning applications within 13 weeks	Within existing resources	Dec-08			Stephen Gaimster
								Action plan with key milestones to be completed			Jun-08			Stephen Gaimster
63	R4	Pg 25 : Par 66 Pg 33 : Par 95-108	K2	N/A	N		Review current policies on affordable housing in development of the core strategy to ensure they are adequately address affordable and rural housing needs	Introduce Supplementary planning guidance to support the councils policy on affordable housing. Ensure the policy is ambitious and is in line with other Kent Authorities. Ensure that the policy recognises and meets the rural needs of the borough develop affordable housing without grant through developer contribution .	Supply of housing to meet local need - % increase in affordable housing on sites to 35%?	Within existing resources	Dec-08			Stephen Gaimster
64	N/A	N/A	K2	N/A	N		Update the self assessment against KLOE 2 (Strategy and Enabling)	Update assessment/bench marking against the KLOE and update the action and implementation plan	Housing achieves and maintains at least a fair 1* standard against the Audit Commission KLOE standards	Within existing resources	Jan-09	Consider partnership arrangements with other good performing LA acting as 'critical friend'		Deborah Upton

										Homelessness, Housing Advice, Allocations and Lettings									
65	R1	Pg 28 : Par 74	K8	BVPI:183a & 183b, 203, 213 & 214	Y	Measure the length of time households spend in temporary accommodation and set challenging targets to minimise length of stay	Develop a TA reduction strategy in partnership with TA tenants .Develop an action plan from the results of the one to one TA visits. Ensure staff are trained to consider B&B as last resort. .	Time spent in TA is reduced from the present baseline and there are challenging targets are set which are achievable.	From consultants budget	Jan-09	Although the date by the Audit Commission has been set at January, this work should start ASAP		Consultant Mel Cant						
							Action plan with key milestones to be completed			Jun-08		Consultant Mel Cant							
66	R6	Pg 28 : Par 74	K8	N/A	Y	Ensure all TA is inspected by Environmental Health Officers to check for health and safety.	Develop and implement a programme of inspection	All TA is inspected and meets statutory requirements	Within existing resources?	Oct-08	This work should begin ASAP - does this need additional resources?	Deborah Upton							
							Action plan with key milestones to be completed			Jun-08		Deborah Upton							
67	R6	Pg 29 : Par 74	K8	BVPI: 225, 202, & HC1	Y	Ensure response times to homelessness are improved	Improve joint working with stakeholders, consider resources required to meet standards which should be agreed with stakeholders through the homelessness forum.	A reduction of the present waiting time for appointments for referrals from stakeholders and partners	Within existing resources	Oct-08		Deborah Upton							
							Action plan with key milestones to be completed			Jun-08		Deborah Upton							
68	R6	Pg 29 : Par 74	K8	N/A	N	Work with the Private Sector to improve to increase the supply of accommodation	Increase supply through the variety of routes including the Landlords Forum. Increased supply needs to be considered alongside procurement and VFM approach	Increased in the supply of private sector accommodation	Within existing resources	Jan-09	Link to TA and Empty Homes Strategy	Deborah Upton							
69	R6	Pg 27 : par 72	K8	N/A	N	Implement ongoing training for staff	Training plan already complete. This now needs to be rolled out.	Training needs for staff have been identified and begun to be delivered	Within existing resources	Oct-08	Keep training log for evidence	Deborah Upton							
70	R6	Pg 27 : par 72	K8	N/A	Y	Introduce and improve quality control into the service	Ensure clear processes that meet audit requirements. Carry out regular quality checking across teams	Quality control has been introduced and implemented within the service	Within existing resources	Jan-09	Teams to act as 'critical friend' to each other	Deborah Upton							
							Action plan with key milestones to be completed			Oct-08		Deborah Upton							

71	N/A	N/A	K7	N/A	Y	Develop an action plan for the implementation of the revised Allocation Policy	Develop a detailed action plan for the implementation of the revised policy	The Allocation policy is implemented and fully operational	Within existing resources	Check imp date	It is understood that a draft action plan has been prepared by Stephanie Sharpe		Deborah Upton
							Action plan with key milestones to be completed			Jun-08			Deborah Upton
72	N/A	N/A	K1	N/A	Y	Review effectiveness of the new structure of the housing operational service (lettings/allocations/homeless/options/advice and homechoice)	Consider the business processes and identify where business re-engineering would reduce duplication and improve efficiency and VFM of the service	A robust 'fit for purpose' structure that meets the needs of the service	Within existing resources	Jan-09			Deborah Upton
							Action plan with key milestones to be completed			Oct-08			Deborah Upton
73	N/A	N/A	K1	N/A	Y	Evaluate Nomination rights and achievements with Housing Associations	Check nomination rights received match that is set out in nomination agreements. Ensure Homeless people are being accepted.	All nomination rights are being offered by HA and taken up by the council in order to maximise the supply of housing to meet need	Within existing resources	Oct-08			Deborah Upton
							Action plan with key milestones to be completed			Jun-08			Deborah Upton
74	N/A	N/A	K7	N/A	N	Carry out a self assessment benchmarking against KLOE 7 (Allocations and Lettings)	Assess/bench mark against the KLOE and develop an action and implementation plan	Housing achieves and maintains at least a fair 1* standard against the Audit Commission KLOE standards	Within existing resources	Jan-09	Consider partnership arrangements with other good performing LA acting as 'critical friend'		Deborah Upton
75	N/A	N/A	K8	N/A	N	Update Benchmarking against KLOE 8 (Homelessness and Housing Needs)	Update assessment/bench marking against the KLOE and update the action and implementation plan	Housing achieves and maintains at least a fair 1* standard against the Audit Commission KLOE standards	Within existing resources	Jan-09	Consider partnership arrangements with other good performing LA acting as 'critical friend'		Deborah Upton

							Value for Money						
76	R6	Pg 37 : Par 112	K32	N/A	Y	Develop a VFM strategy	Develop first draft strategy from guidance in the PID and the KLOE ? (VFM)	Evidence that the Housing Service is moving towards a systematic approach to providing VFM	Within existing resources	Sep-08			Mick Hayward
							Action plan with key milestones to be completed			Jun-08			Mick Hayward
77	R6	Pg 37 : Par 112	K32	N/A	Y	Implement the VFM projects already identified	Projects include (those not specified elsewhere): • A review of income collection rates in TA • Review policy and arrangements for storing tenants belongings whilst they are in TA Review arrangements for housing benefit on TA • Review of the homebond scheme • Review our to the grant funding level of DFGs	Projects are completed and savings to the budget are achieved and/or there is an increase in the quality of services.	Within existing resources	Jan-09	Link to VFM Strategy		Mick Hayward
							Action plan with key milestones to be completed			Jun-08			Mick Hayward
78	R5	Pg 36 : Par 110	K32	N/A	N	Developing a comprehensive understanding of how costs compare through benchmarking and routinely reviewing costs alongside performance	Benchmarking of team services should be included in this work. The VFM PID includes working at sub regional level on this work.	Benchmarking demonstrates where the service ' fits' compared to other similar organisations. Where the service falls short plans are put in place for sustained improvements.	Within existing resources	Oct-08	Service Managers to begin benchmarking their services and building up a portfolio of comparisons and evidence. PID produced.. Link to VFM Strategy.		Mick Hayward
79	R5	Pg 37 : Par 112	K32	N/A	N	Ensure all improvement plans contain value for money targets which are measurable	Review and assess all plans for VFM targets	Cost and quality are measured in all plans for improvements.	Within existing resources	Oct-08	Link to VFM Strategy		Mick Hayward
80	R5	Pg 46 : Par 149	K32	N/A	N	Make greater use of opportunities to share expertise and resources at a sub-regional level	The VFM PID includes working at sub regional level on this work.	Staff resources are reduced enabling focus on other strategic priorities. Any Financial savings are re-invested back into the service .	Within existing resources	Oct-08	Link to VFM Strategy - ensure learning is recorded in the learning log.		Deborah Upton
81	R5	Pg 38 : Par 121	K32	N/A	N	Examine the scope for further efficiencies and economies of scale, including opportunities to maximise developer contributions to affordable housing	To be considered through the Affordable Housing Working Group	Increased supply of affordable housing from existing budgets	Within existing resources	Oct-08	Link to VFM Strategy		Mick Hayward and Stephen Gaimster
							Action plan with key milestones to be completed			Jul-08			Mick Hayward and Stephen Gaimster

82	R5	Pg 30 : Par 82	K32	N/A	Y	Work with Partners to review the use of financial incentives to address under-occupation in the social housing sector	Analyse the outcomes of the two under-occupation incentive schemes and develop proposed to improve the councils scheme	Better use of existing social housing stock enabling more families to be housing.	Within existing resources	Oct-08	Link to VFM Strategy	Deborah Upton
							Action plan with key milestones to be completed			Jun-08		Deborah Upton
83	R5	Pg 43 : Par 135	K1/32	N/A	Y	Improve the quality of financial and budget management with the service	Ensure Budget monitoring systems are robust and the two parts of the housing revenue budget for the strategic housing service are brought together and effective monitoring is in place .	Revenue and capital budgets are regularly considered by Housing DMT. Housing budgets are able to deliver strategic priorities identified in the service plans.	Within existing resources	Oct-08	Budgets are monitored on a monthly basis. New arrangements will only disaggregate to Service Manager.	Mick Hayward and Deborah Upton
84	R6	Pg 43 : Par 135	K1/32	N/A	Y	Develop outcome based budgets	Develop outcome based budgets . Use PI's and data as part basis for this work	All Housing budgets are moving towards becoming outcome based ensuring an a greater understanding of what is achieved for every £ spent.	Within existing resources	Mar-09	Progress towards this for approval for new format next financial year	Mick Hayward
							Action plan with key milestones to be completed			Oct-08		Mick Hayward
85	R6	Pg 37 : Par 116/117	K1/32	N/A	Y	Introduce modern procurement methods to the Strategic Housing Service	Subject Temporary Accommodation to a formal procurement process. Secure additional health or environmental benefits and ensure opportunities for joint procurement with partners are actively pursued.	TA is subject to a formal procurement process.	Budget issues need to be considered	Jan-09	TA Procurement needs to be managed with Corporate lead and supported or by external Organisation/Consultants.	Deborah Upton
							Action plan with key milestones to be completed			Jun-08		Deborah Upton
							Develop a selection process for preferred partners or introduce minimum standards or best practise for its HA partners.	Preferred Partners selected and standards set.	Within existing resources	Jan-09	Develop robust methodology which stands up to scrutiny. The Housing Corporations view on the approach is under review and may change.	Deborah Upton
							Action plan with key milestones to be completed					Deborah Upton
							Develop partnering contracts for adaptations DFG's or renovation and improvement works.	Partnership contracts developed	Budget issues need to be considered	Jan-09		Amanda Rogers
							Action plan with key milestones to be completed			Jun-08		Amanda Rogers

86	R6	Pg 37 : Par 115	K32	N/A	Y	Collect and evaluate performance information from partners such as the HIA and CAB	Develop performance and evaluation framework and action plan.	Information is collected and evaluated which will inform future decisions on partnerships arrangements.	Within existing resources	Dec-08			Deborah Upton
							Action plan with key milestones to be completed			Jun-08	This task to be reassigned until the Performance Manager is in post		Deborah Upton
87	N/A	N/A	K32	N/A	N	Ensure HIA contract in place	Review HIA service and award steady state contract		Within existing resources	Apr-09	Actions should follow the SP procurement policy and procedures.		Amanda Rogers
88	R6	Pg 36 : Par 111	K32	N/A	Y	Evaluate SLA's and their effectiveness	Develop SLA evaluation framework and action plan. Ensure rolling reviews are included	The council can demonstrate that its investment to Partners are providing VFM in the housing services they manage and operate.	Within existing resources	Jan-08			Deborah Upton
							Action plan with key milestones to be completed			Jun-08	This task to be reassigned until the Performance Manager is in post		Deborah Upton
89	R6	Pg 38 : Par 121	K32	N/A	N	Bid for resources in line with the Strategic Priorities	Set up regular monitoring of bids available and consider applying for these, including those for the operational services.	Maximised income by securing other forms of inward investment to meet service priorities.	Within existing resources	Jan-08			Stephanie Goad
90	N/A	N/A	K32	N/A	N	Carry out a self assessment benchmarking against KLOE 32 (Value for Money)	Assess/bench mark against the KLOE and develop an action and implementation plan	Housing achieves and maintains at least a fair 1* standard against the Audit Commission KLOE standards	Within existing resources	Feb-09			Deborah Upton