

Report to the Housing Partnership Core Strategy Group
15th May 2009

Housing Block Performance Report 2008/09

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The housing block LAA delivery plan was put in place last year to track performance and actions towards delivering the 3 housing priorities namely;

- Increase the overall supply of affordable housing to meet the needs of all its residents and the local economy;
- To strengthen our weaker housing markets by increasing the choice and quality of the housing offer in the localities;
- To better meet the needs of vulnerable and homeless people by investing in better prevention and support services.

1.2 This report sets out progress against these performance targets and actions. It would normally also revise actions for 2010 and 2011 to refresh the action plan. However this will be done separately via the new housing strategy which will shortly be in place.

2.0 Performance Summary

2.1 The attached action plan provides a summary of performance in each area. In terms of headline performance the following can be seen;

- All 3 of the high level housing indicators within the LAA met its 2008/09 target;
- There was also generally good progress in terms of the planned actions during the year;
- However over this period the economic recession has meant that a number of short term actions not contained within the action plan have needed to be activated and more importantly it will seriously affect future actions / performance;
- In particular the recession has massively affected the level of new house building activity with almost a complete lack of new sites being developed. Because of this the indicator net homes provided will not meet the original targets for 2009/10 and it will be unlikely to meet the 2010/11 targets. Fortunately government has recognised these difficulties and negotiations to reset these targets will occur during the year once the market has hopefully stabilised;
- The target for reducing temporary accommodation will also be very difficult to meet given the underlying housing market pressures. However in this case government have made it clear that no recognition will occur on this national target. As a result intensive work is currently being undertaken between the Council and WALH the service provider to try to increase performance in this area.

3.0 Performance – Increasing Overall Supply of Affordable Housing

3.1 In terms of performance against target the action plan shows;

- Progress against the high level net homes provided indicator
- However as already mentioned the prospect of delivering the original targets in future years is extremely low due to the economic recession
- Progress against the affordable homes targets is generally on track with the programme building up momentum

3.2 As regards performance against planned actions good progress has been made on all of the intended actions.

3.3 Indeed in reality actual performance has even exceeded these actions as the economic situation has caused acceleration in the expected progress in these areas. This being the case in the number of bids for resources submitted to the homes and communities agency (HCA) and in terms of establishing social lettings agency initiatives.

4.0 Performance – Strengthening Our Weaker Housing Markets

4.1 In terms of performance against target the action plan shows;

- That the high level indicator measuring decency in the Council stock has been exceeded due to better than expected progress within the WALH improvement programmes

4.2 As regards performance against planned actions good progress has been made in terms of continued investment within the renewal areas, the decency programme, in establishing housing market information and in terms of joint work covering neighbourhoods and worklessness. However pressures have significantly increased in terms of the number of empty homes and in issues within the privately rented market. As a result considerable efforts have been made in these areas in terms of developing a widely based empty homes strategy and in terms of evaluation current landlord initiatives eg accreditation scheme. These initiatives will be rolled out in early 2009/10.

5.0 Performance – Better Meeting the Needs of Vulnerable / Homeless People

5.1 In terms of performance against target the action plan shows;

- The high level indicator measuring the use of temporary accommodation has just been met.
- However the real test will be next year when levels will need to half and it will be a very difficult target to meet
- The use of B&B has reduced further but was still in use at a very low level.

- SP figures have not been finalised but were broadly on track at Q3
- 5.2 As regards progress against planned actions again because of the recession initiatives and activity have increased beyond what was planned. This is principally because of increased pressures on services and in trying to take advantage of government initiatives especially in terms of trying to prevent repossessions etc.

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 In overall conclusion as regards progress against the action plan performance has been strong and has had to exceed that which was planned due to the worsening economic and housing situation. However the difficulties will continue and again in 2009/10 considerable progress will be needed if aspirations are to be met especially in terms of the areas of homelessness. As regards overall supply the immediate prospects are outside the scope of the partnerships resources and this as been recognised by government. Despite this all available actions will be undertaken locally to try to ensure that when the economy revives the borough will be in a position to take advantage.