

Democratic Services

Riverside, Temple Street, Keynsham, Bristol BS31 1LA
Telephone: (01225) 477000 *main switchboard*
Direct Lines - Tel: 01225 394458
Web-site - <http://www.bathnes.gov.uk>

Your ref:

Our ref:

Date: 25th July 2011

E-mail: Democratic_Services@bathnes.gov.uk

To: All Members of the Housing and Major Projects Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel

Councillor Rob Appleyard
Councillor Steve Hedges
Councillor Les Kew
Councillor Barry Macrae
Councillor Brian Simmons
Councillor Will Sandry
Councillor Paul Fox

Councillor Tim Ball – Cabinet Member: **Homes and Planning**
Councillor Cherry Beath – Cabinet Member: **Sustainable Development**

Chief Executive and other appropriate officers
Press and Public

Dear Member

Housing and Major Projects Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel: Tuesday, 2nd August, 2011

You are invited to attend a meeting of the **Housing and Major Projects Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel**, to be held on **Tuesday, 2nd August, 2011 at 5.00 pm** in the **Kaposvar Room - Guildhall, Bath**.

The agenda is set out overleaf.

Yours sincerely

Mark Durnford
for Chief Executive

If you need to access this agenda or any of the supporting reports in an alternative accessible format please contact Democratic Services or the relevant report author whose details are listed at the end of each report.

This Agenda and all accompanying reports are printed on recycled paper

NOTES:

- 1. Inspection of Papers:** Any person wishing to inspect minutes, reports, or a list of the background papers relating to any item on this Agenda should contact Mark Durnford who is available by telephoning Bath 01225 394458 or by calling at the Guildhall, Bath (during normal office hours).
- 2. Public Speaking at Meetings:** The Council has a scheme to encourage the public to make their views known at meetings. They may make a statement relevant to what the meeting has power to do. They may also present a petition or a deputation on behalf of a group. Advance notice is required not less than two full working days before the meeting (this means that for meetings held on Wednesdays notice must be received in Democratic Services by 4.30pm the previous Friday)

The public may also ask a question to which a written answer will be given. Questions must be submitted in writing to Democratic Services at least two full working days in advance of the meeting (this means that for meetings held on Wednesdays, notice must be received in Democratic Services by 4.30pm the previous Friday). If an answer cannot be prepared in time for the meeting it will be sent out within five days afterwards. Further details of the scheme can be obtained by contacting Mark Durnford as above.

- 3. Details of Decisions taken at this meeting** can be found in the minutes which will be published as soon as possible after the meeting, and also circulated with the agenda for the next meeting. In the meantime details can be obtained by contacting Mark Durnford as above.

Appendices to reports are available for inspection as follows:-

Public Access points - Riverside - Keynsham, Guildhall - Bath, Hollies - Midsomer Norton, and Bath Central, Keynsham and Midsomer Norton public libraries.

For Councillors and Officers papers may be inspected via Political Group Research Assistants and Group Rooms/Members' Rooms.

- 4. Attendance Register:** Members should sign the Register which will be circulated at the meeting.
- 5. THE APPENDED SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS ARE IDENTIFIED BY AGENDA ITEM NUMBER.**
- 6. Emergency Evacuation Procedure**

When the continuous alarm sounds, you must evacuate the building by one of the designated exits and proceed to the named assembly point. The designated exits are sign-posted.

Arrangements are in place for the safe evacuation of disabled people.

Housing and Major Projects Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel - Tuesday, 2nd August, 2011

at 5.00 pm in the Kaposvar Room - Guildhall, Bath

A G E N D A

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

2. EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair will draw attention to the emergency evacuation procedure as set out under Note 6.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Members who have an interest to declare are asked to:

- a) State the Item Number in which they have the interest
- b) The nature of the interest
- c) Whether the interest is personal, or personal and prejudicial

Any Member who is unsure about the above should seek advice from the Monitoring Officer prior to the meeting in order to expedite matters at the meeting itself.

5. TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

6. ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC OR COUNCILLORS - TO RECEIVE DEPUTATIONS, STATEMENTS, PETITIONS OR QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THIS MEETING

At the time of publication no notifications had been received.

7. HOUSING & MAJOR PROJECTS ROUTINE REPORT (Pages 7 - 38)

This report provides an update in respect of housing delivery and the projects currently managed by the Development & Major Projects Directorate.

8. HOUSING RENEWAL POLICY (Pages 39 - 72)

The Council is required to adopt and publish a Housing Renewal Policy. This policy is periodically reviewed and revised as required. It sets out how Housing Services will provide assistance, including financial assistance, to help low-income, elderly, disabled and other vulnerable residents to undertake essential repairs and adaptations.

9. CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

This item gives the Panel an opportunity to ask questions to the Cabinet Member(s) and for them to update the Panel on any current issues.

10. PANEL WORKPLAN (Pages 73 - 86)

This report presents the latest workplan for the Panel (Appendix 1) as well as information to help Panel members identify any additional items for the workplan.

The Committee Administrator for this meeting is Mark Durnford who can be contacted on 01225 394458.

Bath & North East Somerset Council

Housing & Major Projects Panel 2nd August 2011

Prepared by the Development and Major Projects Strategic Director - John Betty

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Exemption under Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972

The following exemption is engaged in respect to the appendices:

3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

All exemptions under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 are subject to the public interest test. We have assessed the public interest issues in this case, and have concluded that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosure at this time.

1. Overview

- The directorate is focused on delivering Sustainable Economic Growth as set out in the Economic Strategy of April 2010 and the Smart Economic Growth Cabinet paper of November 2010.
- The delivery of this is manifested through Business development and support, Regeneration and Development projects, Housing Delivery and the continued delivery of Capital projects.
- This work is set against a background of significant Government changes to funding and support, continuing macro-economic challenges and increasing pressure on housing.
- The ability of the Council to deliver its priorities and aspirations in this area will depend on the alignment of policies in Planning, Transport and the ability of the Council to influence and encourage growth and development through its asset base and influence.
- There are significant challenges ahead in bringing forward development but there are also major opportunities through Bath City Riverside, Bath Western Riverside, Bath Quays South, Manvers Street, Norton Radstock Regeneration, MOD Sites, Keynsham, Somerdale and Temple Street. All of which could and should have significant ability to help the economic growth and development agenda.
- The Directorate is currently reviewing its capacity and organisation in order to respond to this agenda.
- The requirement to ensure that the agenda is rooted i.e. the administrations requirement to ensure local engagement.

2. Housing Delivery

- The Council has published a Core Strategy which seeks to provide 11,000 new homes in B&NES by 2026. This will require a step change in annual delivery rates over the plan period.
- Given the scope of the changes and demands of this the Strategic Director for Development & Major Projects has been given the corporate responsibility for developing a Council-Wide action plan to ensure a corporate co-ordinated approach to the delivery of housing, including affordable housing.
- A brief review of the current arrangements within the council has been commissioned by SDG. The report will cover the capabilities and effectiveness of the organisation and the capacity currently in place and will recommend actions necessary to ensure that there is a co-ordinated approach across the council and accountable to the Strategic Director of Development and Major Projects.
- The report will address:
 - an assessment of current governance structures and future needs
 - priorities for action against Council corporate objectives
 - targets, reporting and accountabilities
 - skills/capacity/gap analysis
 - Current management reporting arrangements.
- The Core Strategy will be subject to an Examination in Public, including the proposed Housing numbers and delivery locations.

Changing Government Housing Policy

- The Government has put in place the New Homes Bonus. This is a new scheme which provides a financial incentive to Local Authorities for every home built and an additional bonus for affordable homes built
- Bath and North East Somerset received £611,349 in its first allocation

- A new Affordable Rent Model (AR) is also being implemented. Affordable rented homes will be made available to tenants by Registered Providers at up to a maximum of 80% of market rent and allocated in the same way as social housing is at present. Landlords will have the freedom to offer Affordable Rent properties on flexible tenancies tailored to the housing needs of individual households.
- The Homes and Communities Agency is now requiring Registered Providers to submit proposals for a 4 year programme of delivery against which they will allocate funding
- Where AR produces viability issues, the planning authority will need to work with the Homes and Communities Agency to seek additional investment or look at the proportion of affordable housing acceptable to them
- Housing Authorities are required to put in place Strategic Tenancy Policies to manage the affordable housing and tenancy mix

Track record and targets

- Based on demographic, migration, household and housing market indicators the Bath and North East Somerset future housing growth requirements study concluded that in order for housing supply to absorb demographic change and support economic and employment growth potential it would need to increase by 11,000 dwellings over the Core Strategy period.
- The core strategy therefore sets a requirement to deliver 11,000 houses over the plan period. This equates to 550 per year.
- Between 2006 and 2011 an average of 393 homes were built
- In order to address this backlog and meet future demand the Strategic Housing Land Assessment Analysis sets a target of building a total of 3,626 homes between 2011/12 and 2015/16
- The Council's policy is to focus on brownfield land in delivering these targets in order to protect the quality of life for residents in Bath and North East Somerset
- Sufficient brownfield land has been identified to achieve these targets. However there remain some challenges in delivering these:
 - Working with the MOD and other partners to bring forward sites vacated in Bath
 - Ensuring infrastructure is in place to allow development in Bath City Centre sites
 - High land values in Bath and Keynsham in particular
 - Influencing other land owners to ensure disposal of other key sites (e.g. Somerdale in Keynsham and Polestar in Poulton)
 - Reluctance of some developers to build, given the on-going uncertainty about house prices and availability of credit

Affordable Housing delivery

- Delivering affordable homes is vital to a sustainable economy
- The Strategic Housing Development Service within the Council's department of Adult Health, Social Care and Housing works with Planning and Development Management to enable the supply of affordable housing on threshold sites. This enabling work aims to influence planning proposals in line with local housing needs, and ensure Section 106 will deliver the intended outcomes in respect of affordability and nomination priority for eligible applicants; that affordable housing will be properly managed over the long term, and secured financially, and if restrictions are lifted for the subsidy to be recycled to secure alternative provision.
- The Council's target is to deliver 610 affordable homes between 2011/12 and 2014/15
- To support this, sub-regionally the Council, along with the other Unitary Authorities in the West of England, has agreed a Local Investment Plan with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). This identifies priority locations for the delivery of affordable housing along with the funding required to facilitate delivery. In light of the Government's changes and reducing subsidies and grant from the HCA, it is proposed to complete a review of the LIP by September 2011.
- The Council has commissioned a viability assessment looking at the potential impact of the Affordable Rent Model on the affordability and delivery of affordable housing in different geographic areas and by different house types

3. Major Projects Overview

Council Direct Projects

- **Keynsham Town Hall**

- Two stakeholder workshops were attended by over 40 people from local groups and organisations in Keynsham in March 2011 and May 2011. Further consultation and engagement with the local community about the regeneration of Keynsham town centre will take place in Autumn 2011.
- The timescale for the wider consultation is intended to allow the new Cabinet to consider options about the best way to deliver a well thought out scheme that will support the regeneration of Keynsham, including the Riverside building, take account of Somerdale and provide the best possible value for money for the local taxpayer.
- The public consultation will cover all elements of the scheme such as building design and materials, new streets and spaces, traffic and parking, and how the scheme will contribute to the wider regeneration of Keynsham town centre.
- On-going engagement with the Keynsham Civic Centre Community Focus Group will continue over the Summer 2011 as the Council continues to develop the scheme in preparation for the public consultation in the Autumn 2011 with a view to submitting a planning application by the end of the year 2011.

- **Radstock Public Infrastructure**

- In addition to its own funding, the Council has secured investment support worth £800k from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) to enable the improvements to the current road network to begin. Work is expected to start in the Autumn and includes:
 - Replacing the double mini roundabout at the junction of A367 and the A362 with one roundabout;
 - Allowing two-way traffic on The Street;
 - Creating a new link from The Street to Frome Road.
 - Traffic Regulation Orders are currently being advertised.

- **Southgate**

- Station work have commenced and are to be delivered in 2 parts:
 - **Initial works:** Lift & Toilets
 - **Remaining works:** Excavation of ramp & completion of station environment including refurbishment of vaults works due for completion July 2012.
- Counter terrorism measures have been agreed with the police and are to be implemented by end of 2011.
- **Residential Accommodation:** Agreement has been finalised to extinguish existing lease and re-grant.

- **Public Realm**

- **City Info & Street Furniture**

- Civitas funded Wayfinding & Public Transport products now installed within City Centre.
- Full system installation to be completed by September 2011 following Civitas evaluation phase.
- Street Furniture prototypes have been installed at St James Rampire to enable user feedback.

- **Union Stall Street**

- Public Realm programme has been re sequenced to deliver High Street as the first project therefore, Union Stall Street becomes the second project to the end of programme
- Design will commence in August 2011
- Procurement for construction works estimated November 2011
- Construction commencement planned February 2012

- **High Street**

- Original Bath Transport Package proposals for High Street are now to be delivered as part of Public Realm & Movement Project.
- Design changes have been proposed to improve the Public Realm value of the original transport scheme
- Options presented to Cabinet 11th July re Taxi solutions.
- Construction works to commence October 2011.
- Planned completion April 2012.

Children's Services

- **Primary Capital Programme (Batheaston)**
 - 1 week extension has been given to contractor due to severe weather conditions.
 - Landscape works are on-going to the field.
 - Completion date due September 2011.

- **Primary Capital Programme (Midsomer Norton)**
 - Due to past programme delays the programme has been reviewed.
 - Handover date has been rescheduled to October 2011.

- **Primary Capital Programme (Weston all Saints Primary)**
 - Due to steelwork detailing programme has been delayed, a revised programme has been put together with mitigation measures to rectify this.
 - Temporary classroom to be installed mid-August 2011 to allow for increase of pupils.
 - Handover date due end October 2011.

- **Ralph Allen School Applied Learning Centre**
 - Pre-application has been submitted.
 - Team currently looking at providing a bio-mass boiler scheme for the whole school and meeting with architects and planning consultants on how best to take this forward.
 - School are currently investigating funding.

- **Wellsway Sports Hall**
 - Pre-planning application was submitted 3rd June 2011.
 - Planning submission submitted 15th July 2011 for aim of full Planning consent 27th October 2011.
 - 1st set of tender's now evaluated, tender addendum to be issued.
 - There is a 5 week wait until end September 2011 until planning has been granted and confirmed before appointing a consultant.
 - Landscaping to be revamped with removal of footpaths.
 - Additional parking will be included for the school this will be set out in the tender addendum.

- Handover date due October 2012.
- Additional consultation to be carried out on option of 3 locations, all ward Councillors have been contacted and each issued plans.

- **Oldfield School Bath**

Planning submitted 13th July 2011 –expected to hear back end August 2011.

- Interim works expected to commence 22nd July 2011 including asbestos works.
- 6 contractors have been shortlisted. Appointments due 26th November 2011.
- Fence has been erected to protect the Newts.
- Working to start on site end October 2011.

- **Radstock Schools**

- **St Nicks**

- Portakabin's have now been removed at St Nicks School
- Completion of ceiling work being handed over this month.
- Works to corridor and Assembly hall commence during the Summer holiday's 2011.
- Children's Centre complete end of October 2011 for Children to move in for Half Term.
- Waring's remain on programme and relationships with the school remain good.

- **Trinity**

- Roof on programme, roof works to phase 1 now stripped off. New roof constructed July 2011. Summer holiday's will finish completion of phase 1 including half of corridor.
- Meeting with Waring's and Property Services took place 12th July 2011 to review alterations to Children's Centre and how Waring's will programme into their works.
- Landscaping is complete.

- **BWR**

- Infrastructure contract is now in place, works are on programme.
- Residential units are ahead of programme, 95 units approaching completion of 1st phase, ready for occupation August 2011.
- Contractor in discussions with Supermarket chain on removal on Gas holders. A proposal is expected to come to B&NES.

- **Somerdale:**

- Kraft is in the process of procuring a developer for the Somerdale site.
- They are currently assessing the Expressions of interest and will be shortlisting a number of developers to work up a more detailed proposal for selection in the Autumn 2011.
- An introductory meeting has been set up between representatives of Kraft, the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development in August.

Economic Enterprise & Business Development – Overview

The Economy, Enterprise and Business Development Service responds to the Council's priority to deliver sustainable economic growth across Bath & North East Somerset. We do this by promoting employment sites, supporting business need, enabling businesses to start and grow and promoting B&NES as a place to do business. The work of the team falls into three broad categories.

4. Economic Enterprise and Business Development

1.1 Sector Support

- **Creative Bath:** The Council is funding Creative Bath this year to deliver a set of networking, training and support events to creative firms. The network has over 1,000 individuals receiving its bulletins. The network recently launched its membership scheme. There are now over 100 paid-up members.
- **Low Carbon South West:** LCSW have signed a 12 month agreement to deliver a range of services to B&NES including a monthly business breakfast covering low carbon services, delivering a business support function for LCSW local members and SME's, facilitating two low carbon conferences and promoting B&NES and its development sites to Low Carbon inward investors.
- **Visitor Accommodation :** There is currently significant interest in the development of additional hotels in Bath. The Visitor Accommodation Study set out a strategic approach to managing the expansion of hotel accommodation in the city and a report has been prepared for Cabinet, proposing consultation on the Study, prior to its potential adoption as Council policy. To compliment this, work has been commissioned to identify the priorities for developing a proactive approach to engaging with hotel operators, developers and site owners.
- **Business Liaison:** The economic development team meets and maintains contact with key growth sector businesses as well as local business networks.

Recent business visits to introduce the Council's work and to gain intelligence include Engineering / Defence; IT / Technology; Creative; Green tech / retrofitting.

Issues discussed at meetings include premises and growth issues, support required, skills issues, and so on. Requests for assistance are taken forward by economic development in consultation with other Council teams (e.g. property; children's services). Recent key meetings / events attended: BathSpark (technology network), Creative Bath summer event, Small Business Focus networking event, Bath and Bristol Enterprise Network Advisory Group. Assistance given on formation of Keynsham Industrial Alliance (businesses on Broadmead Lane).

1.2 Business Support

- **Business Matters Website:** A new website is being developed to promote the area as a vibrant business destination; promote local businesses, organisations and partnerships and attract new business opportunities to the area. The website is expected to go live in the Autumn 2011.
- **Property Enquiries:** For the first quarter of 2011, the Council received 24 enquiries for available property in the B&NES area – of the 24, three were identified as local 'growth sector' businesses all looking to expand, and three potential social enterprises.
- **GWE Business West:** As a result of the closure of Trimbridge House, staff from Business West have now moved into Palace Yard Mews. This has proved a positive development and improved working arrangements. The 2011/12 SLA has been agreed and Business West is now delivering a series of business start up workshops for people interested in starting their own business in Bath and North East Somerset. In addition they are operating a programme of coaching for high growth businesses, including a focus on getting investment for growth. We are continuing to work with Business West on the implications of the closure of the regional Business Link offices in November 2011.
- **Business Improvement District (BID):** The Bath BID has been in operation since April 2011. The Council has been collecting the levy on behalf of Future Bath Plus and collection rates have been extremely high. The business-led BID Board has been formed and subgroups dealing with work programmes (for example, marketing and promotion) have also been established with a view to delivering bespoke projects to benefit the business community in the City centre. BIDs may be appropriate in other areas of the District if business support for the concept is demonstrated and the business case for using BID legislation stacks up.

1.3 Connectivity

- **Broadband Delivery UK– (BDUK):** the Council is exploring with other West of England Authorities the potential to bid into government funding for funding to improve connectivity in the rural areas. British Telecom continues to roll out a programme of next generation fibre-to-cabinet speeds in areas of Bath, having completed their programme in Midsomer Norton / Radstock. The Council is exploring with BT and other providers their plans for rollout in other areas of the District.

1.4 Specific Initiatives

- **Creative / Tech Hub:** the Council held a workshop with key contacts in the creative and technology community who have been lobbying for a “hub” workspace to be launched in Bath to support the growth of this part of the economy. The Council intends to assess the opportunities locally for such a facility and its potential involvement. A hub might also offer facilities for public use (such as bar / café, meeting rooms, exhibition space).
- **Casino :** The Council has commenced the competition for the award of the small Casino licence. Stage one of the competition has been completed and four applications cleared to proceed to stage two where each will be assessed to determine which proposal offers the “greatest local benefit” to the B&NES area. The applications are for the Cattlemarket (2), Manvers Street and Sawclose sites in Bath. Stage two of the competition is scheduled to commence in July with the intention of reporting to the Council’s Licensing Committee in February 2011.

1.5 Economic intelligence

- **Local Economic Assessment (LEA):** This document provides an annual overall assessment of the health of the economy in Bath and North East Somerset. The 2010/11 document has recently been updated. The West of England Partnership has also produced a summary of the Local Economic Assessments of the 4 Unitary Authorities. These assessments provide an evidence base for the development of the Council’s economic policy and interventions.
- **Promoting Smart Growth:** Commissioned in conjunction with Planning Services the Smart Growth Report sets out the options and opportunities for achieving higher levels of sustainable economic growth in B&NES. The report has informed the Economic Strategy for

B&NES, the “City of Ideas” growth agenda and the economic growth levels put forward in the Council's Core Strategy. The report's recommendations are also helping to shape the sector and business support work being undertaken.

1.6 Redundancy Support

- **MOD** : The MOD has confirmed that it is to vacate all three of its sites in Bath and move 2600 jobs to the Abbey Wood complex in South Gloucestershire. The Council has expressed concerns over the economic and environmental impacts of these relocations and is seeking to address these and the future use of the three sites with the MOD through a Bath Sites Working Group.

1.8 Engagement

- **B&NES Economic Partnership (Theme group for Local Strategic Partnership)**: This group consists of key businesses, business networks and HE and FE along with the Council and supports the delivery of the Bath and North East Somerset Economic Strategy. This strategy was launched in 2010 and provides an overall vision and action plan for the economy. The Economic Partnership is in the process of being re-structured to ensure it can feed local intelligence into the West of England LEP and following the departure of a number of public bodies (e.g. The Regional Development Agency and Government Office South West) to broaden representation. Recent issues it has focussed on include broadband delivery, graduate retention and high growth support.
- **B&NES Initiative**: The Initiative, a joint initiative between the Council and the Chamber of Commerce, provides a forum for large employers in the area to meet together to support the Council in delivering its economic agenda. It provides a strong and supportive voice for Bath and North East Somerset into Government and at the West of England. The Council continues to support the Initiative in particular to consult with them on economic policy and delivery.

5. Sustainable Development (Regeneration Delivery)

2.1 Bath Regeneration

- **Grant Applications - Regional Growth Fund:** In 2010 the Government launched the Regional Growth Fund. This is a £1.4 billion fund over three years to create private sector jobs, particularly in areas with a high reliance on public sector employment. Private business or public/private sector partnerships are eligible to apply, but not public sector only organisations (e.g. Local Authorities). Nationally approximately £250 million was available for round 1 and bids worth £2.78 billion were received. There were 8 applications to round 1 from the West of England, but none from Bath and North East Somerset. 2 bids were successful, both focussed on manufacturing industries. Bath and North East Somerset has strongly supported a bid to round 2, worth £4 million from the University of Bath to develop a Tech Hub for Bath, building on the areas existing strengths in digital and media sectors.
- **Enterprise Area:** The West of England Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) has determined that Bristol Temple Quarter will be given a new designation as an Enterprise Zone. This means Bristol City Council will need to produce a Local Development Order outlining how they will encourage business to locate there through relaxing planning rules. The Government will also offer a business rate holiday for new businesses starting in the zone and allow the LEP to retain business rates from new businesses. As part of this agreement 4 Enterprise Areas within the West of England have also been agreed. One of these is Bath City Riverside. This designation means that these areas will be the first to benefit from some of the financial gains from business rate retention accrued from the Bristol Temple Quarter Enterprise Zone.

2.2 Keynsham Regeneration

- **Business Association:** B&NES EEB officer attending Keynsham Business Association monthly meetings to provide access to support partners and advocacy with the local authority in terms of local business needs and issues.

2.3 Radstock regeneration

- **Radstock Economic Action Plan:** This project aims to understand the key strengths and weaknesses of the local economy in Radstock and Westfield, and develop a series of locally owned actions designed to support businesses to start and grow and broader

job creation in Radstock and Westfield. It will include a desk-top mapping exercise of economic data to develop a baseline position, (including: 1.Workplace and economic performance, 2. Business Stock, 3. Labour market supply and demand, 4.Employment land and premises offer, 5.Business support and FE provision) and a workshop bringing together key local organisations to present the findings of the economic research and identify interventions and develop an action plan.

2.5 Neighbourhood Regeneration

- **London Road:** For some years, the London Road area has been in relative decline, and its traditional role as a local centre has been eroded, with retail units becoming empty and changing use. The area also suffers from higher unemployment rates than other areas of Bath.

A wide approach to Community Regeneration is being developed.

The Council owns the freehold of three buildings in the area – numbers 2, 3, and 4 Long Acre, which have the potential to contribute towards the wider regeneration of the vicinity. The Council is currently in discussions with Places for People about their wish to extend their lease in 2 Long Acre (Caroline House).

Any decision on the future of the buildings by the Council will take fully into account the potential of these sites to contribute to the overall regeneration of the London Road, the role of the area as a gateway into the city, and the needs of the local community.

6. Local Enterprise Partnership

3.1 Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP): Following an invitation from Government in June 2010, the West of England Partnership submitted a proposal to Government to form a LEP covering the West of England area on 6th September 2010. On 28th October 2010 it was announced that the West of England was successful and should proceed with establishing its Board.

The purpose of the LEP is to support the delivery of sustainable economic growth and private sector jobs in the West of England. The role of the LEP Board is to:

- Co-ordinate the approach to economic growth by the private and public sector
- Identify opportunities and linkages across sectors for innovation, to maximise value from limited funding
- Facilitate opportunities for business and private sector organisations
- Influence government programmes and initiatives
- Engage in dialogue and lobby Government

The Board has agreed its priorities in three main areas: establishing a business focussed and joint working approach; removing barriers to business growth; and maximising the West of England's assets. The priorities will form the basis of a LEP business plan.

The Council is actively engaged in the LEP through:

- Board membership by our Leader
- Leadership of the business theme of the LEP on behalf of the 4 Unitary Authorities by Development and Major Projects
- Active engagement with a series of sector sub groups (e.g. creative industries, low carbon, tourism etc)
- Membership of the main project team supporting the board
- Membership of the small business group

6. Directorate Recruitment

Update July 2011

Recruitment Update - Jul 2011							
Role	Planned Status	Current Status	Job Description	Grading Assessment	Advertising	Recruitment	Target date / Mitigation
LEP Project Officer	Permanent	New post to manage B&NES approach to Local Enterprise Partnership	x	x	x	Job Description being developed for evaluation	Nov-11
Development Manager	Permanent	Vacancy arising due to Directorate staff changes	x	x	x	Job Description being developed for evaluation	Nov-11

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**Access to Information Arrangements
Exclusion of access by the public to Council meetings**

Information Compliance Ref: LGA/11/009

Meeting: Housing & Major Projects Panel

Date: July 2011

Author: John Betty

Exempt Appendix Titles:

- Appendix A – Risk Overview
- Appendix B – Project Initiation

The appendices contain exempt information, according to the categories set out in the Local Government Act 1972 (amended Schedule 12A). The relevant exemption is set out below.

Stating the exemption:

3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

The public interest test has been applied, and it is concluded that the public interest in maintaining the exemptions outweighs the public interest in disclosure at this time. It is therefore recommended that the Panel resolve to exclude the public, should they wish to discuss the appendices to the report. The paragraphs below set out the relevant public interest issues in this case.

Factors for withholding:

Appendix A – contains information on financial and contractual risks which if disclosed, would identify weaknesses in the Council's position which could be exploited to our commercial disadvantage by third parties.

Appendix B – contains information on new business cases in their very early stages, which have not received full approval to proceed. The Council is required to decide whether these projects are to proceed before they become open to public scrutiny. It is in the public interest for the Council to have some internal thinking space.

Factors for disclosure:

Disclosure would:

- Further public understanding of the issues concerned.
- Promote accountability and transparency by the Council for the decisions it takes.
- Allow individuals and companies to understand decisions made by the Council affecting their lives and assist individuals to challenge those decisions.
- Promote accountability and transparency in the spending of public money.
- Further public participation in the public debate of issues.

Reasons why the public interest favours withholding:

The Council considers that the public interest has been served by the fact that a significant amount of information has been made available on these issues – by way of the main report.

There is strong public interest in the Council delivering cost effective services to its customers. Release of this information would prejudice this function, as outlined above, and is therefore not in the public interest.

The Appendices refer to unresolved issues about which the Council hasn't yet formed a final view - there is an important public interest in the Council being able to consider these issues in private.

It is in the public interest that the Council is able to deliver cost-effective solutions in relation to significant local issues. This depends partly on the Council being able to protect its commercial position while the detailed terms of relevant schemes are agreed.

It is important for public authorities to have some measure of 'private thinking space', and that they are able to share important information with Elected Members tasked with representing the local community.

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

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Bath & North East Somerset Council		
MEETING:	Housing and Major Projects Policy Development & Overview Panel	
MEETING DATE:	2 nd August 2011	AGENDA ITEM NUMBER
TITLE:	Housing Renewal Policy	
WARD:	ALL	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: Home Health and Safety Policy		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 The Council is required to adopt and publish a Housing Renewal Policy. This policy is periodically reviewed and revised as required. It sets out how Housing Services will provide assistance, including financial assistance, to help low-income, elderly, disabled and other vulnerable residents to undertake essential repairs and adaptations. The policy as written supports the aims of the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Housing and Wellbeing Strategy 2010-2015, particularly around improving health and wellbeing and reducing inequalities within our communities.
- 1.2 Due to budgetary constraints, caused by the Government withdrawing a key funding stream, Cabinet was asked to adopt this revised policy as a matter of priority on the 13th July 2011. This was agreed. It was further agreed that the policy would be reviewed in 1 year.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Housing and Major Projects Panel is asked to:

- 2.1 Note and comment on the adopted policy.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The funding for the Home Health and Safety Policy 2011 is detailed in the Medium Term Financial Plan previously adopted by the Council. The total funding amounts to £165,000, comprising £45,000 from Housing Services efficiency savings and £120,000 from new monies for adult social care from the Department of Health.
- 3.2 In addition there is £1m of mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant funding comprising £422,000 Government capital allocation and £578,000 revenue contribution.

4 THE REPORT

- 4.1 The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England & Wales) Order 2002 provides local authorities with a general power to offer assistance to improve housing conditions. This assistance may take the form of financial grants, loans or any other type of help and support thought appropriate. Prior to making such assistance available it is a requirement that the Council must adopt and publish a Housing Renewal Policy. All applications for housing grants, loans and other forms of housing assistance will be judged against this policy.
- 4.2 It is important to remember that the worst housing conditions are found in the private sector. Indeed the Bath & North East Somerset House Condition Survey (2004), which is currently being updated, indicated that almost 1 in 4 owner-occupied properties do not meet the Government Decent Homes standard, often due to poor thermal efficiency. This compares to the current figure for social tenancies of around 1 in 20. The survey also confirmed that poorer housing conditions were associated with older households. National evidence also suggests that almost 1 in 5 of all households now live in fuel poverty.
- 4.3 For over 20 years the Government has funded this area of work using a number of funding mechanisms, most recently through the Regional Housing Pot allocation. During the last few years our allocation has remained around £580,000 p.a., though in 2010/11, and following a successful additional bid, we were allocated £689,000. However, the new coalition government have now withdrawn this funding stream. Given that this programme is targeted towards the most vulnerable in our community we have secured, through efficiency savings and social services funding, a much reduced funding allocation to protect some of the most vulnerable residents in our community.
- 4.4 The proposed Home Health and Safety Policy 2011, contained in the appendix, is therefore a significantly revised and trimmed version of the existing Housing Renewal Policy. The principle changes have been to further restrict both client eligibility and eligible works. However, we have attempted to be creative, and based upon national evidence which suggests that highly targeted, small scale works, promptly delivered can have significant positive health benefits for elderly and vulnerable clients, have created and commissioned an "urgent repairs" service.
- 4.5 The policy now comprises six schemes aimed at the improvement of unsuitable homes occupied by low-income, disabled, elderly and otherwise vulnerable households. These are:

- advice and home visits – to help vulnerable people decide what work is required to remedy serious hazards and property defects;
- Mandatory Disabled Facilities grants (separately funded) – adaptations to ensure the homes are disabled people are suitable for their access needs;
- urgent repairs grants - to fast track urgent and small repairs for vulnerable people thus reducing negative health impacts through illness or accident;
- home improvement loans – to help vulnerable residents undertake essential repairs and safety improvements that help to keep them safe and well at home;
- home insulation and top up heating/insulation grants to help households with low income keep their homes warm and energy efficient;
- community alarms grant – to help vulnerable people feel safer in their homes by providing community alarms and key safes.

4.6 In summary these changes driven by an increased focus on the health and wellbeing of B&NES residents, the loss of the capital grant from Government for Housing Renewal, together with the views of staff and service users on improvements to the service. For the purposes of this policy a household is defined as vulnerable if the household is a low income household and, aged over 60 or with a limiting long term illness or disability.

5 RISK MANAGEMENT

5.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

6 EQUALITIES

6.1 The policy will assist vulnerable households in B&NES access financial assistance to carry out essential repairs and safety improvements and adapt their homes to meet their needs. It is proposed that resources for essential repairs and safety improvements will be aimed at low income residents that are over 60 years of age or a have a relevant disability affecting their ability to work. An equalities impact assessment has been carried out.

6.2 Evidence shows that older and disabled householders are more vulnerable to many of the common housing health and safety hazards. Individuals under 60 and able bodied are more likely to be able to obtain work and fund the improvement themselves. Therefore resources are aimed at low income households and, aged over 60 or with a limiting long term illness or disability.

7 CONSULTATION

7.1 Cabinet Member; Parish Council; Councillors; Staff; Other B&NES Services; Service Users; Local Residents; Community Interest Groups; Stakeholders/Partners; Other Public Sector Bodies; Section 151 Finance Officer; Chief Executive; Monitoring Officer were consulted during the development of this policy.

7.2 The consultation was carried out using meetings, a questionnaire and the circulation of draft policy.

8 ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN REACHING THE DECISION

8.1 Social Inclusion. Good quality, suitable housing increases social inclusion, particularly for children and older people on low income. It also assists with the maintenance of good health and comfort, reducing social exclusion caused by poor health and poor living conditions. These factors should reduce the demands on NHS B&NES.

8.2 Sustainability. Relatively small scale targeted intervention can prevent housing falling into excessive disrepair. Also energy efficiency improvements reduce carbon dioxide emissions and the likelihood of fuel poverty.

8.3 Young people. Good quality suitable housing improves the health and educational outcomes for children and young people

8.4 Customer focus. This policy aims to help meet the housing needs of residents in B&NES.

8.5 Health and Safety. The policy is underpinned by actions in the Housing and Wellbeing Strategy to improve the health, safety and wellbeing of vulnerable households in B&NES.

9 ADVICE SOUGHT

9.1 The Council's Monitoring Officer (Council Solicitor) and Section 151 Officer (Divisional Director - Finance) have had the opportunity to input into the single member decision report on which this report has been based.

Contact person	Chris Mordaunt, Housing Services Manager (Housing Standards & Improvement) Graham Sabourn, Associate Director (Housing)
Background papers	
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	

Housing Services

Home Health and Safety Policy

(adaptations, repairs and improvements)

June 2011

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This document can be made available in a range of languages, large print, Braille, on tape, electronic and accessible formats from the Housing Services
Telephone 01225 396444

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1 HOME HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

1.1 This policy sets out how home adaptations and home safety repairs and improvements budgets are to be spent from July 2011.

1.2 Adaptations for disabled people

1.3 This policy will improve the housing conditions of eligible disabled owner occupiers or tenants and families with disabled children by providing Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) to purchase adaptations that enable independent living.

1.4 Eligibility for a DFG is assessed by the Occupational Therapy Service and a test of resources will be carried out by Housing Services.

1.5 Home safety repairs and improvements

1.6 This policy will improve the housing conditions of vulnerable owner occupiers by giving them advice and financial support in the form of loans or grants to remedy and alleviate serious health and safety hazards in their homes.

1.7 This policy operates alongside the Housing Services Enforcement policy which deals with the repair and improvement of rented homes to remedy serious housing health and safety hazards.

1.8 For the purposes of this policy a serious health and safety hazard means a hazard assessed as Category 1 or 2 and rated A-D under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System.

1.9 For the purposes of this policy a household is defined as vulnerable if the household is a low income household and, aged over 60 or with a limiting long term illness or disability.

1.10 **Home insulation and community alarm grants**

1.11 This policy will improve the housing conditions of people with low income by giving them advice and financial support in the form of grants to help them insulate their homes – making it more affordable to stay warm.

1.12 This policy will improve the housing conditions of vulnerable people with low income by giving them advice and financial support in the form of grants for community alarms that makes them safer in their homes.

1.13 **Delivery Schemes**

1.14 This policy will be implemented by Housing Services and delivered via the following six schemes:

- advice and home visits – to help vulnerable people decide what work is required to remedy serious hazards and property defects;
- disabled facilities grants – working with the Occupational Therapy Service to help disabled people make their homes safe and suitable to live in;
- urgent repairs grants - to fast track an urgent small repair for vulnerable people and help prevent illness or accident;
- home improvement loans – to help vulnerable people afford repairs and safety improvements that help to keep them safe and well at home;

- home insulation and top up heating/insulation grants to help households with low income keep their homes warm and energy efficient;
- community alarms grant – to help vulnerable people feel safer in their homes by providing community alarms and key safes.

1.15 **Budget**

1.16 This Policy and the delivery schemes are subject to the availability of funding. Grants and loans are subject to eligibility criteria and a maximum amount to distribute the financial support available in an effective way.

1.17 The Policy will be subject to periodic review particularly if there are substantial changes to funding and resources.

2 **Policy Context**

2.1 Bath and North East Somerset Council has general powers given under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 to provide assistance that improves housing conditions in the area.

2.2 The Council's priorities for improving the lives of local residents are set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy 2009-2026. The Policy will contribute towards the aims of the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Housing and Wellbeing Strategy 2010-2015 by:

- improving health and wellbeing and reducing inequalities within our communities: narrowing the gap between people with low income living in poor housing conditions and the better off.
- by helping people to feel confident about carrying out their daily activities inside the home

- making homes more resilient to climate change,

2.3 The Key to Independence 2008-2013 is the Council's Housing Strategy for older people. The Policy will contribute towards the aims of the Key to Independence by providing person centred housing repairs and adaptation support and by improving the health and safety of older people.

2.4 The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (summary and conclusions for 2009) identifies falls and associated injuries and cold weather in energy inefficient homes as being a particular problem amongst older people in the area. The implementation of this policy will contribute to reducing the incidence of hospital admissions because of falls and excess cold and to preventing excess winter deaths amongst older people by targeting loans and grants to remedy serious hazards and improve home energy efficiency to owner occupiers aged 60 or over.

3 Equalities

3.1 The Policy will be implemented by Housing Services and its delivery partners and the Schemes will be available to people with protected characteristics in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Council's Single Equalities Scheme.

4 Appeals

4.1 If an applicant is refused a loan or grant and wants to appeal against the adverse decision they may contact the Housing Services Manager who will consider the appeal. An appeal must set out the reasons why the applicant wants the decision changed and provide supporting evidence. An appeal should be made in writing unless the applicant's circumstances are exceptional.

5. Complaints and Comments

- 5.1 We want to provide good quality services but sometimes things can go wrong. If this happens we need to know so that we can put it right and learn from the experience. We welcome comments or suggestions that help us to improve the service.
- 5.2 The Council has a Complaints procedure (available on the website) that recommends that complaints are first made to the housing officer for the application or to the Housing Service Manager. Complaints can also be made to the Complaint Procedure Manager who can be contacted on: 01225 477931.

6 Exceptional cases

- 6.1 In exceptional cases the Council will consider applications for help with home adaptations, repairs and safety improvements that fall outside this Policy. Such applications will be decided by the Housing Services Manager.
- 6.2 Exceptions to the maximum amount of financial assistance available will be considered by the Housing Service Manager where the maximum is likely to be exceeded due to unforeseen works.

7 HOME HEALTH AND SAFETY DELIVERY SCHEMES

Disclaimer

The Council does not accept responsibility for any loss or damage incurred as a result of the advice and guidance provided by the repairs and safety improvements and adaptations schemes.

Summary Table: Home Health and Safety Delivery Schemes

Assistance Type	Purpose	Eligible client group	Amount available	Additional information
Free home health and safety advice	Home visits by housing Officers to give advice about home repairs and prioritising work to remedy defects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Low income ✓ Home owners ✗ Tenants 	None as this scheme for giving advice only.	Low income is defined as being on income related benefit.
Disabled Facilities Grant	Financial assistance and advice to make home adaptations to promote independent living	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Low income ✓ Disabled ✓ Home owners ✓ Tenants 	Up to £30,000	All DFG approvals are subject to an eligibility assessment and a test of resources. The maximum grant will not exceed the cost of works scheduled by the Council Occupational Therapist.
Home Improvement Loans	To provide loans for repairs and improvements to remove serious health and safety hazards (Category 1 hazards A to C and Category 2 hazards D only).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Low income ✓ over 60 ✓ vulnerable ✓ Home owners ✗ Tenants 	Between £500 and £15,000	<p>Loans are available from Wessex Home Improvement loans upon a referral from Housing Services.</p> <p>Loans will be low cost repayment, interest free or a combination of</p>

				<p>both.</p> <p>Loans are repayable to Wessex HIL.</p> <p>Low income is defined as having a certain level of disposable income which is assessed by Wessex HIL.</p>
<p>Urgent Repairs Grant</p>	<p>To provide small grants for carrying out urgent repairs quickly.</p> <p>For example to fix dangerous electrics or repair a broken heating system.</p>	<p>✓ Low income</p> <p>✓ over 60</p> <p>✓ vulnerable</p> <p>✓ Home owners</p> <p>✗ Tenants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £1000 per grant • No client to have more than 3 grants in a year and more than £1,500 in a year. 	<p>Low income is defined as being on an income related benefit. Clients not on a benefit may be given a Test of Resources to determine their income level.</p>
<p>Home energy efficiency.</p> <p>Two types of assistance:</p>	<p>Warm Streets To provide cavity wall and loft insulation.</p> <p>Warm Front top-ups</p>	<p>Both Schemes:</p> <p>✓ Low income</p> <p>✓ Home owners</p> <p>✓ Tenants</p>	<p>Warm Streets: Depending on age and income some people will be provided with home insulation. Otherwise there are</p>	<p>Low income for the Warm Streets scheme is defined by the Warm Streets scheme and is subject to change.</p>

<p>Warm Streets and Warm Front Top-ups</p>	<p>To provide top-up grants to successful Warm Front applicants who need additional money on top of the Government grant to carry out the works.</p>	<p>Warm Front Top-up clients must be successful applicants of the Warm Front Scheme who have been told by Ega that the cost of works they have applied for is more than the maximum allowed by the Warm Front Scheme.</p>	<p>discounts of at least 50% (May be subject to changes which are outside the scope of this Policy)</p> <p>Warm Front Top-ups Top-up grants are given at an amount that will cover the extra cost required to complete works being funded by the Government Warm Front grant (or equivalent). Excessive claims may be refused. Average grants paid have been between £200 and £1,000.</p>	<p>Warm front Top-up clients will have been assessed by the Warm Front scheme as having a low income in order to be entitled for a Warm front grant.</p>
<p>Community alarms Grants</p>	<p>For the installation of community alarms and key safes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Low income ✓ over 60 ✓ vulnerable ✓ Home owners ✓ Tenants 	<p>£200 maximum</p>	<p>Low income is defined as being on income related benefit.</p>

HOME HEALTH AND SAFETY ADVICE AND HOME VISITS

Who can apply?

This service is for home owners with low income only. Private sector tenants and tenants of Registered Providers (for example Somer Community Housing Trust) should, at first, ask their landlord about repairs that need doing.

Low income is defined as being on one of the income related benefits listed below:

- *Income Support
- *Income based Jobseekers allowance
- *Employment support allowance (income Based)
- *Council Tax benefit
- *Pension credit (Guarantee credit)
- Likely to satisfy low income eligibility
(Not likely to be assessed as having full contribution in Housing Services test of resources as determined at point of initial inquiry)

The Scheme

When landlords do not carry out repairs Housing Services will provide help and advice which includes the use of enforcement powers to remedy significant Housing Health and Safety Hazards rated as band A to D hazards. This is a separate service that can also be accessed by calling the number below under the heading "How to apply". The Housing Services Enforcement Policy describes how the Council will deal with landlords who fail to carry out reasonable repairs to the homes of their tenants.

Home visits will be carried out to enable housing officers to give preliminary advice about home repairs and prioritising work to remedy any defects. A list of contractors for repairs can be provided.

Home repairs and improvements advice and support for elderly, disabled or vulnerable people can also be provided by the Home Improvement Agency.

Works that can be included

When an officer visits they will focus on identifying serious health and safety hazards and major disrepair. For example:

Dangerous electrics
Inadequate heating and/or home insulation
Damp and mould
Roof leaks
Dangerous staircases and pathways

How to apply

Call Housing Services on 01225 396444 to ask for an appointment

Funding amount

This scheme is not for giving out grants or loans. It is for advice only.

Requirements and conditions

- Advice and guidance is given subject to available resources and to reflect the best interests of the household.
- The advice and guidance is not a structural survey and the assessment is based on the Housing Health and Rating System under the Housing Act 2004.
- Advice given may be verbal or written.
- The Council may have to take formal action when they discover a serious hazard or disrepair. For example they may have to serve a Hazard Awareness Notice which tells the house owner what the hazards are.

DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT

Who can apply?

This grant is available to residents who are disabled and have been referred for assistance by the Council's Occupational Therapy Team.

It is available to owner-occupiers and private tenants, including tenants of Residential Social Landlords (with the landlord's consent).

The grant is only available to people on low incomes and is subject to a "test of resources" which examines people income and savings.

Applications for children will not be subject to a "test of resources" under current legislation.

The Scheme

Grants are available for disabled people to provide adaptations in their homes which will enable them to live more independently and remain at home.

The grants are mandatory which means that the Council has a legal duty to provide them. The grant can include payment for professional fees and any unforeseen works that are necessary.

Works that can be included

The eligible works include those that are deemed mandatory in accordance with the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. This includes essential adaptations to give residents better freedom of movement into and around their home and to access facilities within it. All applicants will have to be assessed by an Occupational Therapist before being referred to the Housing Standards and Improvement Team.

Funding will only be considered up to the value of the works recommended by the Council Occupational Therapist.

In exceptional circumstances funding will be made available for the provision of an additional access ramp into the disabled person's accommodation so that, for example, they have access to the back garden as well as access through the main entrance. As agreed by Occupational Therapist Manager and Housing Services Manager.

Funding amount

The maximum amount of grant will be £30,000.

Home Improvement Loans can also be used to “top up” a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) where the cost of work exceeds the maximum of £30,000 allowed for a DFG.

Home Improvement Loans can only be made available to owner occupiers as the loans are put as a charge against the property so that outstanding loans can be reclaimed by Wessex HIL when the property is sold or inherited. See the Home Improvement Loans section to this document for further information about applying for a loan.

How to apply

Contact the Access team on 01225 - 396000 and ask for an assessment by and Occupational Therapist (OT). If the OT judges that the client is in need of a DFG the case will be referred to Housing Services who will administer the grant application.

The Council’s Home Improvement Agency is also available to help and support clients through the process of applying for a DFG. The first point of contact however is the Access Team.

Requirements and conditions

About the applicant

The property is to be occupied by the applicant following the completion of the work.

Applicants are subject to a test of financial resources except where the works are for children.

About the grant

A valid application and specified conditions are detailed in the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. (Assistance with completing forms is available.)

The client will be informed within 6 months whether or not their application has been approved or refused. Housing Services will aim to approve a valid application within 6 weeks.

About the works

Estimates for the cost of the works are required, prior to approval, from two contractors (unless otherwise directed by the Occupational Therapist).

Reasonable professional fees will be paid only when considered necessary. Fees from a chartered architect, chartered surveyor or a home improvement agency, or private OT will be considered.

Unforeseen works

Unforeseen works can only be considered upon prior inspection and agreement by Housing Services.

If unforeseen works take the total cost of the works above the grant maximum of £30,000 the client may be asked to pay the additional money.

Payment of works

Payments will be made to the client or will be paid to the contractor(s) only at the client's request.

Final payments are only made on the submission of an acceptable invoice for the works, including any professional fees.

Final payments will be made when all works are completed and meet the client's needs as determined by the Occupational Therapist.

Interim payments will be paid at the discretion of the Housing Services. Clients will be expected to pay any contribution they may have before the Council pays an interim payment.

Interim payments are only made on the submission of an acceptable invoice for the works, including any professional fees, and will be paid to a maximum of 90% of the approved amount. Works to the value of the payment being requested must have been completed and the works must have been inspected by a Housing Services Officer from the Council, or an Officer from the Home Improvement Agency or both.

Recovery of Grant

Disabled Facilities Grant exceeding £5,000 may be reclaimed by the Council where a property is sold or transferred within 10 years of the certified grant completion date. No more than £10,000 will be reclaimed in each case. Grant in excess of £5,000 may be registered as a local Land Charge. The decision to recover Grant will be made on an individual basis by the Housing Services Manager.

A local Land Charge will be registered if the Grant is likely to have added value to the property. For example a land charge may be registered where the property has been extended to provide additional facilities and/or accommodation, but not usually for the installation of stair lifts or other items that would not substantially change the property value.

HOME IMPROVEMENT LOANS

Who can apply?

This service is for vulnerable home owners with low income only.

Private sector tenants and tenants of Registered Providers such as Somer Community Housing Trust should ask their landlord to carry out repairs. The Housing Services Enforcement Policy describes how the Council will deal with landlords who fail to carry out reasonable repairs to the homes of their tenants.

Low income eligibility will be assessed by Wessex Home Improvement Loans who will carry out a financial assessment to decide whether or not an applicant is able to have a low interest home improvement loan. As part of the assessment they will look at clients' income savings and outgoings.

The criteria for eligibility are a disposable income of less than £125 per week and savings of less than £16,000.

Vulnerable people are defined as people with low income and with a limiting long term illness or disability living in unsafe or unsuitable housing.

The Scheme

Home Improvement Loans will be offered for home repairs and improvements that will remove serious health and safety hazards band A to D as assessed under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System. This includes Category 1 Housing Health and Safety Hazards bands A to C and Category 2 Housing Health and Safety Hazards band D

Home Improvement Loans can also be used to "top up" a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) where the cost of work exceeds the maximum allowed for a DFG.

Home Improvement Loans can only be made available to owner occupiers as the loans are put as a charge against the property so that outstanding loans can be reclaimed by Wessex HIL when the property is sold or inherited.

Loans are available from Wessex Home Improvement Loans (Wessex HIL) via a referral from Housing Services.

There are several types of loan available. Advice and guidance will be provided by Wessex HIL to ensure applicants are offered the most suitable type of loan for their situation. In some cases Wessex HIL may not be able to lend to the client. In such cases clients will be referred back to the Housing Service who may be able to offer alternative form of assistance.

In some cases where Wessex is unable to lend to a client or where the maximum they can lend is insufficient to complete all the essential works the Council may not be able to offer any further financial assistance. In such cases careful

consideration will be given to taking the most appropriate course of action and may be referred to the Housing Manager for a decision.

The Home Improvement Loans will be low cost capital repayment, interest only, interest roll-up, interest free or a combination at the discretion of Wessex HIL

All loans are repayable to Wessex HIL who holds the loan fund on the Council's behalf.

The loans are subsidised by the Council who pay an annual subscription to Wessex HIL for running the scheme and subsidise each loan individually when required to do so.

Who are Wessex HIL?

Wessex HIL is a Community Development Finance Institution who works in Partnership with Bath and North East Somerset Council as well as with other councils in the area. Established in 2002 as a "not for private profit" organisation they provide low cost finance to home owners for essential maintenance and improvement works.

Works that can be included

Home repairs and improvements that will remove serious health and safety hazards band A to D as assessed under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System will be considered. For example:

- Dangerous electrics
- Inadequate heating and/or home insulation
- Damp and mould
- Roof leaks
- Dangerous staircases and pathways

Home improvement loans may also be able to cover works to the common parts of a building, or where a legal notice has been served requiring fire precautions work and when there are insufficient funds held by the management company.

Home Improvement Loans can also be used to "top up" a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) where the cost of work exceeds the maximum of £30,000 allowed for a DFG.

Unforeseen works and professional fees may also be included in the loan amount (see below in conditions and requirements).

Funding amount

The maximum that can be lent is £15,000

The minimum that can be lent is £500

All assistance is subject to the availability of funding.

The Council will subsidise each loan given and the subsidy will be a grant paid directly to Wessex HIL on the client's behalf. The subsidy amount is determined by Wessex HIL on a case by case basis and will depend on the type of loan the interest payable and the loan period.

If the client chooses to use the service of the Council's Home Improvement Agency then the agency's fees will be included in the loan. Housing Services will approve fees charged at 10% of the cost of the works.

How to apply

Clients can contact Housing Services on 01225 396444 to discuss whether or not they are likely to be eligible.

Clients can also contact the Home Improvement Agency. The Agency can help people make an application for this type of loan and provide help to get the works carried out. For example they will arrange for building contractors to carry out the work.

The following gives a brief out line of how to apply:

- An officer from the Council will visit and decide which works can be included.
- Clients will be provided with a schedule of works by the Council.
- A financial advisor from Wessex HIL will arrange to visit the client/ applicant in their home and assess eligibility for the loan. They will make a decision on eligibility, whether a loan is affordable and if so what type of loan is best for the client.
- Clients must use the schedule of works to get two estimates; one each from two different building contractors. These estimates will be part of the application to the Council which will also include a proof of title (or equivalent proof of ownership) to show who owns the house and completed application forms.
- When Housing Services have a full and complete application they will aim to approve it in writing within 20 days.
- Clients can only start works when they have their written approval from the Council.

The Home Improvement Agency and the Council and Wessex HIL will do what they can to guide and support clients through the process.

Wessex Subscription

The Council will pay from its Housing Renewal budget an annual subscription fee to Wessex HIL to belong to the Wessex Consortium.

Requirements and conditions:

About the applicant

Applicants must own the property.

Applicants must have sufficient equity in the property.

Owner-occupiers are to have owned and lived in the property for the past 2 years. Occupying applicants with shared equity will usually be assessed jointly.

The applicant is to be over 18 years old

About the loan

Full repayment of any outstanding loan will be necessary on the disposal of the dwelling. In this instance disposal means the sale of the property or the transfer of ownership, or the inheritance of the property.

Applicants must have a bank account; repayments are made by a monthly standing order from this account.

The loan will be recorded as a land charge until repayment.

About the works

Funding is only available for the cost of works started after the approval of assistance. This means that applicants must not start works for which they are borrowing the money until the loan is approved by Wessex HIL and the Council.

Reasonable professional fees may be included from a chartered architect, chartered surveyor, home improvement agency or for other associated services approved by the Council.

As part of the application estimates for the cost of the works are required, prior to approval, from two approved contractors.

Works eligible for funding through an insurance claim will not receive assistance but the policy excess amount can be.

Clients can only start works when they have their written approval from the Council. Starting works before written approval may invalidate their application.

Unforeseen works

Unforeseen works are works that were not expected to be needed when the works were originally planned but are essential for the job to be completed safely and in a satisfactory manner.

Unforeseen works can only be considered upon prior inspection and agreement of Housing Services.

Unforeseen works will have to be funded by the applicant. However Wessex HIL may, in agreement with the client, add a maximum of 10% of the cost of the works (including any fees) to the loan when the loan is initially set up. This extra amount can then be used for unforeseen works if needed. If this amount is not used then the 10% must be paid back to Wessex HIL by the applicant when works are complete.

Payment of the works

For clients not being helped by the Home Improvement Agency the Home Improvement Loan payment is only made on the submission of an acceptable invoice for the works, including any professional fees. All works must be completed to the satisfaction of the Council.

Home Improvement Agency (HIA) clients must agree to have their loan held for them by the Agency in the Home Improvement Agency Client account. The loan money will be put in to that account when the loan has been agreed by Wessex HIL and signed up to by the client. The Home Improvement Agency (HIA) will pay the building contractor when all works have been completed to the satisfaction of the Council and upon receipt of an acceptable invoice. This will mean that Home Improvement Agency clients have to start making repayments to Wessex HIL from the time the loan is paid to the HIA client account and before that works have started.

URGENT REPAIRS GRANT

Who can apply?

This service is for vulnerable home owners with low income only.

Private sector tenants and tenants of Registered Providers such as Somer Community Housing Trust should ask their landlord to carry out repairs. The Housing Services Enforcement Policy describes how the Council will deal with landlords who fail to carry out reasonable repairs to the homes of their tenants.

Vulnerable people are defined as people with low income and with a limiting long term illness or disability living in unsafe or unsuitable housing.

Low income is defined as being on one of the income related benefits listed below.

- *Income Support
- *Income based Jobseekers allowance
- *Employment support allowance (income Based)
- *Council Tax benefit
- *Pension credit (Guarantee credit)

For clients who are not on one of these benefits but who are on one of the following benefits or, who consider themselves to have a low income, Housing Services will carry out a Test of Resources to determine eligibility. In such cases clients may have to make a contribution.

- Disability Living allowance
- Industrial injuries disablement benefit
- War disablement pension
- Child Tax credit (Joint income of £15,000)
- Working Tax Credit
- Pension credit (savings credit)

The Scheme

Urgent repair grants are available for carrying out urgent repairs quickly. The scheme uses a fast track simple application process. For instance; only one estimate for the works is required and the owner will not need to prove that they own their home, only to declare that they do.

This service is different and separate from the Handy Man service and from the Housing Improvement Loans service whereby clients receive a low interest loan from Wessex Home Improvement Loans via the Council.

Works that can be included

Grants will be offered for works that will remove serious health and safety hazards band A to D as assessed under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System.

This includes Category 1 Housing Health and Safety Hazards bands A to C and Category 2 Housing Health and Safety Hazards band D.

A disrepair or failing that is causing a statutory nuisance or is prejudicial to health and that needs to be dealt with urgently. For example a blocked toilet or dangerous electrical systems would be eligible.

The Urgent Repairs Service must be the most appropriate way to help the client. It should not be used to cover work that could be carried out by the Handy Man Service or Bobby Van or by a Home Repair Loan.

Examples of eligible work are

- Repairs to a boiler or heating system to ensure that provision of heating and or hot water.
- Repairs to stop water leaking into the property.
- Repairs to dangerous electrics.
- Repairs to fix a broken or leaking WC or cess-pit.
- Works to investigate the condition of power and lighting circuit and establish what repairs are needed.
- Works to investigate the structural stability of a dwelling or part of it and establish what works are needed.
- Repairs or alterations to help prevent falls of various types. For e.g. falls on stairs, falls between levels and in bath rooms.
- Repairs or alterations to make a property secure.

Funding amount

£1,000 per job

No more than 3 grants per client in any one year and a maximum of £1,500 per client in any one year.

All assistance is subject to the availability of funding.

How to apply

Contact Bath and North East Somerset Council's Housing Services or the Council's Home Improvement Agency.

Requirements and conditions

About the grant

The payment for urgent repair work is made as a grant and so is not repayable to the Council. Therefore the Council will not seek to recover this grant if the property is subsequently sold or if the applicant moves out for some reason.

About the works

As part of the application, one estimate for the cost of the works is required from one approved contractor.

Unforeseen works

Unforeseen works are works that were not expected to be needed when the works were originally planned but are essential for the job to be completed safely and in a satisfactory manner.

Unforeseen works can be paid for up to the maximum amount of grant allowable under the scheme.

Unforeseen works can only be considered upon prior inspection and agreement of Housing Services.

Payments of works

Final payment for work is only made on the submission of an acceptable invoice for the works, including any professional fees. Works must be completed to the satisfaction of the HIA or Housing Services.

Payment of the works will be made directly to the building contractor by the Council or the Housing Improvement Agency (or the Council commissioned provider of this scheme). Applicants will need to agree to this when they sign the application form.

HOME ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Who can apply?

This assistance is available to everyone in Bath and North East Somerset with greater benefits for those on a low-income.

The Schemes

These schemes are to provide help to improve energy efficiency within the home and reduce fuel poverty. There are two forms of Assistance:

- Warm Streets scheme (or equivalent)
- Warm Front top-up grants.

Warm Streets scheme

Who can apply?

“There is something for everyone”

- Home owners
- Tenants of private rented accommodation who have their landlord’s permission.

What works can be included

Loft insulation and or cavity wall insulation

Funding amount

Depending on age, income and household circumstances, some people will be provided with home insulation for free. In other cases there are discounts of up to 50%.

How to apply

- Phone the Energy Saving Trust advice centre on 0800 512012
- Email on warmstreets@cse.org.uk

An energy advisor will tell you if you are eligible for free or discounted home insulation.

Requirements and Conditions for Warm Streets

- All assistance is subject to the availability of funding.

- The applicant is to be over 18 years old.
- A valid application
- Applicant to meet Warm Streets low income/low savings, household or age criteria

Top-ups for National Warm Front Scheme (or equivalent)

Where the cost of works usually included in the Warm Front Scheme or equivalent exceeds the amount paid by the Warm Front Grant (£3,500) the Council will make up the additional amount on the applicant's behalf. The additional cost must pay for works which help provide affordable warmth or increased energy efficiency. Applicants must apply to the Council for this discretionary funding. An additional estimate may be required.

Who can apply?

Successful applicants to the Warm Front Scheme who have been told by Warm Front that the cost of the works they have applied for are more than the maximum allowed by the Warm Front Scheme.

What works can be included

Works approved by Warm Front (or equivalent). A typical example is central heating system being installed where there was none before or where the existing system was broken and needs replacing.

Funding amount

Top-up grants are given at an amount that will cover the extra cost required to complete the works being funded by Warm Front grant. Excessive claims however may be refused. On average grants that have been paid in the past range between £200 and £1,000.

How to apply

Clients will need to contact Housing Services and pass to them a copy of their approval letter from Warm Front. This letter will say how much extra funding is needed to complete the works.

If the Council can approve the client's application for a Warm Front Top-up they will write to them confirming this. The Council will make the payment to Warm Front on the client's behalf.

Requirements and Conditions for Warm Front Top-ups:

- All assistance is subject to the availability of funding.
- The applicant is to be over 18 years old.
- A valid application to Housing Services.
- Applicant to already be a successful Warm Front applicant.
- Payment of works - The Council will pay Warm Front directly on behalf of the client.

COMMUNITY ALARMS

Who can apply?

This grant is available to low income residents who are elderly, disabled or otherwise vulnerable.

The assistance is available to owner-occupiers, private tenants and Residential Social landlord (Housing Association) tenants.

Low income is defined as being on one of the income related benefits listed below.

- *Income Support
- *Income based Jobseekers allowance
- *Employment support allowance (income Based)
- *Council Tax benefit
- *Pension credit (Guarantee credit)

Vulnerable people are defined as people with low income and with a limiting long term illness or disability.

The scheme

Small grants are available for vulnerable people on low income for the installation of community alarms and key safes. This equipment can help people to remain in their own homes as it enables them to call for help easily if they fall or become ill for example.

Works that can be included

Eligible works include community alarms and key safes.

Funding amount

The maximum amount of assistance offered is £200

How to apply

Contact the Community Alarms Service. They will visit the client in their home and decide what equipment is needed and they will help the client apply for the grant from Housing Services.

Requirements and conditions

- All assistance is subject to the availability of funding.
- The applicant is to be over 18 years old.

- A valid application will comprise of a correctly completed and signed application form and specified proof of income. (Assistance with completing forms is available.)
- The eligible works are to be specified and arranged by the Community Alarms Service.

Payment for works

Community Alarms and Housing Services will arrange for the payment of the grant when the works are complete.

Summary of budgets and targets for the year 2011/12

Type of assistance	Maximum assistance available	Targets (No. of grants or loans given per year)	Total budget available for scheme
Free home safety repairs and adaptations advice and home visits	No funding Advice only.	none	No funding
Home Improvement Loans	£15,000	20	£50,000 for Wessex Subscription payment and subsidy payments for individual loans @ April 2011 Wessex Pot total - £250,000
Critical Repairs Grants	£1,000	30	£50,000
Home Energy Efficiency			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm Streets 	Cost of Loft and cavity wall insulation	160 measures	£40,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm front Top-ups 	Reasonable costs to enable applicant to take up Warm Front grant	10	£10,000
Community Alarm Grants	£200 maximum	100	£15,000
Disabled Facilities Grants	£30,000 maximum	250	£1,000,000

Agenda Item 10

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING: **HOUSING AND MAJOR PROJECTS POLICY
DEVELOPMENT & SCRUTINY PANEL**

MEETING **2nd August 2011**
DATE:

TITLE: **WORKPLAN FOR 2011/12**

WARD: All

AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM

List of attachments to this report:

Appendix 1 – Panel Workplan

Appendix 2 – Information to help to identify Workplan Items

Appendix 2 – Workplan suggestion form

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 This report presents the latest workplan for the Panel (Appendix 1) as well as information to help Panel members identify any additional items for the workplan (plus a suggestion form for workplan items).
- 1.2 The Panel is required to set out its initial thoughts/plans for their future workload, in order to feed into cross-Panel discussions between Chairs and Vice-chairs - to ensure there is no duplication, and to share resources appropriately where required.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Panel is recommended to
 - (a) consider the range of items that could be part of their Workplan for 2011/12 and into 2012/13
 - (b) agree a first draft of their Panel Workplan 2011/12 and into 2012/13.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 All workplan items, including issues identified for in-depth reviews and investigations, will be managed within the budget and resources available to the Panel (including the designated Policy Development and Scrutiny Team and Panel budgets, as well as resources provided by Cabinet Members/Directorates).

4 THE REPORT

4.1 The purpose of the workplan is to ensure that the Panel's work is properly focused on its agreed key areas, within the Panel's remit. It enables planning over the short-to-medium term (ie: 12 – 24 months) so there is appropriate and timely involvement of the Panel in:

- a) Holding the executive (Cabinet) to account
- b) Policy review
- c) Policy development
- d) External scrutiny.

4.2 The workplan helps the Panel

- a) prioritise the wide range of possible work activities they could engage in
- b) retain flexibility to respond to changing circumstances, and issues arising,
- c) ensure that Councillors and officers can plan for and access appropriate resources needed to carry out the work
- d) engage the public and interested organisations, helping them to find out about the Panel's activities, and encouraging their suggestions and involvement.

4.3 The Panel should take into account all suggestions for work plan items in its discussions, and assess these for inclusion into the workplan. Councillors may find it helpful to consider the following criteria to identify items for inclusion in the workplan, or for ruling out items, during their deliberations:-

- (1) public interest/involvement
- (2) time (deadlines and available Panel meeting time)
- (3) resources (Councillor, officer and financial)
- (4) regular items/"must do" requirements (eg: statutory, budget scrutiny, etc)?
- (5) connection to corporate priorities, or vision or values
- (6) has the work already been done/is underway elsewhere?
- (7) does it need to be considered at a formal Panel meeting, or by a different approach?

The key question for the Panel to ask itself is - can we "add value", or make a difference through our involvement?

4.4 There are a wide range of people and sources of potential work plan items that Panel members can use. The Panel can also use several different ways of working to deal with the items on the workplan. Some issues may be sufficiently substantial to require a more in-depth form of investigation. Further details about sources, ways of working and investigations are given in Appendix 2.

4.5 Suggestions for more in-depth types of investigations, such as a project/review or a scrutiny inquiry day, may benefit from being presented to the Panel in more detail using the form at Appendix 3.

4.6 When considering the workplan on a meeting-by-meeting level, Councillors should also bear in mind the management of the meetings - the issues to be addressed will partially determine the timetabling and format of the meetings, and whether, for example, any contributors or additional information is required.

5 RISK MANAGEMENT

5.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

6 EQUALITIES

6.1 Equalities will be considered during the selection of items for the workplan, and in particular, when discussing individual agenda items at future meetings.

7 CONSULTATION

7.1 The Workplan is reviewed and updated regularly in public at each Panel meeting. Any Councillor, or other local organisation or resident, can suggest items for the Panel to consider via the Chair (both during Panel meeting debates or outside of Panel meetings).

8 ADVICE SOUGHT

8.1 The Council's Monitoring Officer (Divisional Director – Legal and Democratic Services) and Section 151 Officer (Divisional Director - Finance) have had the opportunity to input to this report and have cleared it for publication.

Contact person	Mark Durnford, Democratic Services Officer. Tel: 01225 394458
Background papers	None
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	

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Last updated 8th July 2011

Housing and Major Projects Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel Workplan

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Director	Report Author	Format of Item	Requested By	Notes
2nd Aug 2011	Housing & Major Projects Routine Report	JB	John Betty	Report		
	Housing Renewal Policy	AA	Graham Sabourn	Report		
	Cabinet Member Update			Verbal		
20th Sept 2011	Strategic Tenancy Policy & Housing Allocations (Localism Bill)					
	Travellers Sites					
	Major Projects Routine Report	JB	John Betty	Report		
15th Nov 2011	Empty Homes / Empty Property Policy Update					
	Housing Delivery Panel Update					
	Major Projects Routine Report	JB	John Betty	Report		
31st Jan 2012	Strategic Tenancy Policy & Housing Allocations (Localism Bill)					
	Major Projects Routine Report	JB	John Betty	Report		
27th March 2012	House Condition Surveys (Private Sector Stock)					
	Housing Renewal Policy - Review					
	Major Projects Routine Report	JB	John Betty	Report		

Last updated 8th July 2011

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Director	Report Author	Format of Item	Requested By	Notes
Future items						
	New Homes Bonus	JB				

Workplan sources and ways of working (adapted from “How to be an Effective Scrutiny Member” training 2011)

Sources of Panel activities/work plan suggestions

» **People**

- Whole Panel
- Cabinet member suggestions,
- SDG/officer suggestions,
- members of public
- community/voluntary groups
- Non-panel Councillors

They don't all have to be sat in the room, but seek their views and input

» **Wide range of issues and subjects**

Seek suggestions/ideas from

- The Cabinet's Forward Plan,
- corporate plan/priorities,
- range of corporate and service policies, strategies and plans – when are they due to be reviewed/refreshed?
- sustainable community strategy (if something is to be achieved in 20years – ask how? where could OS be involved?)
- new ways of working (eg: multi-organisation projects) – have they worked, are they successful? What can be learned?
- Service plans and performance information
- New government legislation, consultation or guidance
- Suggestions from public, media issues, neighbourhood, voluntary and community sector organisations
- Issues from audit or inspection reports

Ways of Working

» Types of Workplan/Agenda items

- » Formal report
- » Presentation
- » Verbal briefing/update
- » Q&A session/interview
- » In-depth investigation

» By who?

- Cabinet members,
- Member champions,
- Council officers,
- “partner” organisations, such as NHS, Police, and local organisations,
- residents/community groups ,
- young people (DAFBY, Youth Parliament)
- and others?

Planning

» **Medium to longer term**

- Medium to longer term: 12 – 24 months
- later stages can be more about “sketching in” regular items, outcomes of planned reviews/following up items etc

» **Flexibility – room for planned and reactive work**

- Planning = good; don't forget to add the regular work, such as budget/service plans
- but also leave space and flexibility for issues arising

Setting Boundaries

» **Self discipline: time, energy, capacity**

Be self-disciplined – don't say yes to everything suggested !!

- As a Panel, do you have the time, energy, capacity? This is where planning over a longer timescale can help
- Not all Panel members can be at all meetings, involved in reviews, sitting on a policy development group – need to share and schedule who's involved and when
- Identify the timescale (even if roughly) for when something is to be examined/ reviewed - Members can identify in advance where and when they can best be individually involved
- Check: is officer support available? For example: an investigation that needs lots of financial info during March may not be easy to support.

» **Challenge yourselves**

Be a “critical friend” to your own plans.....

- Is this the best use of our time?
- What could we influence or change? Is it the right time to do it?
- Could we be duplicating work already underway (eg: through the audit or change programme)?

» **Avoid “for information” or “to note” as much as possible**

Could this be done another way -

- E-mailed document or link to the intranet (CIS) (save paper and server capacity?)
- A separate dedicated briefing from officers?
- Could 1 or 2 Councillors be commissioned to look into something report back to the Panel at the next work planning session?

» **Key question: does OS “add value”? Can it make a difference?**

- Are you going to influence change/improvement?
- Can you have a tangible effect via your observations, comments, recommendations.....and subsequent changes?

Making a difference can also be through holding public discussions -

- clarifying reasons – the what, why and how,
- enabling community views to be heard,
- bringing together a range of involved organisations that may not have met before in the right forum,
- exploding myths and misunderstandings?

In-depth Investigations

Methods:

Review/projects

- structured projects that take place over several months, with a sub-section of the Panel forming a Steering Group;
- use a range of processes and tools to gather evidence about the subject
- produce a final report about the project culminating in the strongly evidenced conclusions and recommendations
- Cabinet response to agree/defer/reject recommendations then brought to Panel

Scrutiny Inquiry Days

- Recent development in B&NES, although used in other Councils.
- A participative, consultative way of working
- Range of organisations interested in a certain issue (eg: Trade Waste collections) invited to meet informally with the Panel
- main part is a type of “workshop” or facilitated sessions
- develop shared “Action Plan” that all organisations sign up to
- report of day taken to formal Panel meeting, to agree any recommendations that are to be made to Cabinet.

These types of investigation are supported by high standard established project management processes provided by the Policy Development & Scrutiny Team

Service-led policy review & development

This is a potential new way of working, based on the Councillor involvement model recently used in work on the Local Development Framework. Details are still to be discussed and finalised, but based on previous practice, this could involve ;

- A sub-group of Panel members meet and work with service officers on a review or development of policy
- Members provide comments and suggestions at regular intervals during the process
- Different to a project/review (as above) as its an on-going overview of the development of the policy, rather than a more objective Panel-led and directed investigation,
- Needs to be included in workplan to ensure Panel capacity
- It has not yet been identified how the Members report back to Panel on how they've "added value" by their involvement in the policy development process.

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**BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL
POLICY DEVELOPMENT & SCRUTINY PANEL:
WORK PLAN SUGGESTION FORM**

Your name: _____

Suggested Workplan item: _____

Which Panel: _____

Topic Outline: Please include a brief outline about the topic you are suggesting and any reasons for it to be prioritised.

You may want to consider including information about whether your topic

- impacts on more than one section of society, or multiple wards in B&NES,
- is an issue of public concern,
- has any particular timescales to be carried out or completed by
- is a poor performing/overspending service area, and
- what you think can be achieved from scrutiny involvement.

Type of Topic: Do you think your item should be

- A) Agenda item at a future panel meeting (When? _____)
or
B) An In-depth investigation
- a. Project/review
 - b. Single Inquiry Day
 - c. Service-led policy review & development

Please return completed forms to scrutiny@bathnes.gov.uk

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