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Stephen McGrath – Member Services Manager
General Enquiries: Telephone No. 01362 656870
Member Services Fax No. 01362 690821
DX743950 Dereham 2

To The Chairman and Members of the Overview &
Scrutiny Commission

Our Ref: HM/L.3.1

Contact: Helen McAleer

All other Members of the Council – for information

Direct Dial: 01362 656381

E-mail: helen.mcaleer@breckland.gov.uk

Date 29 December 2010

AGENDA SUPPLEMENT

Dear Sir/Madam,

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION - THURSDAY 6 JANUARY 2011

I refer to the agenda for the above-mentioned meeting and enclose the following item:

Item No	Report Title	Page Nos
9.	<u>Choice Based Lettings</u> Report of the Deputy Chief Executive.	44 - 49

Yours faithfully

Helen McAleer

Senior Committee Officer

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

Report of Mark Stokes the Deputy Chief Executive
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 6th January 2011

DELIVERY OF THE HOUSING REGISTER CONTRACT

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To consider the performance of the delivery of the Housing Register Contract by Anglia revenues Partnership Trading (ARPT).

Note: In preparing this report, due regard has been had to equality of opportunity, human rights, prevention of crime and disorder, environmental and risk management considerations as appropriate. Relevant officers have been consulted in relation to any legal, financial or human resources implications and comments received are reflected in the report.

3. Information, Issues and Options

3.1 Background

- 3.1.1 The contract for the delivery of the housing register and development of a choice base lettings system was tendered and awarded to Anglia Revenues Partnership Trading (ARPT) in July 2007. The Contract was agreed and signed on January 2009 although the service has been provided from July 2007.

At the start of the service there were 2832 people on the housing register with a housing need as set out within the adopted allocations policy.

- 3.1.2 ARPT undertake a number of tasks to deliver the contract which are detailed in the contract but briefly provide the following :- Assessment of housing applications, advice to applicants to assist with meeting housing need, provision of nominations to the Housing Associations when requested within the application of the allocations policy, provision of data such as housing need information, maintenance of housing applications, development of the services and the move to a choice base lettings system.

- 3.1.3 The Contract is managed by the Housing team through regular assessment of performance data details of which are attached at appendix A, monthly performance meetings and quarterly contract meetings. Quarterly meetings are also held with the Housing Associations ARPT and the Council to measure and develop the service ensuring the customer is 'key' to those improvements and develop a choice base lettings service.

3.2 Issues

- 3.2.1 The service provided by ARPT has been inconsistent over the period of the contract to date. A sample of the performance data in graphical form is attached to this report at appendix B. The inconsistency has been on a number of issues which have been addressed through the contract meetings. The issues have been :-

Quality of the service through the quality of the staff. There have been some poorly performing staff as well as at times not enough staff.

Poor performance against agreed targets

Lack of delivery against key aspects of the contract ie no delivery of the Choice Base Lettings system

This has resulted in the financial penalties being claimed against the contract

- 3.2.2 The issues listed above have been addressed through a number of ways. Performance has started to improve through investment in staff resources as well as the relocation of the team to Elizabeth House from Breck house. The ability to increase staff knowledge and understanding by working within the housing team has increased greatly and is leading to a higher quality of service and experience for the customer
- 3.2.3 The none delivery of Choice Base lettings continues to be of concern for the Council. The target date for delivery of the system set by the Department of Communities and Local Government was December 2010. Within the contract the delivery of the system was intended to be 1st April 2009.
- The development of the system has been delayed for a number of reasons mainly due to the bespoke nature of the system being developed and the relationship between ARPT and Civica their delivery partner. A system was finally accepted by the Council and ready for a go live in January 2010 when there was a major hardware failure which resulted in the system being unable to be recovered. This has led to a number of protracted contracted negotiations with ARPT with a current deadline of 20th January 2011 being the new delivery date set by the Council.
- 3.2.4 Extensive legal advice has been undertaken on our contractual position and procurement position with relation to the contract which has been discussed as confidential business by Cabinet. Further information on this matter will be subject to a Cabinet decision after 20th January 2011.
- 3.2.5 The delivery of the Housing Register continues to be delivered satisfactorily to Customers by ARPT.

Lead Contact Officer:

Name/Post: Darryl Smith

Telephone: 01362 656890

Email: darryl.smith@breckland.gov.uk

Appendices attached to this report:

Appendix A extract from contract of performance measures

Appendix B Graphs of performance data

Appendix S2 KEY PERFORMANCE AND QUALITY REQUIREMENTS
Pre 1st April 2009

1. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

In addition to the requirements contained in the contract and specification the Contractor is required to meet the following key operational performance and quality targets set out by the Council :-

OPERATIONAL

	1	TARGET	Classification
	Publicity and Promotion		
	Produce branded publicity, website and key stakeholder information	At within one month commencement of contract	A
	2		
	Access, information and communication		
	Receive and respond to routine telephone enquiries during office hours from prospective applicants in relation to joining the Housing Register	Within 1 working day	B
	Provide information to applicants on services available from related agencies where tenancy sustainment is an issue	Within 2 working days	B
	Receive and respond to routine telephone enquiries from council in respect of Housing Register applications of applicants at risk of homelessness as determined by the Council	Within 1 working day	B
	Respond to urgent enquiries from the Council Housing Advice and Homeless team in respect of homelessness matters	Within 2 hrs	A
	Receive and acknowledge in writing to enquiries from third parties from MPs, councillors, law centres and solicitors etc and	Within 3 working days	B

	follow up with full reply	Within 14 days	A
	When the Council receives enquiries from the Ombudsman, supply full details on request to the Council's nominated Officer to respond	Within 10 working days	A
	Receive and respond to routine social welfare enquiries from social welfare and health agencies, tenancy sustainment services, advocacy and advice services, law centres and solicitors	Within 5 working days	B
	Notify Council about enquiries from local councillors, MPs, ombudsman services	Within 2 working days	B
	Full written response to general correspondence	Within 10 working days	B
	3		
	Applications, assessment and maintenance		
	Design application pack and form suitable for use as common housing application form, inc availability in prescribed languages	Within 6 weeks of commencement of contract	A
	Acknowledge and process normal applications, assess and issue confirmation letter	Within 7 working days	B
	Where investigations are required to determine special circumstances, provide home visits and establish eligibility in complex cases, following acknowledgedgement, full response	Within 2 weeks	A
	Where applicant meets defined criteria for referral to Councils Homelessness team, notification and process	Within 1 working day	A
	Undertake rolling annual review of applicants	Within 1 year of application	A
	Respond to notification of change in circumstances, re	Within 10 working days	B

assess and confirm position in writing	Within 28 days	B
Remove applicants from the register where no response has been received to review notice		
Undertake satisfaction surveys to applicants on the registers operation	Annually	B
Provide and maintain a database/IT platform capable of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recording data in respect of all factors relevant to the applicants' housing register application needs assessment and equalities status Providing an audit trail capable of recording customers' chance in circumstances Interrogation on both individual applicants and on groups of applicants by means of a selected criteria to determine need and demand Automatically updating points for increasing ages of dependants Producing shortlisting of applicants for nomination to RSL purposes on the following variables: housing need, property type and property location and location connection 	From commencement of contract	A
To have capacity to produce paper copies of applications, including documents collected in course of assessment, for	From commencement of the contract	A

consideration of appeals, Homeless applications, Freedom of information requests, Ombudsman enquiries etc		
Back up data base to Council server	As agreed	A
4 Nomination and referral requests		
Respond to requests for nominations and referrals from landlords and zone agents received by 10am each working day	Within 24 hours by email	A
Notify the Council that a homeless applicant has been nominated to an RSL	Within 24 hours by email	A
Lift suspension of shortlisted applicant, after liaising with Landlord holding nominees	No later than 5 working days	A
Remove successful applicant from the register following confirmation of COT	Within 2 working days	B
Provide Council with outcomes of offers to homeless applicants, as advised by landlords	Within 1 working day	A
5 Enquiries, Appeals and Complaints		
Respond to all applicant appeals at stage one	Within 10 working days	A
Convene panels for second stage appeals and respond	Within 21 working days	B
Respond to applicant complaints in line with complaints procedure	100%	B

GENERAL

In conjunction with the Council will have:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised application form to encompass common housing register requirements Follow IT project plan 	Within 3 months of commencement of contract	A
	To agreed time	A

		scale	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redesigned and produced application pack, and all associated media/forms to accommodate choice based lettings scheme in conjunction with Council and key stakeholders 	By Go-live date of 1 st April 2009	A
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To produce a quarterly newsletter with information regarding stock availability, turnover, letting levels 	Within 2 months of commencement of contract	B
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To have a website capable of providing downloadable applications, contact to be made with contractor and basic information in key languages 	Within 1 month of contract commencement	A
	Required level of achievement		
	Be achieving operational performance targets as agreed in:		
	Targets classified as 'A'	95%	
	Targets classified as 'B'	90%	
	To achieve satisfactory satisfaction levels, measured in line with the Councils surveys, in excess of;	80% in first year rising to 90% by year three of contract	

Total number of applications issued

