



AGENDA

NOTE: In the case of non-members, this agenda is for information only

- Committee - **POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW PANEL 3**
- Date & Time - **TUESDAY, 1ST APRIL, 2008 AT 2.00 PM**
- Venue - **NORFOLK ROOM, THE CONFERENCE SUITE, ELIZABETH HOUSE, DEREHAM**

Members of the Committee requiring further information, or with specific questions, are asked to raise these with the appropriate officer at least two working days before the meeting. If the information requested is available, this will be provided, and reported to Committee.

Panel 3 Members:

Mr R.G. Kybird (Chairman)	Mr R. Kemp
Mrs S.R. Howard-Alpe (Vice-Chairman)	Mr J.P. Labouchere
Mr G.P. Balaam	Mr B. Rose
Mr P.J. Duigan	Mr F.J. Sharpe
Mrs D.K.R. Irving	Mr M. Spencer

PERSONS ATTENDING THE MEETING ARE REQUESTED TO TURN OFF MOBILE TELEPHONES

Committee Services

Elizabeth House, Walpole Loke,
Dereham Norfolk, NR19 1EE

Date: Wednesday, 19 March 2008

PART A

ITEMS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

	<u>Page(s)</u> <u>herewith</u>
1. <u>MINUTES</u> To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 19 February 2008.	1 - 7
2. <u>APOLOGIES</u> To receive apologies for absence.	
3. <u>URGENT BUSINESS</u> Members are asked at this stage to declare any interests that they may have in any of the following items on the agenda. The Members' Code of Conduct requires that declarations include the nature of the interest and whether it is a personal or prejudicial interest.	
4. <u>DECLARATION OF INTEREST</u> Members are asked at this stage to declare any interests they may have in any of the following items on the agenda. The Members' Code of Conduct requires that declarations include the nature of the interest and whether it is a personal or prejudicial interest.	
5. <u>NON-MEMBERS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE MEETING</u> To note the names of any non-members wishing to address the meeting.	
6. <u>LEISURE PFI UPDATE</u> Report by the Sports Development Officer.	8 - 10
7. <u>HOUSING PERFORMANCE AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN - MONITORING REPORT MARCH 2008</u> Report by the Strategic Housing Manager.	11 - 26
8. <u>WORK PROGRAMME</u> To receive the Work Programme and note any amendments.	27
9. <u>NEXT MEETING</u> To note that the next meeting of Policy Development and Review Panel 3 will be held on 13 May at 10.00 am.	

PROTOCOL

The Working Style of the Policy Development & Review Panels

This document sets out the roles of Members and Officers, and the general principles to be adopted by the Policy Development & Review Panels (PD&RP) overseeing the Panel's mode of operation.

Member Leadership

Members of the Panel will undertake scrutiny topics as directed by the Overview & Scrutiny Commission (O&SC) and will recognise that best practice identifies scrutiny as a Member-led activity. The Panel will expect Cabinet members, to take responsibility for answering their questions about topics which primarily relate to the Council's activities.

A Constructive Atmosphere

Meetings of the Panel will be constructive and not judgmental. Panel recognises and accepts that effective scrutiny is best achieved through challenging and constructive enquiry. People giving evidence at Panel should be given due respect and not made to feel under attack.

Independence

Members of the PD&RP will not be subject to whipping arrangements by the party groups.

Respect and Trust

Meetings will be conducted in a spirit of mutual respect and trust.

Consensus

Members of the Panel will work together and, while recognising political allegiances, will attempt to achieve consensus and agreed recommendations. There will be recognition that the Panel has a primary duty to scrutinise on behalf of the community.

Openness and Transparency

The PD&RP's business will be open and transparent, except where there are sound reasons for protecting confidentiality. The minutes of the Panel's meetings will explain the discussion and debate so that they can be understood by an outside reader.

Impartial and Independent Officer Advice

Officers who advise and support the Panel will give impartial and independent advice, as officers support all members of the Council.

Regular Review

There will be regular reviews of how the scrutiny process is working, and a willingness to change if it is not working effectively.

Programming and Planning

The Panel will have a programme of work assigned by the Overview & Scrutiny Commission. The Panel will be able to suggest additional topics for review through the O&SC for approval in the work programme. Before each topic is commenced, the O&SC will agree the scope of the exercise, what information they will need initially, and which members, officers and external witnesses they wish to see.

Managing Time

The Panel will aim to conclude the business of each meeting in reasonable time. The order of business will be arranged as far as possible to minimise the demands on the time of witnesses. Where possible, members should give advance notice of specific questions being provided at the time of the meeting to save items being deferred.

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW PANEL 3

**Held on Tuesday, 19 February 2008 at 10.00 am in
Council Chamber, King's House, Thetford**

PRESENT

Mr R.G. Kybird (Chairman)	Mr J.P. Labouchere
Mrs S.R. Howard-Alpe (Vice-Chairman)	Mr B. Rose
Mr G.P. Balaam	Mr F.J. Sharpe
Mr P.J. Duigan	Mr M. Spencer
Mrs D.K.R. Irving	

Also Present

Lady Fisher

In Attendance

Martin Seymour	- Health Improvement Manager
Darryl Smith	- Principal Housing Officer (Strategy and Enabling)
Mark Broughton	- Scrutiny Officer
Elaine Wilkes	- Senior Committee Officer

1/08 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2007 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2/08 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Mr. R. Kemp due to other commitments.

3/08 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Lady Fisher declared a personal interest in relation to reference to the YMCA in agenda item 6, as she was a member of the YMCA Board.

4/08 NON-MEMBERS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE MEETING

- Lady Fisher – Executive Member for Environment and Housing.

5/08 THETFORD HEALTHY LIVING CENTRE - GREEN TRAVEL PLAN MONITORING (AGENDA ITEM 6)

Nicola Reeve and Helen Richter from the Thetford Healthy Living Centre were in attendance for this item.

The Chairman reminded members that this item was in response to concerns raised at previous meetings about car parking at the Healthy Living Centre.

Miss Reeve presented the Travel Plan Monitoring Report for the Thetford

Action By

Action By

Community Healthy Living Centre, which set out the results of the annual travel survey conducted over a two-week period during January 2008, a copy of which had been circulated to members prior to the meeting.

It was proposed to conduct a further staff travel survey in the summer to see whether there was any evident seasonal variation in the results.

It was explained that this was a multi-user facility, with a number of staff having peripatetic jobs and therefore needing their cars for work.

It was noted that the Centre was not yet fully occupied, so it was likely that there would be more pressure on car parking spaces in the future. However, it was explained that current parking area attached to the Centre was focused on patient use and alternative parking provision for staff was being investigated.

The Travel Plan sought to address some of these issues, for example through the use of a car sharing scheme for staff and the provision of a staff bicycle for local visits.

Pedestrian access would be further improved by a proposed footpath link to the rail station. Plans were also in hand to provide for an ambulance turning bay.

Signage remained an issue and the Centre had been unable to secure the agreement of County Highways on the need for more signage.

During the discussion, members remained concerned about the issue of signage and inadequate car parking provision at the Centre. Members considered that these problems, including the omission of an ambulance turning bay, were serious failures in the design and planning process of the Centre.

Public transport was also an issue of concern, as there was currently no bus service to the Centre as originally understood to have been part of the proposals for the Centre. However, it was noted from the travel survey results that only a small percentage of visitors to the Centre had indicated they would be prepared to consider using public transport.

RECOMMEND that

- (1) the Overview and Scrutiny Commission notes that the parking levels envisaged in the planning process are wholly inadequate for the Centre use, mainly affected by the lack of public transport and the location of the Centre and the fact that there is no user acceptance of the goals of the Green Travel Plan; and
- (2) County Planning representatives and the relevant County Executive Member be asked to attend a future meeting to review the planning process and the issues of signage and bus services to the Centre.

6/08 **HOUSING WAITING LIST - ALLOCATIONS POLICY AND CHOICE BASED LETTINGS (AGENDA ITEM 7)**

Action By

The Principal Housing Strategy and Enabling Officer gave a presentation on forthcoming changes to the Breckland Housing Register consequent upon the move to a Choice Based Lettings system.

The current Housing Register contract with ARPT came into operation in July 2007, with a commitment to move to a Choice Based Lettings Scheme by December 2008 (in advance of the Government target of December 2010). There was also a commitment to review the allocations policy and move to a common policy of allocating properties with all affordable housing providers.

There were presently 3071 applicants on the Register, which was an open register operating on a points system, with a weighting towards homelessness.

A number of improvements had been identified in respect of the allocations policy. These included:

- Priority for those who currently live within the District and have a long local connection. It was proposed to achieve this through a points system based on length of residence.
- Suspensions from the Register for those who have rent arrears (i.e. those in the main who intentionally withhold rent payments) or are anti-social residents. There would be a need to establish an appeals process for this policy.
- Improving the use of the housing stock by prioritising moves to reduce under-occupation. This would be achieved through the use of an increased points system for such applications.

Other areas for improvement would come from: the new legislation (awaited from the Government) on allocations, which would shape the move towards Choice Based Lettings; opportunities to learn from new schemes already being operated by other key partners; and changes to enhance the current system in preparation for the new scheme.

The proposed timetable provided for consultation with members, key stakeholders and focus groups, waiting list applicants and the public on the proposals over the next three months, with recommendations being reported through the full Committee processes during September 2008, for implementation in December.

Key focus groups would include young people, hard to reach groups, the elderly, those with mental health problems and disabled people.

Arising on a question about the make-up of the present Register, the Principal Housing Strategy and Enabling Officer undertook to include a breakdown of the list, which would show the number of applicants from outside the District, with the next monitoring report to the Panel. However, it was noted that there was often a local connection attached to applicants wishing to move into the District, some of whom were returning for various reasons after moving away.

It was also noted that people could be multi-registered with other authorities but there were no regional or local statistics available on this at present but would rather be a national statistics issue.

It was important to be mindful, however, that housing need was not purely defined by the Housing Register. Housing need covered wider circumstances and this was why there was a necessity to conduct regular Housing Need Surveys to assess the broader picture, which included information on the provision and needs of private as well as social housing.

During discussion, members expressed interest in the opportunity to attend as observers any fact finding visits to other authorities or conferences.

So far as the reference to the need to establish an appeals process in regard to the proposed policy for suspension of applicants from the Register was concerned, it was suggested the officers should investigate how that requirement might be integrated with the existing Appeals Committee. There would also be a need to provide training for all members as the new scheme developed so that they were sufficiently informed to be able to assist their constituents.

The Executive Member for Environment and Housing expressed the wish to have feedback on the proposed use of new advertising and publicity methods under the new scheme, the types of tenancies/leases and terms that would be on offer and on the type of landlords (including accredited landlord schemes) other than Registered Social Landlords that would be available under the new scheme.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and a further update be reported to the Panel for its meeting on 13 May 2008 as part of the continuing consultation process.

7/08 HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY REVIEW ACTION PLAN - 6 MONTHLY MONITORING REPORT (AGENDA ITEM 8)

The Principal Housing Strategy and Enabling Officer presented the report and explained the current position on progress on the delivery of the Homelessness Strategy Review Action Plan.

The following highlights from the report were noted:

- The new staff structure was continuing to be bedded in.
- A YMCA supported lodging scheme and a night-stop emergency housing scheme for young people were being developed.
- Proposals were in hand for the development of a hostel for young people. Funding bids had been submitted for this and results were awaited.
- The Rent and Deposit Loan Scheme as part of the work on prevention of homelessness had proved to be successful. There were high administration resources associated with this, however, and ways of reducing these costs were being explored.
- Plans were progressing for the redevelopment of John Room House in Thetford.
- Proposals for a family support centre were being discussed. Only one site had been identified for this use to date and the suitability of the site for such development was under investigation. There was the risk that match funding for this scheme might be lost if it was not able to proceed in time.

Action By

Darryl Smith

Darryl Smith

- A mobile rural advice service was about to be launched.

During discussion, it was noted that the homeless figures were much the same as for last year. There was slower movement of properties available for re-housing which was felt to be consequent on the current housing market and its impact on the affordable housing market.

Performance monitoring figures would be reported to the next meeting and it was agreed these should include some comparison statistics with neighbouring authorities.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and, in particular, that it be noted that demand for homeless housing was expected to continue due to the economic climate and that the slow down in the housing market is putting pressure on the availability of affordable housing.

8/08 **HEALTH IMPROVEMENT WORK PROGRAMME (AGENDA ITEM 9)**

The Health Improvement Manager attended for this item and presented an update on the Breckland Health and Well-being Partnership and on progress of the Action Plan.

In noting progress on items in the Action Plan, discussion took place on the work area for combating obesity. In response to a question about whether diabetes was linked to obesity, it was confirmed that there was a link. A recent local study, however, indicated a surprising contradiction of this in relation to obesity in young people living in rural areas. Members thought that some of the reasons for this could be related to issues of lack of accessibility to sports and other physical activity facilities, lack of street lighting (reducing outdoor activity in winter months), lack of neighbouring friends in the age group (discouraging outdoor activity) and parents driving their children to school.

Some remedies to these issues suggested by members included introducing car exclusion zones around schools, walking school buses and promoting active travel plans for schools. This was suggested as a suitable topic for a presentation to the next Town and Parish Council Forum.

The Panel also discussed the desirability of measuring achievements from the Action Plan which could be a useful tool in furthering the promotion of healthy living. It was acknowledged that it was difficult to achieve a baseline against which to measure performance in the areas contained within the Action Plan and some areas would require some detailed research. Nonetheless, members felt that the Council should look to see what indices were available.

Particular highlights from the report were:

- Reducing Smoking – An evaluation to be undertaken of the introduction of the smoke-free legislation in Breckland through a survey of over 120 businesses across the District representing the catering and hospitality sectors, food production, small businesses on industrial estates, the transport and taxi sectors. The results of the survey would be available at the end of April 2008.
- The continued growth and success of the walking for health

Action By

Darryl Smith

Action By

scheme. A new partnership had commenced with Active Norfolk and Lloyds Pharmacy to deliver the scheme under the Fit Together programme. The Health Improvement Officer was asked to keep Town Councils informed about this programme.

- The Breckland Community Sports Network delivery plan had been produced and submitted to Sport England for approval.
- The notable success of the sexual health campaign in Thetford to reduce teenage pregnancy rates.
- Initial findings from an evaluation of the Joy of Food pilot project in Thetford showed marginal improvements in people's diet on completion of the programme but qualitative data collected to date showed significant improvements in people's knowledge and confidence, particularly in respect of feeding young children. It was now proposed to roll-out the next phase of the programme across Norfolk, which would involve the training and deployment of a number of community food workers across the County.

The Health Improvement Manager advised the Panel on forthcoming changes to the structure and function of the Norfolk Primary Care Trust. He explained that he was employed by the PCT and had worked within Breckland Council to develop partnerships and deliver joint health improvement initiatives. The proposed structural and function changes in the PCT reflected a change towards a more thematic-based role. Changes included the role of the Health Improvement Manager expanding to take on responsibilities for aspects of public health and health improvement across the PCT area, with a consequently reduced focus on Breckland. However, he would continue to represent the PCT on the Breckland Local Strategic Partnership, to support the development of the Health and Well-being Partnership and the delivery of its Action Plan. The Health Improvement Manager would also continue to report to this Panel. In addition, the PCT was shortly to appoint further Health Improvement Practitioners to work in the areas of health inequalities, partnership for health and workplace health. It was envisaged that some of their work would be in the Breckland area and that capacity to deliver health improvement across Breckland would be enhanced by these changes.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the report be noted and in particular the changes to the structure of the Norfolk PCT as highlighted above;
- (2) the Health Improvement Manager be asked to report back to a future meeting on what indices are available to enable the results from the Action Plan to be measured and on how these might be used towards further health promotion.

**Martin
Seymour**

9/08 WORK PROGRAMME (AGENDA ITEM 10)

The report was noted.

10/08 NEXT MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 11)

The arrangements for the next meeting on 1st April 2008 were noted.

The meeting closed at 1.10 pm

| **Action By**

CHAIRMAN

BRECKLAND COUNCIL**Report of the PFI monitoring Officer – Riana Rudland to the
Policy Development Review Panel 3 COMMITTEE – 1st April 2008****Leisure PFI update report****1. Purpose of Report**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update and overview of the PFI leisure contract and the performance of Dereham Leisure centre and Breckland Leisure centre and Waterworld.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Council/Committee:

2.1 Note the contents of the report.

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 Full service commencement of the PFI (Private Finance Initiative) Leisure contract was triggered on 19th April 2007 with the completion of the building phase at Dereham Leisure centre. Dereham Leisure Centre opened on 20th April on time and on budget, the enhancements made to the existing site at Breckland Leisure Centre in Thetford completed three months ahead of schedule.

3.1.2 The usage of the leisure centres has increased significantly since the opening of the new facilities and as we approach the end of the first year of operation trends in usage are beginning to emerge.

3.2 Issues

3.2.1 The new Leisure Centre opening proved a large success with only minor operational defects experienced. An effective Client monitoring process was in place to ensure that the Council was protected against any risk, and that our partners Parkwood Leisure managed any issues with minimal disruption to the public.

3.2.2 Overall usage of the centres has increased, particularly in the case of Dereham. The following table shows the increase in total admissions of both centres from August 2007 – January 2008 compared to the previous year.

<u>Month</u>	<u>Dereham</u>		<u>Thetford</u>	
	<u>2006/2007</u>	<u>2007/2008</u>	<u>2006/2007</u>	<u>2007/2008</u>
Aug	10046	15090	26176	28363
Sep	13621	16958	19174	20107
Oct	13366	22325	22283	24325
Nov	16344	17326	18604	19645
Dec	8401	12487	10521	13809
Jan	14090	19762	24256	23233

Total admissions for period	75868	103948	121014	129482
Percentage increase		27.01%		6.54%

3.2.3 Another key area of success in terms of usage is shown by the increase in swimming lessons at both sites as shown by the table below.

<u>Month</u>	<u>Dereham</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>Thetford</u>	<u>-</u>
	2006/2007	2007/2008	2006/2007	2007/2008
Aug	224	0	1960	2523
Sep	3411	828	2202	2543
Oct	1762	5398	2986	4491
Nov	3556	3792	2432	2352
Dec	1710	2844	512	2225
Jan	3117	3300	2645	2818
Total admissions for period	13780	16162	12737	16952
Percentage increase		14.73%		24.86%

3.2.4 Swimming lessons have increased dramatically at both sites which can be attributed to the high quality swimming lesson programme and Aquazone branding offered by the contractor.

3.2.5 The sports development plan and the camp adventure programme at the centres has proved popular and is gradually increasing, while the rural holiday sports programme delivered in partnership with the Council has been a massive success. Recent programmes have boasted 100% satisfaction ratings with the sessions and a number of sessions have reached capacity in terms of attendances. In addition to the holiday programmes Parkwood have delivered a number of sports days, Inclusive days, hosted the Presidents sports day and provided support and guidance to local clubs and coaches.

3.2.6 In order to meet contractual requirements in terms of operating standards, Parkwood Leisure are currently undergoing the QUEST accreditation process. This is the accreditation awarded to Leisure centres and covers areas such as health and safety procedures, customer care, sports development, staffing requirements and training, and cleaning standards. Part of the award process includes a mystery customer visit as well as staff interviews and assessment of policies and procedures. Parkwood are due to be assessed for this accreditation mid to late April 2008. In order to maintain the standard they will be reassessed on a regular basis.

3.3 Options

3.3.1 To note the contents of the report.

3.4 Reasons for Recommendation(s)

3.4.1 Report for information only

4. Risk and Financial Implications

4.1 Risk

4.1.1 There are no risks attached to the contents of this report

4.2 Financial

4.2.1 None

5. Legal Implications

5.1 None

6. Other Implications

- a) Equalities: The Council in conjunction with its Partners Parkwood Leisure are committed to providing fair and equitable services.
- b) Section 17, Crime & Disorder Act 1998: None
- c) Section 40, Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006: None
- d) Human Resources: None
- e) Human Rights: None
- f) Other: [e.g. Children's Act 2004] None

7. Alignment to Council Priorities

7.1 Functions and activities relating to sports development and leisure services support delivery of the following Council Priorities:

- Stronger Communities
- Prosperous Communities

8. Ward/Community Affected

8.1 The leisure services within the district are available to all members of the community.

Background Papers

None

Lead Contact Officer:

Name/Post: Riana Rudland – PFI monitoring officer

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Email: riana.rudland@breckland.gov.uk

Key Decision Status (Executive Decisions only):

This is not a key decision

Appendices attached to this report:

N/A

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

**Report of the Strategic Director – Services Directorate to the
Policy Review Panel 3 - 1st April 2008**

**HOUSING PERFORMANCE AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN – MONITORING REPORT
MARCH 2008**

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 Policy Review Panel are requested to note progress against delivery of the Housing Improvement Plan and any matters arising. .

2. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Council/Committee:

- 2.1 Note progress against the Housing Improvement Plan and agree to review further progress in July 2008

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 Audit Commission inspection judged the Housing Service as 'Fair with promising prospects of improvement' in May 2005.
- 3.1.2 The inspection report contained a series of recommendations, one key one being 'to produce an improvement plan incorporating the many recommendations contained in the inspection report.'
- 3.1.3 Policy Review Panel requested that quarterly monitoring reports be submitted detailing progress against delivery of the plan. This has been amended to six monthly updates.

3.2 Issues

- 3.2.1 The recommendations contained in the Housing Improvement Plan have formed the basis of the Council's Annual Delivery Plan and the Strategic Housing Service Plan for 2007/08 and 2008/09. These documents in turn have influenced the staff appraisal process and the development of statutory documents such as the housing and homelessness strategies.
- 3.2.2 Progress against the targets contained in the plan has been consistent since its adoption, despite pressure on the team to respond to other national and local targets not contained within the Improvement Plan itself. The team has responded well to the challenges and the majority of targets have been met. Several targets are in the final stages of delivery, there remain a number of targets however which are influenced by corporate rather than Strategic Housing issues/timescales.

Targets nearing completion:

- a) Diversity/BME issues
- b) Norfolk Wide Physical and Sensory Disability Strategy
- c) Strategic approach to the provisions of temporary accommodation
- d) Private Sector Housing Strategy

Targets influenced by other corporate timescales:

- e) Migration of Housing Service into Customer Contact Centre
- f) Affordable Housing Policies/approach

3.2.3 An update will be provided on the above at the meeting.

3.2.4 The Housing Improvement Plan is contained at Appendix 1. For ease of reference matters arising of note to members have been highlighted in the final column entitled 'update'.

3.3 Options

3.3.1 To note progress made against the Housing Improvement Plan and the outstanding matters arising

3.3.2 To not note progress made against the Housing Improvement Plan and the matters arising.

3.3.3 To agree to review progress against any outstanding items in July 2008.

3.4 Reasons for Recommendation

3.4.1 The inspection report identified areas for improvement across the Housing Service which are contained in the improvement plan

3.4.2 It is considered that the 'prospects of improvement' is the more critical judgement for organisations.

3.4.3 By reviewing progress against the action plan in July 2008 the Panel will have an opportunity to consider progress made in the early stages of performance year 2008/2009.

4. **Risk and Financial Implications**

4.1 Risk

4.1.1 Non delivery of the action plan items could indirectly affect the Councils direction of travel rating from the Audit Commission, in terms of improvements to the overall service. The Council has however mitigated this risk by its progress and achievements to date. There remains a residual risk to the Councils in terms of non delivery of targets which can only be delivered with corporate assistance.

4.2 Financial

4.2.1 No direct financial implications resulting from this report.

5. **Legal Implications**

5.1 No direct legal implications resulting from this report.

6. **Other Implications**

- a) Equalities: The report has no direct Equalities implications. Equality Impact Assessments have been carried out across the range of housing services.

- b) Section 17, Crime & Disorder Act 1998: There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from this report.
- c) Section 40, Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006: There are no direct implications from this report.
- d) Human Resources: n/a
- e) Human Rights: The report itself does not have any direct implications in respect of human rights. Delivery of individual targets/projects/service contained in the plan make a significant contribution to ensuring the Council is upholding an individual's human right whilst they are accessing housing services Articles 2, 8, 10, 12 refer.
- f) Children's Act 2004: the provision of housing and housing support services contribute directly to the core aims of the Children's Act. Access to decent affordable housing can be seen to make a substantial contribution to improving the life chances, address health inequalities and improve access to education and opportunities for children and vulnerable young people.

7. Alignment to Council Priorities

- 7.1 Safer and Stronger Communities – The improvement plan contains recommendations for improvement to the housing service (Domestic Violence, temporary accommodation, HMO licensing, BME research et) and in doing so gives the housing function a central role in regards to delivery of the Council's wider Community Safety and Community Cohesion agenda. All actions are evaluated for Section 17 implications.
- 7.2 Your Council, Your Services – delivering noticeable, sustained improvement in the delivery of the housing service to customers is the central aim of the performance and improvement plan objectives.

8. Ward/Community Affected

- 8.1 All wards

Background Papers

n/a

Lead Contact Officer:

Name/Post: Anita Brennan, Strategic Housing Manager

Telephone: 01362 656880

Email: anita.brennan@breckland.gov.uk

Key Decision Status (Executive Decisions only):

n/a

Appendices attached to this report:

Strategic Housing Performance and Improvement Plan 2005 – March 2008 update

STRATEGIC HOUSING
PERFORMANCE AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Response to Audit Commission Housing Inspection 2005

April 2008 Update

Improvement Plan – Access/Customer Care/Consultation (Generic)

Action	Timescale/ Months :	Lead Officer (and support)	Comments / update	Resources	<u>UPDATE</u>
Develop an access strategy in conjunction with the corporate centre, based on research into footfall and need, which clearly identifies how the housing service will: improve access for customers; develop service standards; deliver mandatory customer care training; and use complaints, surveys and other forms of customer consultation to ensure access to services meets customer needs.	Medium Short (3) Medium (6) Long (9) Ongoing	AB / Corporate	Key recommendation of report – to complete by March 1 st 2006 – item referred to corporate centre	H / C	Homelessness Strategy addressed improvement of access to service. Will be fed into the corporate access strategy when developed.
15 Renew web pages	Short	PK		H	Completed
Review web pages	Ongoing	JH		H	Completed
Review homeless out of hours service	Medium	AB		H/C	Completed
Review daytime homelessness service and service standards and need for a local rate or free phone telephone service (Previously identified)	Medium	JMW	i - Service reviewed to emphasise prevention and introduce soft split	H/C	Review completed – trial of free-phone number taking place at Theftford Customer Contact Centre

Action	Timescale/ Months :	Lead Officer (and support)	Comments / update	Resources	UPDATE
	Short (3) Medium (6) Long (9) Ongoing			H = Housing C = Corp Con = Consultant	
Review leaflet formats and consultation /participation arrangements for leaflets	Short	AB/GP		H	Completed
Review housing service standards involving customers	Medium	AB/GP		H	Completed
Review need for IT terminal in interview rooms	Short	AB/ Corporate		H/C	Completed
Ensure full consultation on migration to customer services centre	Long	AB/ Corporate		C/H	Migration of service on hold - Corporate
Deliver customer care training to staff	Medium	AB		H/CON	Training to be held April 22nd
Develop a consultation strategy for Housing Services	Medium	AB		H	Housing Consultation Plan for 06/07 developed. Annual Corporate Plan will be updated from 07/08
Establish a complaints system for Housing Services	Short	AB/GP		H	Completed
Communicate the key messages in the Housing strategy to residents.	Short	AB		H/C	Completed
Review the housing strategy action plan and consolidate it with the ADP (involving partners in that process)	Medium	AB/ Corporate		H/C	Completed

Improvement Plan – Diversity (Generic)

Action	Timescale/ Months :	Lead Officer (and support)	Comments/ update	Resources	Completed
	Short (3) Medium (6) Long (9) Ongoing			H = Housing C = Corp Con = Consultant	
Within six months, develop a diversity strategy in conjunction with the corporate centre, which includes: profiling of customers to inform service development; a comprehensive training package for housing staff to ensure behavioural compliance with good practice and which is tailored to housing specific service delivery issues; and a system for monitoring contractor compliance on equalities and diversity issues.	Medium	AB/ Corporate	Key recommendation of report – by March 1 st 2006. referred to corporate centre	H/C	BME housing research study completed. Norfolk Wide Action plan in development.
Review involvement in the East of England Regional Assembly equality network, the county wide Community Cohesion group, the Racial Equality Council or the BME (Black & Minority Ethnic) sub group of the county wide public involvement forum	Short	AB		H	Completed
Investigate and address the needs of groups other than gypsies and Portuguese including the needs of HIV customers	Medium	AB Corporate		H/C	Research completed.
Develop a BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) housing strategy and specifically take account of Houses Of Multiple Occupation	Medium	AB / GP		H	In development

Improvement Plan – Performance Management and Value for Money (Generic)

Action	Timescale/ Months :	Lead Officer (and support)	Comments / update	Resources H = Housing C = Corp Con = Consultant	<u>Completed</u>
Review protocols with partner agencies around case management and nominations to ensure improved services for homeless applicants during assessment and rehousing	Medium	AB		H	Completed.
Use newly increased staffing resources as an opportunity to improve the effectiveness of appraisal, performance management, risk management and partnership involvement processes and embed in the way housing services are planned, delivered and monitored	Medium	AB		H	Completed/ ongoing
Within six months, develop systems for involving partners, particularly in rural areas, and customers in monitoring performance and reviewing the continued relevance of strategies on a regular basis	Medium	AB/GP	Key recommendation of report – by March 1 st 2006	H	Completed.
Identify a risk champion in the service	Short	AB		H	Completed
Review the properties and shortcomings of FLARE' computer system	Short	GP		H/C	Completed

Improvement Plan – Housing Strategy and Enabling

Action	Timescale/ Months :	Lead Officer (and support)	Comments/ update	Resources	Completed
	Short (3) Medium (6) Long (9) Ongoing			H = Housing C = Corp Con = Consultant	
Review the methodology for assessing housing need to include local needs survey information from parish councils or targeted research data on the needs of Black and Minority Ethnic, older or younger people.	Medium	AB		H	Housing Market Assessment completed.
Assess the housing options available for young people including supported accommodation	Medium	AB/PK		H/Con	Assessment complete – bids in place
Review the decision made in 2002 housing not to adopt a policy recommended an affordable housing policy of 40 per cent on new build sites	Short	AB/PC/ Corporate		H/C	Review of affordable housing policies currently being undertaken through LDF
Develop a strategy to deliver the required number of affordable housing units as defined by the housing needs study of 2003 for 600 units per year and assign affordable housing objectives to named individuals so as to assess success	Long	AB/ Corporate		H/C	New Affordable Housing Policy to be developed by Q2 2008 following LDF consultation process.
Investigate other forms of funding for development	Long	AB/ Corporate		H/C	Completed 07/08
Adopt a formal 'preferred partner' system	Short	AB/ Corporate		H/C	Completed

Action	Timescale/ Months :	Lead Officer (and support)	Comments/ update	Resources	Completed
Prepare development briefs for sites to guide developers	Ongoing	PC/ Corporate	Subject to planning agreement	H/C	Planning target – achieved where appropriate
Assess the provision of shared or other low cost home ownership or market renting schemes.	Medium	AB/ Corporate		H/C	Completed - Part of Housing Market Assessment
Establish a protocol with regeneration service areas to ensure that housing is firmly on the agenda	Short	AB/ Corporate		H/C	Completed/ Ongoing – Growth Point status.
Assess the need for a direct lettings scheme in the private rented sector.	Short	PK		H	Completed - service to be developed in 2007 with landlords forum.
Lead the development of a Norfolk wide physical and sensory disability strategy	Medium	AB		H/CON	To be completed March 31 st 2008
Whilst making use of the powers contained in the Housing Act 2004 as soon as they take effect, develop over the next twelve months a private sector housing strategy. This should be based on a revised stock condition survey	Long	AB/GP	Key recommendation of report – by September 1 st 2006	H	Completed

Action	Timescale/ Months :	Lead Officer (and support)	Comments/ update	Resources	Completed
Review strategies including the empty property and fuel poverty strategies and the renewal policy	Short (3) Medium (6) Long (9) Ongoing Medium	AB/GP		H = Housing C = Corp Con = Consultant H	In development – part of 08/09 STP.

Homelessness and Housing Advice – Performance and Improvement Plan

Improvement Plan - Housing advice and Homelessness

Action	Timescale/ Months :	Lead Officer (and support)	Comments / update	Resources	Completed
	Short (3) Medium (6) Long (12) Ongoing			H = Housing C = Corp Con = Consultant	
Monitor the number of homelessness presentations prevented through housing advice	Short	JMW		H	Completed – ongoing (Best Value Performance Indicator)
Undertake a rough sleeper count.	Short	PK		H	completed march 06
Review protocol with Peddars Way regarding assessment and rehousing processes	Medium	AB/ JMW	Key recommendation of report – undertake as part of choice based lettings proposal - by March 1st	H	Completed as part of transfer of waiting list.
Review the budgetary provision for the rent deposit loan scheme	Short	AB/PK	Budget required – in star chamber bid	H	Completed budget increased
Review the position regarding a 'sanctuary' scheme to reduce homeless presentations after domestic abuse,	Short	PK	Budget required- in star chamber bid	H	Completed
Review the list of private lettings agents it provides to customers asking for help in obtaining private rented accommodation	Short	PK		H	Completed

Action	Timescale/ Months :	Lead Officer (and support)	Comments / update	Resources	Completed
	Short (3) Medium (6) Long (12) Ongoing			H = Housing C = Corp Con = Consultant	
Review the 95% target for the speed in assessing homelessness cases	Short	SHM / JMW		H	Completed – reviewed and maintained
Within six months, develop a strategic approach to the provision of interim and temporary accommodation to ensure it is of appropriate quality and in locations which optimise the opportunity for customers to maintain existing support networks.	Medium	AB		H	Completed
Review procedures and practices engaged in placing homeless people in interim accommodation	Short	JMW		H	Completed
Review the level of support given to people placed in temporary accommodation	Short	AB		H	Completed review of floating support finalised
Establish a programme to regularly check the quality of temporary or interim accommodation and review the need to adopt the Greater Norwich grading system for bed and breakfast accommodation, based on the fitness standard	Short	PK/AC		H	Completed Regular checks undertaken
Assess the need to adopt the Government's hostel review toolkit.	Short	PK/AC		H	Completed Desirable elements adopted

Improvement Plan - Private Sector

Action	Timescale/ Months : Short (3) Medium (6) Long (12) Ongoing	Lead Officer (and Support)	Comments / update	Resources H = Housing C = Corp Con = Consultant	Completed
Undertake a stock condition survey to identify properties not achieving decent homes standard	Long	GP		H/Con	Completed
Investigate the effectiveness of local Performance Indicators and consider identifying further ones.	Short	GP/AB		H	Completed
Amend e mail contact provided on web site from principal housing officer	Short	GP		H	Completed
Realistically assess the risks inherent in inspecting only 30 Houses of Multiple Occupation per year in a district.	Short	GP/AB		H	Completed new target adopted
Reinvigorate the landlord forum and task it to :- Develop its terms of reference Establish an accreditation scheme	Short	GP		H	completed
Establish systems to ensure housing associations in the district achieve 100 per cent decent homes standard by 2010.	Short	GP		H	Monitoring system in place via annual reporting mechanism.
Review the use of intervention strategies to target disrepair in the private sector	Short	GP/AB		H	To be undertaken as integral part of development of private sector housing strategy in 07

Action	Timescale/ Months :	Lead Officer (and support)	Comments / update	Resources	Completed
	Short (3) Medium (6) Long (12) Ongoing			H = Housing C = Corp Con = Consultant	
Establish a system to prioritise work on the worse cases of empty properties or properties in disrepair	Short	GP		H	Completed
Review the application of small grants and loans, under the 'Enhance' and Domicile schemes, to help tackle disrepair.	Short	GP/AB		H	Completed
Complete discussions to transfer 'safeguard' inspections and customer support role on grants and loans to the Home Improvement Agency. (HIA)	Short	GP/AB		H	Completed
Identify resources required to focus on Home Energy Act work and education to ensure 'Enhance' is well used for heating installations.	Short	GP/AB		H	Completed budget agreed
Establish consultative proposals for the implementation of the 2004 Housing Act.	Short	GP		H	Completed
Agree arrangements with partner housing associations to manage Empty Dwelling Management Orders,	Short	GP		H	Completed
Examine how the enabling role is used in respect of adaptations	Short	GP/AB		H	To be considered as part of development of Physical Disabilities Strategy
Establish a district wide register of adapted properties to allow all agencies to 'work smarter' in exploring rehousing options.	Medium	GP/AB		H/RSL'S	As above.

Action	Timescale/ Months :	Lead Officer (and support)	Comments / update	Resources H = Housing C = Corp Con = Consultant	Completed
Review and improve target timescales allocated to dealing with DFG's	Short Medium (6) Long (12) Ongoing	GP/AB		H	Review completed – timescales on priority 1 cases have improved.
Agree with partners a system for reporting performance i.e. Home Improvement Agencies and Occupational Therapists	Short	GP/AB		H	Agreed.

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Key

- AB – Anita Brennan
- GP – Gordon Partridge
- PC – Paul Cason
- PK – Polly Kane
- JMW – John Walker
- AC – Adrian Cherry

Policy Development & Review Panel 3

Work Programme & Meeting Schedule

Topic/Item	Lead Officer (s)	1 April 2008 Dereham	13 May 2008 Dereham	17 June 2008 Dereham
Healthy Living & Lifestyles – PFI Leisure Centres	Joe Liggett			
Housing Improvement Plan – Monitoring	Anita Brennan			
Housing Waiting List – Allocations Policy & Choice Based Lettings	Anita Brennan/ Darryl Smith			
Breckland Health Improvement Work Programme	Martin Seymour			
BVPI 166 Environmental Health	Mike Wheatley			
Housing Benefits – Anglia Revenues Partnership	(ARP)			
Emergency Planning – Avian Flu	Mike Wheatley (& DEFRA)			
Thetford Healthy Living Centre – Green Travel Plan	Nicola Reeve (THLC)/ Norfolk County Council		tbc	
Monitoring of Homeless Strategy Action Plan (1)	Anita Brennan/ Darryl Smith			

Notes:

(1) Bring forward to 16 September 2008.