

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 7th August 2008

Subject: Wigan & Leigh Housing Performance for 2007/08 and Business Plan for 2008/09

Report of: Director of Environmental Services

Contact officer: Peter Layland 01942 828983

Purpose / summary: To report the performance of Wigan and Leigh Housing during 2007/08 and to approve the 2008/09 priorities within the Wigan and Leigh Housing Business Plan 2007-10

Alternative options considered and reason for selecting the one recommended: Options include accepting, modifying or rejecting the new Business Plan priorities. Acceptance is recommended since budgets and priorities are in line with existing Council and Board expectations.

Recommendation / decision: The performance of Wigan and Leigh Housing for 2006/07 be noted and the 2008/09 priorities for the Wigan and Leigh Housing Business Plan 2007/10 be accepted.

Key Decision: This report involves a key decision within ground(s) 1.

The decision made as a result of this report will be published within **48 hours** and cannot be actioned until **seven working days** have elapsed, i.e. before 19th August 2008

This item is included in the Forward Plan.

Risks / Implications:

Financial:

Wigan and Leigh Housing Company has a management fee of £15.3m for 2008/09. (£15.3m for 2007/08).

Staffing:

No implications for Council.

Policy:

Housing Strategy.

Equal Opportunities - Has a Diversity Impact Assessment been conducted?

Report includes progress on Equality Standard for Local Government and CRE Code of Practices for Rented Housing.

Wards affected:

All.

Property Implications – Does the proposal involve a reduction, addition or change to the Council’s asset base or its occupation?

No

If yes, have the property implications been agreed with the Corporate Property Officer?

Does this proposal have significant implications for the Council and the local population?

Report includes progress on Equality Standard for Local Government and CRE Code of Practices for Rented Housing.

Does this proposal involve a new policy or procedure or significant changes to an existing policy or procedure?

No

Has the Service Director - Borough Solicitor confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council’s Constitution?	Yes
Has the Service Director - Corporate Services confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council’s budget?	Yes
Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council?	No

For Cabinet reports only :

Categorisation of the report:	X		X
Discussion leading to a decision		Discussion	
Monitoring		Decision	X
Sharing for corporate understanding		Information	

Tracking/Process:

	Consultation	Ward Members	Partners
Panel	Overview & Scrutiny	Cabinet	Council
CPP 21.7.08		7.8.08	

There are no Background Papers to this Report within the meaning of Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Proper Officer Martin Kimber

Date 22 July 2008

Background:

- 1.1 Within the Councils contractual arrangement with Wigan and Leigh Housing (WALH), the Company are required to submit a Business Plan which covers issues such as stock investment, finances and priorities for development. Also since 2003 a performance management framework has been in place to ensure the best possible services are delivered and that the Company contributes to the Councils strategic objectives.
- 1.2 Within the performance framework the Council requires:
 - A wide range of indicators to be monitored and performance reported quarterly to Community Protection Panel (except 1st quarter) and half yearly to Cabinet.
 - Closer monitoring/reviews on WALH services based on a risk and performance basis.
- 1.3 To ensure the above are delivered the Council meets WALH on a cycle of monthly, quarterly and annual meetings. The Annual Meeting is formal with the Cabinet Member with authority to act as the Council Shareholder and the Chairs of the Company attending the meeting. The meeting took place on 24th June considering both the Company's performance over the last year and the Business Plan for future years.
- 1.4 Members are reminded that a new performance framework is in place which reflects the new contract with WALH. This focuses more widely on strategic rather than more narrow management issues.

2. Performance 2007/08:

- 2.1 WALH performance over the last year has been relatively good. This judgement being made by looking at the overall performance framework, the CPA housing indicators, achievements against last year's Delivery Plan, and with reference to separate financial reports.

3. Performance Management Framework:

- 3.1 Throughout 2007/08 reports have been produced on a quarterly basis and this report provides the year end figures. The attached performance framework (Appendix 1) provides detailed figures which compare performance against the previous years figures and the target set for the year. This shows that a relatively high 70% of targets were met and 70% of indicators either improved or remained the same compared with the previous year.
- 3.2 Particularly good performance has occurred in the following areas:-
 - Significant improvement in the collection of former tenant arrears.
 - Continued good performance on emergency repairs.
 - A further reduction in the proportion of empty homes / reduction in relet times
 - High levels of energy efficiency in Council stock.
 - A reduction in the number of repeat homeless cases.
 - A reduction in the use of Bed & Breakfast

3.3 Whilst these areas of strong performance are of central importance, there are some areas of concern. These include:-

- Whilst homelessness prevention has improved significantly there is still scope for further improvement.
- Outstanding gas servicing certificates
- The average time to complete non-urgent repairs has lengthened

3.4 Discussions on these points have occurred with WALH and the Council is satisfied that action plans are in place within these areas.

4. CPA Performance:

4.1 A smaller number of key performance indicators are used by the Audit Commission to determine a Council's housing performance within the CPA process. Again the picture is positive with a slight increase in performance this year which saw the Housing element gain a highest score of 4. Of the 14 indicators measured for CPA purposes 9 indicators are upper quartile whilst 5 are mid quartile – none are bottom quartile. This builds on the significant progress the previous year.

4.2 A summary of overall performance is shown below, with detailed scores being shown in Appendix 2. Given the nature of the borough it will be difficult to make further dramatic improvements in this area in the short term, however there are a small number of indicators that are capable of moving into the upper quartile and therefore improving further this positive picture.

4.2 CPA Performance WALH contributes to:

	Top Quartile:	Mid:	Lower Quartile:
2004/05	6	5	3
2005/06	7	7	1
2006/07	8	6	0
2007/08	9	5	0

5. Performance against WALH 2006/07 priorities:

5.1 A further element of WALH's performance is demonstrated in its ability to complete the priorities set out within the Annual Delivery Plan. Appendix 3 provides an evaluation of progress and generally shows good performance.

5.2 The following priorities have shown good progress:

- Increasing Tenant & Resident participation
- Focus Performance Management on key areas
- Progress on SMART Neighbourhoods project
- Complete decent homes programme
- Embed VFM in Stock Investment and Repairs Directorate

- 5.3 The areas not completed relate to major reviews of service areas such in older persons and in access / customer care strategies. These have been delayed because the task has proved more extensive and complex than first thought. It has been agreed that these items are better delayed in order to complete the tasks comprehensively. These will be progressed as part of a larger piece of work in achieving the Better Housing Services theme and progress monitored during 2008/09.

6. Financial Position:

- 6.1 It is not the role of this report to deal in detail with the financial aspects of the relationship between WALH and the Council, this is negotiated annually having regard to HRA resources. However it is important to point out that the management fee paid to WALH is currently static with savings being made to improve VFM.

7. Business Plan Priorities 2008/09

- 7.1 Within the new five year agreement with WALH to manage the Council housing stock a decision was made for the relationship between the Council and WALH to become more strategic, linked to an overall vision based as much on community issues as narrow housing interests. Last year WALH submitted a 3 year business plan 2007/10. However a report highlighting the priorities for next year is attached at Appendix 4. This documents builds on the work already completed and work outstanding in delivering the five goals of Better Housing Services, Decent Homes, Better Neighbourhoods, Access to Affordable Housing and Housing Support for vulnerable people.

8. Conclusions

- 8.1 This report has set down an evaluation of WALH performance during 2007/08 and proposes a number of revised priorities for the current year within the WALH Business Plan 2007/10.

Deputy Chief Executive

Indicator	2006/07 Actual	2007/08 Target	2007/08 Actual	Improving ?	CPA quartile
The number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness absence	13.17 days	13.00 days	9.68 days	Y	
The level of equality standard for Local Government to which the ALMO complies	ES3	ES3	ES3	static	

Director of Asset Management and Development

Indicator	2006/07 Actual	2007/08 Target	2007/08 Actual	Improving ?	CPA quartile
Proportion of public buildings with access for the disabled	55%	79%	79%	Y	
The proportion of LA homes which were non decent reported as snapshot at year end	12%	10%	10%	Y	U
The percentage change in proportion of non decent LA homes between 1st April 2007 and 1st April 2008	25.5%	22.6%	16.0%	N	M
Energy Efficiency - Average SAP rating	65	65	70	Y	U
% age of urgent repairs completed within Government time limits	95.04%	95.5%	97.75%	Y	U
Average time to complete non-urgent repairs	7.95 days	8 days	8.93 days	N	U
Tenants Satisfaction with the overall Repairs Service	98.47%	90%	98.18%	N	
% customer satisfaction following undertaking of programmed works	93%	90%	95%	Y	
% of repairs which are emergency /	11.9%	15%	21.6%	N	

urgent repairs					
Proportion of gas servicing certificates outstanding	2.45%	2%	2.17%	Y	

Director of Housing Management

Indicator	2006/07 Actual	2007/08 Target	2007/08 Actual	Improving ?	CPA quartile
Average time to Re-let Local Authority Housing	39 days	34 days	32.29 days	Y	U
Proportion of Rent Collected including Arrears C/fwd	97.71%	97.80%	97.75%	Y	M
Number of LA tenants with more than 7 weeks of (gross) rent arrears as a % of LA tenants	4.66%	4.50%	4.41%	Y	
% of LA tenants in arrears who have had Notices Seeking Possession served	45.99%	46.00%	50.87%	N	
% of LA tenants evicted as a result of rent arrears	0.30%	0.30%	0.33%	N	
Satisfaction with contact centre		95%	95%	Not reported in 2006/07	
Proportion of Empty Homes as a percentage of the Stock	1.28%	1.27%	1.08%	Y	
% of Neighbour Nuisance Cases resolved to the satisfaction of the person reporting the incident	75.5%	76.0%	80%	Y	
Proportion of Former Tenant Arrears Collected	7.23%	7.50%	12.88%	Y	

Director of Housing Needs

Indicator	2006/07 Actual	2007/08 Target	2007/08 Actual	Improving ?	CPA quartile
The average length of stay in (i) B and B	1 week	1week	0 weeks	Y	U
The average length of stay in (ii) Hostels	0 weeks	0 weeks	0 weeks	Static – no room	U

which include dependent children or pregnant women				to improve	
The % change in the average number of families, with dependent children or a pregnant woman, placed in temporary accommodation	2.01%	10.00%	18.05%	N	M
Households considering themselves homeless who approach for housing advice and housing advice casework intervention resolves their situation, per 1000 households in the authority	1	3	2	Y	
Proportion of households accepted as homeless who were accepted as homeless within last two years	3.61%	3.00%	2.38%	Y	M
Service users who are supported to establish and maintain independent living	98.96%	95.00%	96.39%	N	
Service users who have moved on in a planned way from temporary living arrangements	87.57%	87%	98%	Y	
% of customers satisfied with the Allocations Process	94.54%	90%	93.2%	N	
Satisfaction with Homelessness service	89.41%	85%	92.3%	Y	

Director of Resources

Indicator	2006/07 Actual	2007/08 Target	2007/08 Actual	Improving ?	CPA quartile
The percentage of invoices paid within 30 days or being received	94.64%	96.0%	100.0%	Y	
Dwelling weekly management costs per LA dwelling	£12.61	£13.33	?	?	M ?

Audit Commissioning Benchmarking Analysis (CPA)

Indicator	Wigan Threshold position (2007/08 Performance)
Proportion of non-decent LA Homes	Upper Quartile
Percentage of change of LA decent homes	Mid Quartile
Urgent repairs in time	Upper Quartile
Average time for non-urgent repairs	Upper Quartile
Rent Collection and Arrears	Mid Quartile
Average re-let times	Upper Quartile
Average weekly management cost	Mid Quartile
CRE code for rented housing	No Quartile limit But WALH comply
Energy Efficiency of Council Housing	Upper Quartile
Overall satisfaction with housing service	Upper Quartile
Satisfaction with opportunities to participate	Upper Quartile
Average time in temporary accommodation – bed and breakfast	Upper Quartile
Average time in temporary accommodation – hostels	Upper Quartile
Homelessness prevention	Mid Quartile
Repeat homelessness	Mid Quartile
Change in Use of temporary accommodation	Mid Quartile

Appendix 3 Wigan & Leigh 2007 / 2008 Priorities

Task	Progress
<u>Housing Management</u>	
Improved tenant / resident involvement through Area Housing Forums	Forums now up and running. Further work on community networks now starting.
Improved quality of life focusing upon crime / ASB and cleanliness	Continued close liaison with the Council re ASB, cleaner / greener agenda, and PACTS
Focus performance on key areas of voids arrears and former tenant arrears and sickness absence.	Progress made in all these areas in 2007/08
Improving access to services	Ongoing work re JSC
<u>Housing Needs</u>	
Developing housing options and affordable housing	Affordable Housing List now being handled in the Property Shops Durham Street Scheme successful and now gearing up for a development role.
Review older persons housing services	Review has been delayed but is now underway
Carry out service improvement review of homelessness	Review started but a more fundamental review embracing all housing options / access to social housing underway
Start review of support for vulnerable people	Review delayed until 2008/09
<u>Strategy Policy & Projects</u>	
Progress SMART Neighbourhood Project	Contributed to the new LAA and helped develop shared web based information system
Project Manage the Ince Project	Project still underway and on target
Value for Money Reviews	Strategy agreed and being implemented

Task	Progress
Develop project manager skills	Training completed
Develop knowledge management	Action Plan implemented
<u>Stock Investment</u>	
Undertake stock condition survey	Completed
Produce a 5 to 10 Year Asset Plan	Work continuing based on the Condition Survey
Complete decent homes programme	Still on target for 95% decency by December 2008
Building VFM efficiency savings	Successfully continued
Improve operational performance	Improvement Teams on target
<u>Deputy Chief Executive</u>	
Developing Access and Customer Care strategy	Preparatory / planning work completed but wider review being undertaken in 2008/09
Ensure BV164 and CRE code of Practice are complied with	Continue to comply
Equality Action Plans developed	Continuing progress with the Disability Equality Plan and Gender Equality Plan developed
Review all risks in the Risk Management matrix	Review undertaken
Continue to improve Financial Management including procurement strategy improving savings / growth processes and developing robust financial framework	Good progress made
Continue to improve Information Technology including developing strategy, exploring hand held technology, customer access technology	Good progress made
Continue to improve Human Resource Management including appraisals,	Good progress but certain issues such as the Grievance work slightly

Task
reviewing moderns apprentices,
training review, assessors the
grievance procedure, sickness etc

delayed.

Progress

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive

Contact: Tony Gerrard Tel. No: 01942 486509 E-mail: t.gerrard@walh.co.uk

Priorities for 2008/9

Purpose/Summary:						
To seek members views on the proposed priority work to be undertaken by Wigan & Leigh Housing and reported to Board in 2008/9.						
Recommendations:						
Members are asked to agreed or amend the proposed list						
For decision, discussion or information?			For decision			
For the open part or the press and public excluded part of the agenda? If press and public excluded please state reason.			Open			
Resource and Value for Money Implications:		Any work on these priorities will be contained within existing budgets or will be subject to a separate report to Board at a future date.				
Employee Implications:		There are no direct staffing implications arising from this report though there will inevitably be some implications arising from the work on the different priorities.				
Key Risks incl. Company reputation, business relationships, health and safety and legal implications		The company needs to determine priority areas of work in order to achieve its Vision, to operate effectively and within the law and to ensure that services deliver value for money				
Equality (Impact) Assessed?		Yes		No	Not Applicable	✓
Equality & Diversity and Community Implications:		There are no direct equality and diversity implications arising from this report. Any arising from the work on the different priorities will be the subject of an individual Equality (Impact) Assessment.				
Environmental Implications:		There are no direct environmental implications arising from this report.				
Area Forums Affected:		None				
Tracking/Process		Consultation	Area Forum/s	Committee	Board	
		BMT 19 th March 2008 MT 26 th March 2008			1 st April 2008	

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Each year, Board have agreed a list of priority work to be included in the Delivery and Business Plan. Progress against these priorities is reported quarterly to Board and to the Council. At the meeting on 1st March 2008, Board agreed a report outlining the approach to managing and reporting performance and priorities in the coming year. The list of Performance Indicators is still being finalised. Attached to this report is a suggested priority list of work to be done by the organisation over the coming year. Some is a continuation of ongoing work and some is new work that will take longer than a coming year to complete.
- 1.2 Members will recall that there will be a range of other work being carried out within the organisation during the year and managed internally. The proposals here only cover the main priorities which will be reported to Board. The priorities generally cover the developmental rather than the day to day work of the company.
- 1.3 Separate discussions with the Council client will determine which of these priorities will also be subject to a progress report to the Council.

2.0 The Priority Tasks

- 2.1 The proposed list has been arrived at after having regard to a number of factors:-
- Legislative requirements
 - Work which directly supports the Vision and goals
 - Work which improves service delivery or value for money
 - Work which contributes to the long-term sustainability of the organisation
 - Work which contributes to broader community initiatives
 - Our capacity to deliver
- 2.2 A longer list of tasks was drawn up within individual directorates and from these lists the final proposals were considered by the Business Management Team on 19th March 2008 and subsequently by Management Team on 26th March 2008. The proposals represent a challenging programme of work that will help the organisation to continuously improve. Members will, however, be aware of the need to retain some flexibility in the programme and the ability to switch resources in order to respond to any opportunities or threats which may arise in the year.
- 2.3 In order to keep the programme manageable the various pieces of work have been grouped into 8 themes for the purposes of this exercise. The themes reflect the Vision goals and other important drivers. They are:-

Better Neighbourhoods
Affordable Housing
Supporting Vulnerable People
Business Enablers Supporting
Service Delivery

Better Housing Services
Decent Homes
Improving Value for Money
Governance

If agreed, the individual tasks will appear in the Directorate Plan of the lead Director, shown in the first column. The work led by the Director of Resources will appear in the Deputy Chief Executives' Directorate Plan prior to a managed handover later in the year.

- 2.4 Members are asked to consider whether the proposed priorities listed at Appendix 1 are ones they wish to agree and consider whether there are any other areas of work that they wish to be addressed

3.0 Conclusions

- 3.1 It is important that Board members determine the priorities for the organisation.
- 3.2 The suggested list of priority work, if achieved will help the organisation meet its strategic aims.

4.0 Recommendations

- 4.1 Members are asked to agree or amend the proposed list.

Better Neighbourhoods	
Director Lead	Task
DHM	Review of Tenancy Agreement
DHM	Complete review of Estate Inspection process and assess outcomes when implemented
DHM	Bid for resources to improve Gypsy Caravan Site at Bickershaw and advise on the procurement of the service
DHM	Support Partners in the development of Neighbourhood Working in the borough

Better Housing Services	
Director Lead	Task
DCE	Access, Involvement and Customer Care Programme. A range of projects covering:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of how we involve customers – including development of the Area Forums • Review of access arrangements and methods • Development of Contact Centre and links with the JSC • Agreeing and implementing Customer Care Standards • Staff development/culture shift towards improved customer care • Gaining re-accreditation for Chartermark replacement and Customer Contact Association • Carry out full Status survey
DHM	Review options around changing rent payment cycle from one week in arrears to current week's payment

Affordable Housing	
Director Lead	Task
DHN	Achieve Housing Corporation Pre - qualification
DHN	Produce detailed business case for involvement in new house building
DHN	If approved, submit bids to the Housing Corporation
DHN	Review and improve approach to administering the Council's Affordable Housing List for S106 discounted sales
DSPP	Develop and Embed Housing Options Approach by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice and information at initial point of contact through variety of channels and mechanisms • Effective prevention of homelessness • Partnership working
DHN	Understand operation of housing market and review allocation policy

Decent Homes	
Director Lead	Task
DAMD	Produce 5 to 10 year asset management plan
DSPP	Remediation of contaminated land at Ince <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project management • Work with Council to determine financial arrangements
DAMD	Meeting Government's requirement to produce Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs); Monitor closely when EPC's become compulsory in October 2008.
DAMD	Procure new partnering contracts for external programmes of work
DAMD	Produce Health & Safety and Asset Management systems.
DAMD	Start final phase of the Decency Programme – External Planned Maintenance in respect of Boroughs high-rise blocks in Scholes.

Supporting Vulnerable People	
Director Lead	Task
DHN	Older Persons Housing and Support Service Improvement Programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree asset management plan for the sheltered housing service • Agree future support model for older people and begin implementation • Agree future advice and "active and healthy" model and begin implementation • Ensure disaster recovery plan in place for sheltered housing
DHN	Safeguarding Programme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve full compliance against the Council's Safeguarding Children's audit tool and have produce for maintenance • Agree and begin to implement action plan to fully comply with Safeguarding Adults' responsibilities

Improved Value for Money	
Director Lead	Task
DSPP	Business Process Re-engineering <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within various Directorates • Cross-cutting issues such as document management and workflow
DSPP	Develop and introduce new suite of performance indicators
DHM	Implement recommendations from Audit reviews and follow-up reviews on:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FTAs • Dispersed Tenancies • Service Charges • Current Arrears • Contact Centre
DSPP	Improve performance around management of homelessness
DSPP	Maximise use of existing stock to meet housing need
ALL	Improve performance on void relet times
DSPP	Improved income collection in respect of temporary accommodation
DSPP	Business planning by accommodation types
DSPP	Decreased use of temporary accommodation
DoR	Implement procurement strategy and management of it

Business Enablers Supporting Service Delivery	
Director Lead	Task
DCE	Continue to progress Job Evaluation work
DCE	Conduct Equal Pay Review (linked to Job Evaluation)
DoR	Developing New Build “financial infrastructure”
DCE	Development of Company’s Website and Intranet
CE	Development of response to staff survey

Governance etc.	
Director Lead	Task
DoR	Introduce Board Member development Programme
CE	Develop a Social Responsibility Framework
DoR	Contribute to review of national HRA subsidy system