

Housing Services Update  
Housing & Major Projects Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel  
July 2014

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## General Update

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### Long Service Recognition

- Two members of staff have been celebrating this month at the Mayor's long service award ceremony. Ann Robins has worked for the local authority for the last 25 years, while Dawn Hillman has worked for an impressive 40 years.

### Re-shaping the Way we Work with our Housing Association Partners

- Across the West of England attention has been focussed on the successor arrangements to the West of England Housing Development Panel. The WoE HDP is the legal contracted panel of Registered Providers (our housing association partners) and developers who were selected to become the delivery agents to drive the delivery of affordable and market housing across the Region. This formal contractual panel comes to an end during 2015/16.
- It is acknowledged by all the parties involved in the WoE HDP that the formal arrangements have not delivered on the scale of development anticipated and after a series of facilitated workshops, reviews and consultation exercises, recommendations are taking shape for successor arrangements to be much more flexible and informal with a major focus on delivering the local priorities identified by each Unitary Authority, but with the benefit of a WoE-wide strategic umbrella partnership that retains the positive elements of the joint working established under current arrangements.
- The Heads of Housing and the Enabling Managers are now working up the details of the new locally focussed partnership arrangements, identifying the broad strategic parameters against which potential partners will be selected at the WoE level. Work is soon to commence to identify the key themes against which B&NES will be assessing the RP partners wishing to work within the authority.
- A report outlining the key elements of the new partnership proposals is being taken to WoE PCHB in July and then to each of the 4 UA's for sign off. In B&NES this is likely to be by way of Single Member Decision later this summer.
- Housing & Major Projects will be kept informed of progress and will be asked to comment on the key affordable housing themes for the assessment of B&NES partners.

## Key Projects Update

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### Gypsy and Travellers

- Full planning consent has been granted for a 13 pitch Gypsy & Traveller site on land adjacent to the Lower Bristol Road. In addition a recent single member decision has provided ability to draw down the budget as required and to contract with an RP partner.

- We are currently in negotiations with the RP partner and expect to contract in the next few weeks.
- The allocations and nominations policy has been drafted. It will need to be formally agreed.
- On 18<sup>th</sup> July the Council secured a possession order for the land. Some existing occupiers have already left the site. The remaining occupiers are expected to leave on the 29<sup>th</sup> July. Some of the more vulnerable households will be provided with temporary accommodation elsewhere.

### **Additional Licensing Scheme**

- On 12<sup>th</sup> June 2013 Cabinet approval was received to introduce an additional licensing scheme for HMOs in the designated area for a period of 5 years commencing on the 1st January 2014 with licence applications being accepted from 1st October 2013. The designated area focuses on the wards of Oldfield Park, Westmoreland and parts of Widcombe.
- At the time of writing Housing Services has received around 1,000 applications for additional licensing approval. Most of the licensable HMOs have now been inspected and the team are now drafting the licences.
- Around a third of these have been found to contain significant hazards or complex management issues for which follow up enforcement action is being taken.

### **Empty Properties / CPO**

- Housing services are taking forward the Councils policy to bring long term empty homes into use by seeking to purchase two of the highest priority empty homes in B&NES. Cabinet have authorised the Head of Housing to make Compulsory Purchase Orders for this purpose.
- It is anticipated that the Order will be served on the 31<sup>st</sup> July. A 21 day appeal period follows before confirmation can be given by the Secretary of State. In the interim we continue to work with the owners of the properties to investigate whether a voluntary purchase agreement can be agreed.

### **Energy @ Home**

- Energy@Home is a Council led partnership initiative with particular involvement of Housing Services and Corporate Sustainability. The procurement process for the Energy@Home advice service is nearly complete and the service due to commence in September. The retrofit delivery provider procurement has also started and expected to be available for providing finance and arranging energy efficiency improvement work by the end of the year.
- Phase 1 of Energy@Home is about to launch with a grant scheme providing up to £7300 towards energy efficiency measures funded through a successful bid to DECC.

The grant means that subject to a survey B&NES residents may be able to install solid wall and other insulation measures with no upfront installation costs.

## **Affordable Housing**

- Draft Affordable Housing element of the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document completed following informal consultation with our RP partners. The draft Planning Obligations SPD is awaiting approval prior to wider consultation this Summer.
- Cabinet has approved the new approach to Capital funding for affordable housing as outlined at the last HMP committee. And work is underway focussing on how we can use the council's capital funding to deliver against key housing priorities. Particular emphasis is being made on bespoke housing solutions for priority housing cases or client.
- Scoping work has begun on a strategic review of the affordable housing provision at BWR to consider the success of the development in terms of affordability, sustainability and contribution to the wider regeneration aims for the City Centre. This work is being jointly commissioned by the Council, Curo and Crest and will be a useful tool in helping Housing Services determine the level and nature of affordable housing being sought on Phase II at BWR and the wider Enterprise Area.

## • Q1 Performance

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### What we have done well...

**97%** of customers are satisfied with our services. We have exceeded the 90% customer satisfaction target and been awarded a customer service excellence kitemark. Putting the customer first and having high standards for the quality and timeliness of services is very important to us

**100%** of decisions on homeless application were made within 33 days.

**42%** of all advice and prevention approaches were successful in preventing or relieving homelessness compared to the target of 33%.

**554** new affordable homes have been delivered since April 2011 in partnership with registered providers, and we are on track to meet our target of 610 by the end of March 2015.

**31** weeks is the average completion time for a disabled facilities grant.

**12** households in temporary accommodation at the end of June 2014. This is the lowest it's ever been and is well below the target of 24.

**3%** sickness for the Housing Services compared to a corporate target of 5%

### How we will improve...

**83.3%** Equalities Impact Assessments are in Place (10 out of 12). We expect to have the remaining 2 done by the end of the next quarter.

**75.2%** Many of the "invoices" we pay are received third hand and relate to DFG & other grant payments. These invoices are merely proof of grant completion. Since we have little control over receipt of these types of invoices it is difficult to improve performance.

**43%** of performance development reviews were completed at the end of the first quarter. We expect to have all staff PDRs in place by the end of the next quarter.

**159** properties were improved compared to a target of 180. However, over 100 schedules for work have recently been issued. As such the target is likely to be met in subsequent quarters.

	Current Quarter (Q1 14/15)		Direction of travel	Target	
<b><u>1. Customer</u></b>					
Customer Complaints	100%			87.0%	
Customer Satisfaction	96.6 %			90.0%	See note above
Invoices paid 30 days	75.2 %			93.0%	See note above
Performance Reviews	43.0 %			100%	See note above
Staff Sickness	2.9 %			5.0%	See note above
Telephone response	90.0 %			90%	
Equalities Impact Assessment	83.3 %			100%	See note above
<b><u>2. Improved homes</u></b>					
<u>Number of unsafe or unsuitable homes improved (DLI)</u>	159			720	See note above
Disabled Facility Grants	47			250	See note above
Housing conditions enforcement actions completed	71			350	See note above
Improvements for vulnerable people	41			120	
Empty properties brought back in to use (PPC)	12			50	
(DLI) – Directorate Level Indicator (PPC) – Place Plan Commitment					

	Current Quarter (Q1 14/15)		Direction of travel	Target	
<b><u>3. New homes</u></b>					
Total affordable homes provided (DLI and PPC)	90.8 %		↑	100%	See note above
Affordable homes for rent	89.1 %		↑	100%	
Affordable homes for the intermediate market	96.1 %		↑	100%	
<b><u>4. Preventing Homelessness</u></b>					
Number of households in Temporary Accommodation (DLI)	12		↓	24	See note above
Homelessness cases prevented	42.2 %		↑	33.0%	
Homelessness decisions (Q)	100.0 %		↑	90.0%	See note above
Housing Advice services requests (Q)	541		→	2040	
(DLI) – Directorate Level Indicator (PPC) – Place Plan Commitment					