



Report to: Environment, Economy Culture and Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date: 18th November 2009

Subject: Mid Year Progress Report on the New Housing Strategy

Report of: Executive Director of Environmental Services

Contact officer: Peter Layland 01942 828983

Purpose / summary: To present a mid year progress report on performance within the New Housing Strategy.

Alternative options considered and reason for selecting the one recommended: N/A

Recommendation / decision: The performance against the targets and milestones within the Housing Strategy be noted.

Risks / Implications:

Financial:	Within existing resources
Staffing:	None
Policy:	Housing Strategy
Equal Opportunities - Has a Diversity Impact Assessment been conducted?	A diversity impact assessment has been undertaken within the Housing Strategy process.
Wards affected:	All

Summary of reasons for report being closed in the public interest:

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?

Not at this stage

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? **N/A ***

Has the Service Director - Corporate Services confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council's budget? **N/A**

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council? **N/A**

* delete which applicable

For Cabinet reports only :

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

Tracking/Process:

	Consultation	Ward Members	Partners
Committee	Overview & Scrutiny	Cabinet	Council
EECH Scrutiny 18 Nov 2009			

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

Proper Officer Gillian Bishop

Date 5th November

1. Background

1.1 The new Housing Strategy was considered by this Committee in July and has been subsequently approved by both Cabinet and the Local Strategic Partnership.

1.2 As a reminder this new strategy seeks to achieve two related but distinct tasks. Firstly it sets out a long term view about how housing is able to contribute to the wider vision for the Borough set out within the Local Strategic Partnerships 2026 Sustainable Communities Plan. Secondly the strategy also looks to drive forward shorter term policy aims set out within the Local Area Agreement (LAA).

- Theme 1 : Increasing the overall supply of affordable housing
- Theme 2 : Strengthening our weaker housing markets by increasing choice and quality
- Theme 3 : To better meet the needs of vulnerable and homeless people by investing in better prevention/support

The framework to measure progress via performance indicators and action/milestones is set out within the Housing Strategy Action Plan.

1.3 The development of the strategy involved considerable consultation. It has operated in draft form from the start of 2009-10 and thus it is appropriate to review its progress at the mid year point. This review is restricted to setting out performance and to assess prospects for achieving targets for the year end. A further report will be presented at the year end which will report on progress, but it will also look at re-setting targets and amending the overall Action Plan in light of new circumstances.

2. Progress on Implementing the Housing Strategy

2.1 The emphasis on the first six months 2009/10 has been twofold. Firstly considerable energy has been spent in obtaining the formal approval of the strategy and in transmitting its messages to all partners/colleagues. Good progress has been made in these aims with good publicity and interest shown in the strategies aims, with presentations and discussions within the Local Strategic Partnership, and the EECH Partnership. A launch event was also organised within the biannual Housing Strategy Event. Secondly major attention has been given to try to ensure the strategy is actioned. This has been especially important over the last few months as housing has been dramatically affected by the recession. Thus priority has been given to relatively short term objectives aimed at helping residents most affected. Good examples of success in these areas include the significant increase in homelessness preventions over this period as well as the major reductions in the rate of repossessions in the Borough (better than the regional or national trends).

2.2 The Housing Strategy Action Plan sets out performance targets and milestones expected to be achieved by the year end. Appendix 1 to this report sets out progress at the mid year position and provides comments on the expected year end position. In general this shows the considerable progress made over the last 6 months and the majority of the targets / milestones are expected to be achieved.

**3. Progress Against the Housing Strategy Action Plan
Theme 1: Increase the overall supply of affordable housing to meet the needs of all its residents and the local economy.**

3.1 In terms of this theme the high level performance indicator within the Local Area Agreement (LAA) is the number of net homes provided. As shown in Appendix 1 this target is currently being renegotiated with the government in line with the dramatic effects of the recession on housebuilding. In terms of progress against the supporting indicators the prospects of achieving these by the year end continue to be strong. The only major question mark being the action against empty homes as a new approach involving the Council proactively helping owners and outlining options is being rolled out in the coming months. Thus its effect is not yet proven.

3.2 The action milestones are also showing good progress in term of:

- Delivering investment in new affordable homes
- In making new Council / Wigan & Leigh Housing bids for new housing
- Developing a new empty homes strategy
- Developing regular housing market updates

3.3 The main area where progress against the milestone is not being made is within the review of the affordable housing strategy and within the aim of increasing planning applications that deliver affordable housing obligations.

3.4 The latter is simply due to the recession although considerable work with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and partners is being undertaken to maximise opportunities. This has included the £19m announcement that the Bickershaw scheme is proceeding along with further discussions on a number of sites within the Kickstart programme (HCA scheme to help restart housing completions). In terms of the wider Affordable Housing Strategy review this will not happen during the year. This is due to its links with the Local Development Framework and new case law that effectively compels Councils to undertake viability studies before imposing affordable housing conditions. This is being commissioned but will not report until well into next year.

**4. Progress Against the Housing Strategy Action Plan
Theme 2: Quality: Strengthening our weaker housing markets by increasing the choice and quality of the housing offer in these localities.**

4.1 The high level (LAA target) within this area is the % of non decent Council homes and the good progress being made is likely to meet the year end figure of 3%. As regards the supporting indicators all look achievable although many are only recorded at the year end. The key threat comes within the % of households on income related benefits that suffer from fuel poverty. This indicator is volatile and is affected by increasing fuel prices and the numbers on income related benefits.

4.2 In terms of the milestones good progress can be reported in terms of:

- Changes to our private sector policies
- In completing the WALH decency investment programme
- In the setting up of Wigan Housing Solutions

- In the relaunch of the landlords accreditation scheme
- In WALH progress towards better quality service
- In fuel poverty initiatives

4.3 The major threats to progress in this area relate to the roll out and success of the various changes made and in reacting to the increasing reports of neighbourhood issues.

5. Progress Against the Housing Strategy Action Plan

Theme 3: People: To better meet the needs of vulnerable and homeless people by investing in better prevention and support services.

5.1 The high level indicator in this area is the number of households living in temporary accommodation(LAA indicator). Good progress is being made in reducing this figure. However the targets are extremely stretching and given the current recession it will be a notable achievement if it is achieved. As regards the supporting indicators many of these are only recorded at the year end but performance does seem to be generally on target.

5.2 In terms of milestones strong performance in the following areas can be reported.

- Updating our housing allocation policies
- Reducing temporary accommodation
- Introducing comprehensive housing options information on the web
- In transforming services to older people
- Implementing the WARM strategy
- Tackling causes of homelessness/proactive in prevention
- Increasing support available for the homeless
- Improving adaptation procurement

5.3 Areas where greater progress in the second part of the year is needed includes

- Work on gypsy/traveller sites
- Developing links between homelessness/worklessness

5.4 These will be prioritized to ensure year end targets are met. However the largest threat to progress is the current recession / unemployment which is increasing the pressure on many of the services providing advice and support to vulnerable people. Efforts to help the most vulnerable are being made and increased resources are being made available to meet demand. Despite this tensions remain.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Progress in both implementing and publicising the new housing strategy in the first six months of the year has been good. Outstanding activity in terms of providing additional support to vulnerable people affected by the recession has been made as well as progress in terms of the milestones set in developing the strategy.

As outlined in the report the key threats and issues are:

- Meeting the extremely tough targets in terms of reducing temporary accommodation (LAA high level target)
- Maintaining progress on a wide range of initiatives and ensuring they are successfully implemented
- Reacting along with related services to counter the growing neighbourhood issues
- Continuing the emphasis on helping the most vulnerable within the current economic recession
- Many of these initiatives depend on cross boundary working and therefore the continued commitment of partners is vital.

Appendix 1 Progress against the Housing Strategy Action Plan

Theme 1- Quantity				
Increase the overall supply of affordable housing to meet the needs of all its residents and the local economy				
High Level Performance Indicator	Baseline Performance (2006/07)	2008/09 outturn	2009/10 target	Progress at 6 month review – Oct 2009
Number of net homes provided (NI154) (SHI1)	1105	780	Being renegotiated with GONW	Review with GONW to be finalised Dec 2009.
Supporting Indicators				
Number of affordable homes delivered (NI155) (SHI2)	1	69	85	Target likely to be met at year end. (currently 37)
Number of additional affordable lettings (LAA local)	197	287	400	Target likely to be met at year end.
Percentage of private sector homes empty for more than 6 months (SHI6)	2.17%	2.56%	2.52%	Current figures are below target but risks exist from the economic recession
Number of empty homes returned to use or demolished with Local Authority advice or action (LAA local)	56	64 figures include intensive LA action only	2500	Achievement of target dependent on empty home strategy implementation in the last six months of year

Percentage of homes built on previously developed land (RSS target)	N/A	87.3%	80%	Target likely to be met at year end.

Strategic Objectives	Action	Lead/ Partners	Milestones 2009	Progress at 6 month review Oct 2009
			2009/10	
1,6,7,12	Develop the LDF Core Strategy and Housing SPDs	Planning Policy/ Housing Strategy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consultation on Core Strategy preferred options and core principles (June 09) 2. Draft SHLAA consultation (June 09) 3. SPD reviews 4. Develop methodology for viability studies for affordable housing and other planning requirements (June 09) 5. Updated SHLAA (Sept 09) 6. Publication of final SHLAA (Dec 09) 	<p>Consultation on both the Core Strategy & draft SHLAA completed. (Strategic Housing land availability assessment)</p> <p>SHLAA completion now likely by the year end rather than December.</p> <p>Draft brief for viability study on affordable housing completed however this is a significantly larger task than originally anticipated due to legal issues/recession.</p> <p>The study will therefore only commence in April 2010.</p>
2, 3, 4, 6,7,12,13	Review the Affordable Housing Strategy	Housing Strategy/ Planning Policy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evidence collated and consultation carried out (Nov '09) 2. Draft produced (Jan 10) 	<p>Given the above studies on viability and concerns over the recession, the affordable housing strategy cannot be usefully reviewed during the year. As a result the review will be completed in</p>

				2010/11. An update will be prepared in the interim.
2,3,6,7,1 2,13, 14	Deliver investment in affordable homes via the HCA's NAHP 2008-11	Housing Strategy/ HCA/ providers	1. Completion Ph1 Durham St 2. Ensure completion of pipeline schemes 3. Look to develop bids tackling empty homes in priority areas	Pipeline schemes are progressing to target. Bid to tackle empty homes in preparation. Durham St on site and target
2,3,6,7,8, 12 13,14	Delivery of Wigan and Leigh Housing New Build Business Plan	WALH/ Housing Strategy	1. Bid approval and PP obtained for Kay Close, Scholes 2. Start on site at Kay Close 3. Further development programme in place	Kay Close approved and enabling works have begun Further development options being considered in partnership with WALH.
1,2 ,3 ,4,6,7,12	Maximise affordable housing provision via planning obligations, particularly during the housing downturn.	Housing Strategy/ Planning Policy/ Development Control/ developers	1. Increased number of approved applications with affordable housing obligations	Recession is having a 'dampening' effect on new planning applications unlikely to achieve this milestone. Exploring ways of leveraging in additional funding via HCA on some sites
1,2,3,4,6, 7,12,14	Identify opportunities to provide a range of housing to meet needs within strategic development sites.	Planning Policy/ Housing Strategy/ ERO/ HCA	1. Agreement on master plans for strategic sites, including affordable housing and specialist housing requirements	Work on certain strategic sites being undertaken. Also work on wider linkages within a regeneration framework underway.
1,2,3,4,6, 7,12, 14	Explore opportunities for the Council to	Housing Strategy/ ERO/ Other Council	1. Submit a bid under the HCA LA bidding	Three bids submitted within the Local Authority bidding round Etherstone

	deliver new housing development using its own assets, including the development of a Local Delivery vehicle	departments/ WALH.	round.	St/Windsor Ave successful. The Orchards submitted and awaiting the result. These have been supported by WALH A specialist consultancy brief has been developed to help guide decision making within the Local Delivery Vehicle.
2,3,4,5,6,7,12,14	Work up priority bids for investment in 2011 NAHP bidding round in liaison with HCA and providers	Housing Strategy/ HCA/ providers	1. Identify priority sites including strategic sites for investment	Work underway on developing further bids for next year.
2,3,4,5,7,14	Develop robust and current evidence base in relation to the local housing market	Housing Strategy	1. Key indicator set agreed (June 09) 2. Quarterly market update reports produced	Market update has now been produced.
3,5,7,9,10,11,12,18	Develop an Empty Homes Strategy and Action Plan	Housing Strategy	1. Research undertaken 2. Strategy produced 3. Solutions for issues 4. Action identified	Draft empty homes strategy/Action plan already produced/Implementation is ongoing during the year.

Theme 2 – Quality

Strengthen our weaker housing markets by increasing the choice and quality of the housing offer in these localities

High Level Performance Indicator	Baseline Performance (2006/07)	2008/09 outturn	2009/10 target	Progress at 6 months review – October 2009
Percentage of non decent Council homes (NI158) (SHI3)	15.9%	5%	3%	On course to meet target
Supporting Indicators				
Local Authority tenant satisfaction with Landlord services (NI160)	83.5%	87%	87%	Current survey has 87% satisfaction (repeated bi annually)
Number of non decent homes belonging to vulnerable owner occupiers made decent (LAA local)	101	80	80	On course to meet year end target
Percentage of private sector stock having Cat 1 hazard under HHSRS (SHI4)	N/A	N/A	Baseline to be set following 2010 Private Sector Stock Condition Survey	Baseline still to be set.
Average SAP rating of private sector housing (SHI5)	56	60	62	On course to meet year end target.
Percentage of households on income related benefits in fuel poverty (NI187)	N/A	5.11%	5.05%	Next years survey figure may be threatened by economic situation.

Strategic Objectives	Action	Lead/ Partners	Actions/ milestones	Progress at 6 months review October 2009
			2009/10	
3, 4,5,6,7,9,11,12,17,18	Revise the Private Sector Housing Strategy to reflect new priorities	Housing Strategy/ Private Sector Housing Team	1. Introduce new Private Sector Housing Assistance policy. 2. Review Housing Renewal activities 3. Prioritise enforcement works	New Private Sector assistance policy introduced. Enforcement actions reinforced. Housing Renewal review still to be undertaken.
8,12	Continued investment in WALH stock to maintain current decency levels	Housing Strategy/ WALH	1. Complete the ALMO decency investment programme	On course to complete the programme by year end. Good progress on the recladding work to Scoles multi storey flats
2,4,5,7,9,11,12,18	Development of Wigan Housing Solutions, offering management and leasing services to private landlords	Housing Strategy/ CAB/ Wigan Housing Solutions	1. WHS set up (May 09) 2. Regular Monitoring and support	Wigan Housing Solutions set up and operational. Negotiating with a range of landlords.
4,7,9,11,12,18	Re-launch of landlords accreditation scheme	Housing Strategy	Scheme up and running with future benefits "bolted on"	Scheme relaunched New landlords accredited with more being processed.
4,7,9,11,12,18	Develop LL Forum with Wigan landlords to offer	Housing Strategy	LL Forum meet bi-annually	New landlord's forum still to be launched.

	support and networking opportunities private landlords			
8,11,12,15,16,17,18	Ensure that Wigan and Leigh Housing deliver high quality services	Housing Strategy/ WALH	1. Quarterly performance data and annual meetings 2. Timely Board and Cabinet reports submitted Various	Monitoring showing generally high performance still occurring
6,10,12	Develop fuel poverty initiatives	Housing Strategy/ Private Sector Housing/ PCT/ third sector	1. Support the development of the AWARM scheme	AWARM scheme developed New fuel Poverty Strategy launched in conjunction with the PCT WALH boiler replacement programme also making a significant difference in this area
2,3,5,7,9,11,12, 15	Further develop links between housing initiatives and the PACT process	Housing Strategy/ PACT team/ Providers	1. Provision of funding for neighbourhood initiatives such as alley gating. 2. Contribute to cross cutting teams identifying hot spots of activity.	Funding for alley gating provided. Cross working in certain neighbourhoods developing.

Theme 3 - People

To better meet the needs of vulnerable and homeless people by investing in better prevention and support services

High Level Performance Indicator	Baseline Performance (2006/07)	2008/09 outturn	2009/10 target	Progress at 6 months review Oct 2009
Number of households living in temporary accommodation (NI156) (SHI8)	65	59	30	42 (Good progress made but target is extremely challenging)
Supporting Indicators				
Percentage of households whose homelessness is prevented or relieved through positive action (LAA local)	N/A	43.8%	45%	Currently 67.7% Major progress has been achieved within previous work within homelessness
Number of vulnerable people achieving independent living (NI141)	81.8%	84.1%	79.0%	Broadly on target
Number of vulnerable people who are supported to maintain independent living (NI142)	98.6%	98.2%	98.7%	Broadly on target
Net additional housing support services provided (SHI7)	N/A	202 units	700	Additional services being rolled out

Percentage of social tenants of working age in work, education or training (SHI9)	N/A	32.25%	32.25%	
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Strategic Objectives	Action	Lead/ Partners	2009/10	Progress at 6 month review – October 2009
13,15	Develop allocations policies that offer choice and promote better use of existing accommodation	Housing Strategy/ providers/ Supporting People	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a strategy to tackle overcrowding 2. Participate in Regional Choice Based Lettings pilot, Pinpoint 3. Complete review of the Council's allocations scheme 4. Implement temporary accommodation reduction strategy 	Overcrowding initiative underway. Temporary accommodation strategy is achieving significant reductions but the target is extremely challenging. Review of Councils allocation scheme/pinpoint underway and consultation period completed. On target to be completed by year end.
9,11,12,13, 14,15,16 17,18	Review all published information on access to general needs and specialist accommodation in all tenures	Housing Strategy/ providers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Obtain information 2. Review and carry out recommendations Consistent information available	Review underway and now in draft form likely to be completed by year end.
9,11,13,14,15 16,17,18	Develop comprehensive housing options information on the Housing Strategy web pages	Housing Strategy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New pages are ready 2. Populate with information 3. Launch new site 4. Keep up to date 	Site now set up and being populated. Likely to be completed by year end.

2,3,13,14,15	Develop opportunities for new provision of specialist accommodation for older people	Housing Strategy/ Supporting People/ Adult Services providers/ developers	1. Complete S106 for Belong Atherton (May 09) 2. Development under construction	Completed and being developed.
13,14,15	Develop new models of support for older people including the new model for sheltered housing services.	Supporting People / Housing Strategy/ Adult Services/ providers	1. Successful expansion of community alarms (Sept 09) 2. New model of provision for sheltered accommodation finalized (Sept 09)	Expansion of alarms service begun Draft specification for the new model of specialist housing prepared, to be implemented by April 2010
2,3,13,14,15	Implement recommendations from AGMA Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment	Housing Strategy/ Planning Policy	1. Potential site viability assessments undertaken 2. New sites identified	No progress so far will look to prioritize work in the remainder of the year
2,9,11,13,14,15,16,17,18	Launch WARM Strategy and Implement Action Plan	Housing Strategy/ other Council departments/ other agencies	Strategy is launched Action points implemented Contained in action plan	Strategy prepared and WARM strategy being implemented.
13,14,15,16,17,18	Tackle the causes of homelessness and continue to promote a pro-active approach to prevention.	Housing Strategy/ Supporting People/ providers/ other agencies	1. Embed in joint protocols and provide staff training across relevant agencies	Currently in place and implemented.
13,14,17,	Improve the range of	Supporting People/	1. Identify a site for the	Work underway in identifying a site for

18	support available to those who are at risk of homelessness and make best use of existing provision	Housing Strategy/ providers	Recycling Lives emergency accommodation / training/ worklessness project 2. develop supported lodgings for young people 3. Consider opportunities for re-locating accommodation based services to improve efficiency/ effectiveness.	training/emergency accommodation project, and in relocating accommodation. Still to make progress on the supported lodging project.
6, 12,15,17	Improve adaptations services and achieve better value for money	Private Sector Housing /Adult Services	Develop new procurement practices for adaptations	Currently being piloted and early results encouraging.
2,3,11,14, 15,16 17,18	Consider options to link accommodation and support for offenders with the Worklessness and Homelessness agendas	Housing Strategy/ ERO/ providers	1. Research into possible links 2. Development of projects	Early development has occurred but need to re-inforce progress in the remainder of the year.