

# HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

## Agenda Item 34

Brighton & Hove City Council

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Housing Improvement Programme update</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>26 September 2011</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Strategic Director - Place</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Sam Smith</b>	<b>Tel:</b> 29-1383
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<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

### FOR GENERAL RELEASE

#### 1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 This report informs Housing Management Consultative Committee of the progress made in the delivery of the Housing Service Improvement Plan and proposals for the next phase of the Improvement Programme.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Housing Management Consultative Committee notes the progress made in Phase 1 and the preparations for Phase 2 of the Improvement Programme.

#### 3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

##### What is the Improvement Programme?

- 3.1 The improvement programme is the way that the council manages and organises our work to improve our services. We ensure that all the work in the programme is 'project managed' helping to deliver it in a controlled way; to budget and on time. Taking this approach helps to ensure that the variety of work is co-ordinated and helps ensure that projects achieve the anticipated benefits and service improvements. The overall programme is managed by Sam Smith, the service's Programme Manager.

##### The Housing Management Service Improvement Plan 2009–12

- 3.2 The Improvement Plan presented a three year programme for managing and maintaining council housing. It was developed with the overall objective of improving services to an excellent standard. The first phase of the improvement programme is now coming to a close and proposals have been developed for the next phase of the programme.

- 3.3 The first phase of the Improvement Programme included the delivery of a number of projects that have improved the services provided to residents and the services financial position. Projects completed in the first phase include:
- **Repairs & Improvement Partnership** – procurement and mobilisation of the new partnership with Mears Limited
  - **Housing Centre** – the development of the new centre in Moulsecoomb which houses the partnership and the council’s administrative teams
  - **Turning the Tide** – project to tackle anti-social behaviour, inequality and improve neighbourhoods (including the ‘Rate Your Estate’ initiative)
  - **Resident Involvement Strategy** – review of the Tenant Compact and development of a strategy including a menu of involvement opportunities
  - **Financial Inclusion** – cross agency project to improve financial information, opportunities and advice for residents
  - **Sustainability** – development of the resident energy efficiency working group and initiatives including the training of resident Energy Champions
  - **Customer Access** – review of how we can improve access to, and experience of our services
  - **Website development** – improvements to the council’s website to make it easier to use and provide more opportunities to access services online
  - **Information Technology** – staff training and systems development to improve the service’s use of computer systems
- 3.4 These projects and others have been successfully delivered in the first phase of the Improvement Programme. They have helped to improve the service’s performance and we are now among the top 25% of landlords in areas such as income collection and empty property turn around time. The programme has also lead to significant financial savings which have been re-invested in homes; enabling the council to be on target for all properties meeting the Decent Homes Standard by the end of 2013/14 financial year.
- 3.5 The first phase of the Improvement Programme has helped us to improve performance and ensure that residents are getting value for money. However there is still work to be done to ensure that all residents are getting the service they deserve, and a second phase of the programme is currently being prepared with the aim to make our services more effective, efficient and responsive to residents’ needs.

### **Delivering the council’s priorities - Improvement Programme Phase 2**

- 3.6 The council’s administration has outlined their key priorities for the city and made a number of manifesto commitments relating to housing. The next phase of the Improvement Programme will help to deliver these commitments. The new priorities are:
- Tackling inequality
  - Creating a more sustainable city
  - Engaging people who live and work in the city

- 3.7 The programme includes a range of projects that will help to deliver these priorities including those to improve the sustainability of homes, tackle inequality and increase resident involvement in budget setting and decision making. The programme will aim to reduce the service's management costs in order to re-invest in supporting these priorities. Projects that will be delivered over the next three years include:
- **Carbon reduction** – work to improve the sustainability of homes and tackle fuel poverty e.g. solar photo voltaic panels and energy efficiency work
  - **Resident Involvement** – work to develop resident scrutiny and help ensure that as many residents as possible get involved e.g. through social media
  - **Service reorganisation** – reorganising our staffing structures and changing roles to make sure they are right for the services we provide
  - **Service contracts** – continued work to ensure that all our contracts provide excellent service and value for money
  - **Customer Access** – continuing work to ensure that our services are easy to contact and that issues are resolved quickly and effectively
  - **Lettings review** – work to further improve our lettings process
  - **Accommodation strategy** – making sure that we are making best use of all of our offices and buildings
  - **Working with communities** – working on new project and delivery models e.g. white goods recycling and discretionary schemes
  - **Services online** – further work to improve our web site and access to online services e.g. improved online repairs reporting

### **What happens next?**

- 3.8 The programme will now start to deliver the projects listed above and others over the next three years. There will be plenty of opportunities for residents to get involved and there will be regular progress reports and updates to HMCC and in Homing-in magazine. The programme is flexible and it is likely that some new projects will join the programme and some leave as it progresses.

## **4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 The service is committed to involving residents in our work at all levels and via a wide range of methods. A range of consultation has been undertaken with residents in order to inform our improvement priorities such as questionnaires (e.g. 'Tell us what you think' and regular customer satisfaction surveys), residents' contributions to our annual reports in 2010 and 2011 and feedback on the consultation drafts, resident mystery shopping, focus groups, meetings and resident working groups.
- 4.2 The development of the programme has been informed by the Performance Compact that has been agreed with the council's Lead Commissioner for Housing and the council's Housing Strategy 2009-14.

- 4.3 We have outlined our improvement plans in the annual report to all council tenants and leaseholders being published in September 2011. The annual report 2011 also updates all residents on the completion and achievements of the first three years of our Improvement Programme. It goes on to state that we will launch the next phase of our Improvement Programme and carry on taking a co-ordinated project management approach, involving residents in this work.
- 4.4 Staff affected by any changes will be consulted following the council's 'Managing Change' Policy.
- 4.5 Residents will continue to be involved in the projects to deliver the programme and regular progress reports will be brought to Housing Management Consultative Committee.

## **5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

### Financial Implications:

- 5.1 The costs or cost savings relating to the Housing Improvement Programme Phase 2 will be included within the Housing Revenue Account Budget Strategy for 2012/13, which will be reported to this Committee in February 2012.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Name Susie Allen Date: 08/09/11*

### Legal Implications:

- 5.2 As the report is primarily for noting, there are no specific legal or Human Rights Act implications to be drawn to the Committee's attention. The legal issues associated with the future projects outlined in paragraph 3.7 will be considered as and when they arise.

*Lawyer Consulted: Name Liz Woodley Date: 14/09/11*

### Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 Equality Impact Assessments will be carried out on relevant projects included in the programme. The programme will aim to tackle inequality through its many of the projects.

### Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 The improvement programme will aim to help with the council's aim of becoming the 'greenest city in the UK' and all projects will undertake an analysis of their sustainability impacts as part of the project planning process. There are a number of ways that the programme can help the council to achieve this goal e.g.
- The programme includes projects to improve energy efficiency and install renewable sources of energy on homes; helping to tackle climate change and fuel poverty
  - Projects will take steps to maximise re-use and recycling, and minimise waste to landfill e.g. through procurement conditions

- The programme will help to develop the council's work with local communities and the development of opportunities for apprenticeships and training
- Projects will aim to utilise local labour, products and companies where possible
- Project will take steps to use materials and products which are as sustainable as possible and minimise embedded carbon

#### Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 Providing good quality housing and support is essential to help reduce anti social behaviour and other crime. There are specific projects within the programme which should contain specific objectives around tackling crime and anti-social behaviour.

#### Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 Projects included in the programme will have their risks captured and monitored as part of the project management process. A programme level risk log will also be maintained.

#### Public Health Implications:

- 5.7 There are strong links between improving housing and tackling public health inequalities. The programme has so far delivered a number of projects which will have impacts on public health, for example reducing maintenance and improvement costs in order to bring all homes up to the Decent Homes Standards and projects to improve financial inclusion. The next phase of the programme will include projects that will help to further improve housing condition and tackle inequality.

#### Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.8 The improvement programme will need to be delivered in partnership with residents, other services and organisations. The benefits of improving council housing will have affects across our neighbourhoods and the city and not just confined to those living in council managed housing.

### **6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):**

- 6.1 There are a number of different approaches to delivering service improvements, however a programme management approach has been effective through the first phase of the programme and is in line with best practice within the council and across other private and public sector organisations.

### **7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1 To provide Housing Management Consultative Committee with an update on our progress in phase 1 of the service improvement programme and advise on the launch of phase 2.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

### **Appendices:**

1. None

### **Documents in Members' Rooms**

1. None

### **Background Documents**

1. None