

To: City Executive Board

Date: 5th December 2012

Report of: Head of Housing

Title of Report: April to September 2012/13 – Review of progress against Housing Strategy Action Plan priorities

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To provide the City Executive Board with an update of the Council's progress against the Housing Strategy Action Plan priorities for the period April – September 2012

Key decision? No

Executive lead member: Cllr Scott Seamons

Policy Framework: Housing Strategy 2012-15

Recommendation(s): The City Executive Board is asked

To note and make comment on the progress made from April to September 2012/13 against the tasks identified in the Housing Strategy.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 When the Council adopted the Housing Strategy for 2012-2015 it also requested six month reviews on progress. Appendix A to this report sets out performance against the Housing Strategy Action Plan priority tasks for 2012/13 as at the end of quarter 2.
- 1.2 The targets are distributed between the five Housing Strategy priorities as set out in the table at 2.1 below.

2. Progress to date

- 2.1 As at the end of September 2012 the overall summary position against each of the corporate priorities is as follows:

Priority	Red	Amber	Green
Provide More Affordable Housing			✓

Prevent Homelessness		✓	
Address Housing Needs of Vulnerable People		✓	
Improve Housing Conditions			✓
Improve Quality, cost effectiveness and efficiency		✓	

There has been a great deal of progress against a wide ranging and challenging plan. Appendix A to the report provides members with detailed progress with highlights as follows.

Provide More Affordable Housing

The Affordable Housing Programme for 2012/13 is currently on schedule to be achieved and policy work to support the provision of new affordable housing is progressing.

Prevent Homelessness

Government guidance in relation to allocation policies, discharge of duty into the private rented sector, use of accommodation out of area and new national homelessness strategy were issued later than predicted and so several items have had to be re-scheduled to accommodate the release of such information. Nonetheless, a draft Homelessness Strategy has been produced and a report will be presented to CEB in February to recommend the final Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan. A revised housing allocations scheme is under development.

There has been disappointing progress in the development of a scheme to provide more temporary accommodation but alternatives are being examined with the view to a further report to CEB early in 2013.

Address Housing Needs of Vulnerable People

There have been significant changes to the organisation of the Supporting Programme within the County Council. There are several services to be re-commissioned in the next year. Officers continue to work in partnership, to re-commission services, and try to maintain adequate service provision for vulnerable persons in Oxford and across Oxfordshire. The role of the new Health and Well Being Board is also being kept under review, to ensure local housing and support issues are highlighted and addressed in this new forum.

Improve Housing Conditions

There has been good progress in developing the council's role, both as a landlord in terms of maintaining decent homes standard within its own stock and as the strategic housing authority with regard to action to address poor standards in the private rented sector including good progress in meeting challenging targets with respect to HMO licensing.

Improve quality, cost effectiveness and efficiency

A fundamental review of arrangements for tenant engagement has been undertaken by the Tenant Participation and Advisory service (TPAS) with a revised strategy to be considered by the City Executive Board in November.

A fundamental service review is underway for repairs and planned maintenance. Rents performance has been adversely impacted by the economic circumstances and the direct payments pilot work and is a high priority area for improvement in the second half of the year.

Implement self financing for the HRA.

Following adoption of the HRA Business Plan in February good progress has been made with a six month review of the assumptions to ensure that it will support the Council's ambitions with regard to building new affordable homes, investment in the existing stock and the delivery of first class landlord services.

3. Level of risk

A risk register is attached as appendix 2. It should be noted that risks associated with specific projects and work programmes identified in the action plan are identified and addressed in the relevant project documentation for those projects / programmes.

4. Environmental Impact

The Housing Strategy 2012 to 2015 does not have any explicit environmental impacts in itself. Specific projects identified in the Housing Strategy Action Plan will have environmental impacts, specifically the provision of additional housing to meet housing needs. These environmental impacts associated with specific projects and work programmes identified in the action plan are identified and addressed in the relevant project documentation for those projects / programmes.

5. Equality Impact Assessment

The original EIA is attached as appendix 3 and is still current. The Housing Strategy and Action Plan are very specifically targeted at meeting the housing needs of the most vulnerable people in Oxford and as such no adverse impacts on any equalities group are expected as a result of this strategy.

6. Financial implications

Each element within the Action Plan references the financial implications (General Fund and Housing Revenue Account). There are a number of strategic objective actions that have significant financial implications for the council. These projects are:

- a) Delivery of new housing and land at Barton.
- b) Delivery of affordable housing on council owned land with or without HCA grant.
- c) Implementing Self-Financing of the Housing Revenue Account and supporting improvements within the Councils housing stock

No new financial implications are brought forward by this report. Detail on financial impacts for these actions and projects are identified in the relevant council reports for these projects and are acknowledged in the Housing Strategy Action Plan. Delivering 2012/13 Housing Strategy targets will be dependant on approval of the Budget at Council in February 2013. Financial implications will continue to be kept under review and reported in subsequent reports to CEB.

7. Legal Implications

The Local Government Act 2003 requires local housing authorities to have in place a Housing Strategy for the district.

Meeting the Council's statutory housing obligations is reflected in the objectives of the housing strategy: statutory homelessness duty; provision of housing advice and landlord responsibilities.

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<p>Version 2</p>

Appendices

A – 6 month review of 2012-13 Housing Strategy Action Plan Targets

B – Risk assessment

C – Equality Impact Assessment