

**Report to:** Community Protection Panel  
Cabinet

**Date:** 19 January 2009  
22 January 2009

**Subject:** Wigan & Leigh Housing Half Yearly Performance  
2008/09

**Report of:** Executive Director – Environmental Services

**Contact officer:** Peter Layland 01942 828983

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**Purpose / summary:** To report the performance of Wigan & Leigh Housing during the first half of 2008/09

**Alternative options considered and reason for selecting the one recommended:** None

**Recommendation / decision:** The performance of Wigan & Leigh Housing for the first half of 2008/09 is noted

The decision will be made as a result of this report and will be published within 48 hours

**Risks / Implications:**

Financial: Wigan & Leigh Housing Company has a management fee of £15.3m for 2008/09

Staffing: No implications for the Council

Policy: Housing Strategy

Equal Opportunities - Has a Diversity Impact Assessment been conducted?

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?**

No

**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 \***

\* delete which applicable

**For Cabinet reports only :**

Categorisation of the report:	<b>X</b>
Discussion leading to a decision	
Monitoring	<b>X</b>
Sharing for corporate understanding	

	<b>X</b>
Discussion	
Decision	
Information	

**Tracking/Process:**

	Consultation	Ward Members	Partners
Panel	Overview & Scrutiny	Cabinet	Council
19/1/09		22/1/09	

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 19 December 2008

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 In April 2002 the Council set up an Arms Length Management Organisation to manage its stock of Council dwellings. The nature and scale of the contract with Wigan and Leigh Housing is significant. Within the contractual arrangement with Wigan and Leigh Housing (WALH) the company is required to submit performance management information.
- 1.2 Wigan and Leigh Housing manage approximately:
- 22,842 Council houses
  - additional ALMO capital resources of £137m
  - payment of an annual management fee of over £15m
  - contributes to key housing and corporate objectives
- 1.3 The company's performance also impacts on key government assessment of the Council's performance notably:
- Council's Housing Strategy and
  - Comprehensive Area Assessment
- 1.4 The performance management framework that helps govern the relationship between Wigan and Leigh Housing and the Council was reviewed in 2005 and its main elements are:-
- System of monthly and quarterly meetings
  - Monitoring of key performance indicators
  - Annual meeting
  - Annual Questionnaire
- 1.5 This half year report provides information on key performance targets (Appendix 1) and also on WALH progress on the years agreed priorities within the Annual Business and Delivery Plan (Appendix 2). A revised performance management system is now in place that reflects aims and objectives of the new contract with WALH, effective from April 2007.

## **2. Summary of Performance**

- 2.1 Wigan & Leigh Housing (WALH) demonstrated improvement in most service areas during 2007/08. Performance during the first half of 2008/09 shows continued performance with 63% of the indicators that are reported on a quarterly basis on or exceeding target. And importantly 17 of the 19 indicators measured are improving. Many of the indicators are only available annually and therefore a complete picture is not available until year end. A summary of performance is attached at Appendix 1
- 2.2 In relation to performance against priorities within the Annual Business and Delivery Plan, progress again is satisfactory with all tasks are on target. A

report outlining progress against the priorities in the business plan is attached at Appendix 2

### **3. Critical Risk Factors**

#### **3.1 Homeless Prevention**

The area of most concern is the homelessness prevention indicator (BV213). Top quartile performance is 4 households per 1000, half yearly performance of 0.76 represents bottom quartile. The half yearly target was 1.75. In real terms 106 cases of homelessness have been prevented in the first half of the year. WALH have made this indicator an “at risk” indicator which will ensure considerable focus is given to this area of work. They have carried out a restructuring of the housing options advice teams and predict improved performance over the remaining 6 months of the year. BV213 is a particularly important indicator locally due to the high levels of homelessness in the Borough.

### **4 Economic Downturn**

- 4.1 It is difficult to predict what the effect of the current economic downturn will be. An increase in unemployment could result in an increase in repossessions as well as a possible increase in rent arrears. WALH recognise the risks and are monitoring the situation carefully

### **5 Good Performance**

#### **5.1 Average time to re-let Local Authority Housing**

Performance has continued to improve significantly over the last 3 years. Further improvements can be made and WALH have given this indicator “at risk” status which means there is close monitoring of the work and action plan to ensure continuous improvement. The half yearly target was 33 days and performance exceeds the target at 27.12 days. This is based on 1164 properties changing tenants in the first half of the year.

#### **5.2 Proportion of Empty Homes as a percentage of the stock**

Performance is currently ahead of the year end target and is one that has improved considerably over the last 3 years. It is an important indicator given the current high demand for property. The performance of 1.02% represents 232 vacant properties out of a stock of 22,842. Given this good performance any further gains will be small in size.

#### **5.3 Proportion of rent collected including arrears carried forward**

This is an important indicator as it maximises the income available and reduces the need for future bad debt provision. The full extent of performance is not usually known until the year end when the 4 non-collecting weeks (2 at Christmas and 2 at year end) have a positive effect on the final figure. However the half yearly position shows that performance 96.52% has exceeded the half yearly target of 96.27%. Performance also exceeds the same position last year 96.33%. The year end target is 98% and WALH are confident of achieving this. However as alluded to earlier in this report, the

current economic downturn may have an impact on performance in the second half of the year, WALH will continue to monitor the situation closely.

#### 5.4 Repairs Performance

The completion of urgent repairs within government time limits continues to improve. In quarter 2 alone 99.29% of urgent repair jobs were completed within target. This represents a failure of 39 jobs out of a total of 5516. The half yearly position shows that 98.98 % of jobs were completed on target, the target is 96%. The average time taken to complete non-urgent jobs is 8.01 days the target is 8 days. The proportion of gas safety certificates outstanding is ahead of target and of the 637 properties that have a certificate that has expired 90 have been referred to the Borough Solicitor to obtain access through the legal process. The importance of this process and a proactive WALH stance has been reinforced by the recent gas explosion.

### **6 Conclusions**

- 6.1 General performance by WALH continues to improve in most of the key areas. In some areas, rent collection, repairs performance and empty properties performance is outstanding. However, the report has identified areas of concern such as homelessness and WALH have put plans in place to attempt to address this. The economic downturn has the potential to further exacerbate problems in this area and may also impact on other areas such as rent collection. WALH are mindful of this and are monitoring the impact closely.

### **7 Recommendations**

- 7.1 The half yearly performance (2008/09) of Wigan & Leigh Housing be noted.

## Appendix 1

**Performance Framework**

Ref	Indicator	2007/08 Performance	Half Year Target	Half Year Performance	Improving?
BV12	The number of working days/Shifts lost due to sickness absence	9.68 Days	4.5 Days	4.56 Days ☹️	Yes, but still below target
BV212	Average time to Re-let Local Authority Housing (old L15)	33 Days	33 Days	26.53 Days 😊	Yes
BV66a	Proportion of Rent Collected including Arrears C/fwd	97.75%	96.27%	96.52% 😊	Yes
BV66b	Number of LA tenants with more than 7 weeks of (gross) rent arrears as a % of LA tenants	4.41%	4.25%	4.39% ☹️	Yes
BV66c	% of LA tenants in arrears who have had Notices Seeking Possession served	50.87%	23%	17.45%	N/A
BV66d	% of LA tenants evicted as a result of rent arrears	0.33%	0.145%	0.06% 😊	Yes
HS01	Proportion of Empty Homes as a percentage of the Stock	1.08%	1.26%	1.02% 😊	Yes
L9a	Proportion of former tenant arrears collected	12.88%	7.00%	7.27% 😊	Yes
BV183i	The average length of stay in B&B	1 week	1 week	0.32 weeks 😊	Yes
BV213	Households considering themselves homeless who approach for housing advice and housing advice casework intervention resolves their situation, per 1000 households in the authority	1.95	1.75	0.43 ☹️	No
BV214	Proportion of households accepted as homeless who were accepted as homeless within last two years	2.38%	2.75%	1.65% ☹️	No
NI 156	Number of households living in temporary accommodation.	NEW	50	58 ☹️	Yes but below target

BV 184a	The proportion of LA Homes which were non decent at 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2007 to be reported quarterly as a snapshot at quarter end	12%	10%	6% ☺	Yes
NI 158	% of non decent stock	NEW		6%	Yes
L19	% age of urgent repairs completed within Government time limits	97.75%	96%	98.98% ☺	Yes
L20	Average time to complete non-urgent repairs	8.93 Days	8 Days	8.01% ☹	Yes
L52 (e)	% customer satisfaction with overall repairs service	98.18%	90%	98.73% ☺	Yes
L52 (f)	% customer satisfaction following undertaking of programmed works	95.29%	90%	96% ☺	Yes
	% of repairs which are emergency / urgent repairs	21.63%	15%	18.31% ☹	Yes but still below target
	Proportion of gas servicing certificates outstanding	2.17%	6.00%	3.27%	Yes

## WIGAN AND LEIGH HOUSING BOARD 2<sup>ND</sup> DECEMBER 2008

### Report of the Deputy Chief Executive

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

### Half-Year Position - Progress against 2008/9 Board Priorities

<b>Purpose/Summary:</b>
To inform members about progress against priority tasks for 2008/9 in the 2008/10 Business Plan.
<b>Recommendations:</b>
Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

<b>For decision, discussion or information?</b>	For information
<b>For the open part or the press and public excluded part of the agenda? If press and public excluded please state reason.</b>	Open

<b>Resource and Value for Money Implications:</b>	There are no financial implications arising from this report. A number of the tasks being reported on are looking to improve value for money in their application.					
<b>Employee Implications:</b>	There are no direct staffing implications arising from this report.					
<b>Key Risks incl. Company reputation, business relationships, health and safety and legal implications</b>	Failure to identify, prioritise and performance manage priorities would inhibit achieving the vision for the organisation.					
<b>Equality (Impact) Assessed?</b>	Yes		No		Not Applicable	✓
<b>Equality &amp; Diversity and Community Implications:</b>	There are no direct equality and diversity implications arising from this report.					
<b>Environmental Implications:</b>	There are no environmental implications arising from this report.					
<b>Area Forums Affected:</b>	None					
<b>Tracking/Process</b>	<b>Consultation</b>	<b>Area Forum/s</b>	<b>Committee</b>	<b>Board</b>		
				2 <sup>nd</sup> Dec 2008		

## **1.0 Background**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform members of progress which has been made by the half-year point in respect of priorities in the 2008/10 Business Plan. Because of the timing of the report and the wish to align it with the Performance Report appearing elsewhere on this agenda some of the actions referred to in the appendix have happened after the half-year point. They have been included so members get the most up to date position.
- 1.2 At the meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 members agreed a number of priority tasks for 2008/9. These were subsequently endorsed at the annual meeting with the Council on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2008. These key priorities support the 5 goals and the vision of *Better Homes Brighter Futures*. Priorities are converted into more detailed tasks in the various Directorate plans. They have been grouped around “themes” for the purpose of this report though they may be ordered differently in the Directorate plans. This report updates members on progress that has been made to date on those tasks.
- 1.3 Members will note that this list of 38 priorities is significantly larger and more challenging than the 12 or so that have been agreed in earlier years. This is in part a measure of the volume of activity undertaken by the organisation and the wide range of challenges faced. Many of the priorities are significant projects in their own right and have individual action plans. Overall responsibility for each priority has been allocated to a member of the Management Team and they appear in individual Directorate Plans.

## **2.0 Progress to date**

- 2.1 An update against each of the tasks is detailed at Appendix 1. Members will note that, as in previous years, good overall progress has again been made against the priority work. It is inevitable that with the passage of time some of the planned activities change in focus and some of the original estimated dates change, for example the national review of the Housing Revenue Account Subsidy system is likely to drift into 2009.
- 2.2 Although overall progress is good and there is no undue concern, members should specifically note the following:-
- The bid for resources to refurbish the Gypsy site is under further consideration now that an additional 25% contribution from the Council is required.
  - Resourcing the Older Persons Housing and Support Service Improvement Programme is proving very challenging.

### **3.0 Conclusions**

3.1 Good overall progress has been made in the year to date against a substantially larger list of priorities. There are no concerns at this point in the year.

### **4.0 Recommendations**

4.1 Members are asked to note the contents of this report

Better Neighbourhoods			
Director Lead	Task	Dates	Comments
DHM	Review of Tenancy Agreement	March 09	Proposed changes and agreement to consult tenants approved at Board 2 <sup>nd</sup> September 2008. Has also been reported to the Council's Executive Briefing and was considered by Cabinet on 16 <sup>th</sup> October 2008. Consultation with tenants started at the end of October.
DHM	Complete review of Estate Inspection process and assess outcomes when implemented	December 08	Review carried out in April 08 and first round of new inspections completed during May/June 08. Second round of Inspections was carried out during September/October and the outcomes are being analysed and any necessary amendments to the process being made.
DHM	Bid for resources to improve Gypsy Caravan Site at Bickershaw and advise on the procurement of the service	July 08	The bid was completed but the Council decided not to submit it because the qualifying criteria changed at the last moment with the emphasis being placed upon grant assistance for new pitches rather than solely refurbishment. The Council contribution to the planned works would also increase from 25% to 50%. The Council will now decide what should be done with the site including the option of tendering out the management of it.
DHM	Support Partners in the development of Neighbourhood Working in the borough	March 09	Work continues in this area as reported in the Better Neighbourhoods Action Plan to Business, Investment & Performance Committee on 19 <sup>th</sup> August 2008. Current joint working includes : - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roll out of the Partners And Communities Together (PACTs) initiative</li> <li>• ENCAM assessment of cleanliness</li> <li>• Neighbourhood Teams co-located</li> <li>• Burglary Reduction Strategy</li> <li>• Joint Police/Council/Neighbourhood Anti-Social Behaviour Unit initiatives</li> </ul>

**Better Housing Services**

Director Lead	Task	Dates	Comments
DCE	<p>Access, Involvement and Customer Care Programme. A range of projects covering:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of how we involve customers – including development of the Area Forums</li> <li>• Review of access arrangements and methods</li> <li>• Development of Contact Centre and links with the Joint Service Centre</li> <li>• Agreeing and implementing Customer Care Standards</li> <li>• Staff development/culture shift towards improved customer care</li> <li>• Gaining re-accreditation for Chartermark replacement and Customer Contact Association</li> <li>• Carry out full Status survey</li> </ul>	<p>Stage 1 Oct 08</p> <p>Stage 2 Feb 09</p> <p>Implementation over 2009/10</p>	<p><b><i>The review is progressing according to plan. Some earlier slippage was recovered by the end of stage 1.</i></b></p> <p>Self assessment against new customer excellence standard (CSE) and relevant Key Line Of Enquiry carried out to identify gaps and areas for further work.</p> <p><b><i>Project Board of Tenant Board Members formed and briefed. They have met and agreed stage 1 report on 21<sup>st</sup> Oct 2008 and approved move to stage 2 of review.</i></b></p> <p>We are staying close to Council's Transformation work via DCE's membership of the Public Services Transformation Board. Council have now accepted we will operate our contact centre in parallel with Council's Joint Service Centre for now.</p> <p><b><i>Not now pursuing re-accreditation of Chartermark, opting for CSE instead in 2009</i></b></p> <p>Status survey has been carried out and early indications are that satisfaction with staff helpfulness has recovered to previous high levels.</p>
DHM	<p>Review options around changing rent payment cycle from one week in arrears to current week's payment</p>	<p>March 09</p>	<p>Proposed changes and agreement to consult tenants approved at Board 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2008. Has also been reported to the Council's Executive Briefing and considered by Cabinet on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2008. Consultation with tenants started at the end of October.</p>

Affordable Housing			
Director Lead	Task	Dates	Comments
DSPP	Achieve Housing Corporation Pre - qualification		Achieved July 2008
DSPP	Produce detailed business case for involvement in new house building	Target date to Cabinet Nov 2008	Draft New Build Business Plan produced and approved by WALH Board 2 <sup>nd</sup> November 2008. Being presented to the Council's Cabinet 27 <sup>th</sup> November 2008
DSPP	If approved, submit bids to the Housing Corporation	Target January 2009	Still on target
DHN	Review and improve approach to administering the Council's Affordable Housing List for S106 discounted sales		
DHN	<p>Develop and Embed Housing Options Approach by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advice and information at initial point of contact through variety of channels and mechanisms</li> <li>• Effective prevention of homelessness</li> <li>• Partnership working</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Information made available on Affordable Housing Options.</b></li> <li>• Developed an Affordable Housing Register.</li> <li>• <b>Information on private sector accommodation available.</b></li> <li>• Housing Options managers offering more comprehensive advice for applicants requesting additional priority for Medical/Welfare reasons.</li> <li>• <b>Re-launched a rebranded Property Shop as 'Housing Options property shop'</b></li> <li>• Pilot with Occupational Therapists and Area Offices in relation to households requiring extensive adaptations with a view to providing improved housing options intervention.</li> <li>• <b>Improved marketing of hard to let sheltered accommodation with Arena happening.</b></li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness raising of allocations process for Scheme Managers by visiting schemes</li> <li>• <b><i>Participation in the Sheltered Housing Information Partnership (SHIP) event</i></b></li> <li>• Joint training days with range of partners to enhance understanding of each others services</li> <li>• <b><i>Pilot started with Women Against Violence (WAVE) Support Centre in regard to prevention of Domestic Violence cases reaching crisis point</i></b></li> <li>• Working closely with Offenders and Resettlement Service (OARS) to prevent homelessness for people leaving prison</li> <li>• <b><i>Working closely with the BOND scheme to prevent/relieve homelessness for non-priority and intentionally homeless cases.</i></b></li> <li>• Surgeries set up at Probation, Street Based Services, Alcohol and Drugs Services, Railway Road hostel and Youth Offending Team to try to prevent homelessness for vulnerable people</li> <li>• <b><i>Improved advice at initial point of contact in Property Shops and Area Offices with tailored range of leaflets and information to suit each applicant, appointments for initial advice interviews, filtering through to Housing Options Advice Centre (HOAC) at Platt Bridge those whose need is most urgent for either homeless prevention interview or homelessness investigation</i></b></li> <li>• Separate teams at HOAC for prevention and for homelessness investigation ensuring each strand receives adequate attention</li> </ul>
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DHN	Understand operation of housing market and review allocation policy		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Reasons for people presenting as Homeless analysed regularly</b></li> <li>• Quarterly monitoring of figures on lettings and housing register.</li> <li>• <b>Research into trends in supply and demand</b></li> <li>• Clarification of statute and case law in preparation for allocations policy review</li> <li>• <b>Examination of how different social groups are employing the bidding process</b></li> <li>• Examination of outcomes of current policy in preparation for review</li> </ul>
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Decent Homes			
Director Lead	Task	Dates	Comments
DAMD	Produce 5 to 10 year asset management plan	Complete 2008	Final draft done. Discussed at Board Members away day on 21 <sup>st</sup> October 2008. Stock Investment Task Group invited to set priorities for next 1-3 years. Board report and Plan on the Agenda.
DAMD	Remediation of contaminated land at Ince <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project management</li> <li>• Work with Council to determine financial arrangements</li> </ul>	Complete 2009/10	<p>Project on programme - complete by winter 2009 subject to funding. The phase 6 of 9 is due to complete in October 2008. Phase 7, which has already received Department for Environment, Food &amp; Rural Affairs (DEFRA) funding, will then start.</p> <p>Bids to DEFRA for the last two phases were completed in November 2007 but had to be re-submitted. DEFRA have indicated that the submission is successful and awaiting confirmation which is promised soon.</p>
DAMD	Meeting Government's requirement to produce Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs); Monitor closely when EPC's become compulsory in October 2008.	Implementation for 1 <sup>st</sup> October.	<p><b>Initially using external consultants while officers train to become qualified Domestic Energy Assessors and/or data gatherers.</b></p> <p>EPC's are being carried out as planned.</p>

DAMD	Procure new partnering contracts for external programmes of work	April 08 - Feb 09	<b>On programme, leaseholders consulted, contract advertised through Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) process.</b> Tenders returned and evaluation and interviews to take place soon.
DAMD	Produce Health & Safety and Asset Management systems.	April 08 - March 09	<b>Asbestos Policy updated backed up by procedures.</b> Asset management database installed and training carried out.
DAMD	Start final phase of the Decency Programme – External Planned Maintenance in respect of Borough's high-rise blocks in Scholes.	June 08 - 2010	Decency Programme nearing completion to all estates. G & J Seddons selected for High Rise Blocks Project - following OJEU process, including rigorous interviews. Contract sum substantially less than £10.5m budget, Overall cost, including fees, approximately £7.2m. Work commenced in November 2008 and 80 weeks contract period. Project completion summer 2010.

Supporting Vulnerable People			
Director Lead	Task	Dates	Comments
DSPP	<p>Older Persons Housing and Support Service Improvement Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree asset management plan for the sheltered housing service</li> <li>• Agree future support model for older people and begin implementation</li> <li>• Agree future advice and 'active and healthy' model and begin implementation</li> </ul>	<p>Target date December 2008</p> <p>Target date March 2009</p> <p>Target date March 2009</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>General approach agreed by Board and Council and work ongoing.</b></li> <li>• Report agreed by Board on the 2<sup>nd</sup> November on the general approach supported. Significant issues to be addressed and each aspect will be considered in detail. Target date likely to slip.</li> <li>• <b>Successful bid for healthy and active co-ordinator to work in the Hag Fold area. Work ongoing to improve the links with allocations</b></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure disaster recovery plan in place for sheltered housing</li> </ul>	<p>Target date March 2009</p>	<p><b>advice, other advice providers in the borough and the Leisure and Culture Trust.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work ongoing</li> </ul> <p>(Lot of work in this area and resourcing issues are being considered)</p>
<p>DHN</p>	<p>Safeguarding Programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieve full compliance against the Council's Safeguarding Children's audit tool.</li> <li>• Agree and begin to implement action plan to fully comply with Safeguarding Adults' responsibilities</li> </ul>		<p><b>Agreed referrals process with Connexions for 16/17 year olds placed in temporary accommodation and not open to either Youth Offending Team or Aftercare.</b></p> <p>Agreed access to specialist Community Psychiatric Nurse for applicants placed in temporary accommodation.</p> <p><b>Review of Young Peoples Accommodation Group Protocol undertaken.</b></p> <p>Preparations for Introduction of ContactPoint – the national database for safeguarding children – well advanced.</p> <p><b>Examining factors affecting sustainability of tenancies, where housing support should best be deployed, and working with other partners on bid for Government funding for intensive support for families with young children, particularly young single parents who have recently been homeless and rehoused into Council housing in the Leigh Area.</b></p>

Improved Value for Money			
Director Lead	Task	Dates	Comments
DSPP	Business Process Re-engineering <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Within various Directorates</li> <li>• Cross-cutting issues such as document management and workflow</li> </ul>		Work ongoing in homelessness area. New priorities have also emerged e.g. new regulator.
DSPP	Develop and introduce new suite of performance indicators	Target date March 2009	Phased approach based on National Performance Indicators (NPIs) and Housemark work. Consultation on an agreed set of core and optional indicators been done and our preferred list has been supplied to Housemark.
DHM	Implement recommendations from Audit reviews and follow-up reviews on:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Former Tenant Arrears</li> <li>• Dispersed Tenancies</li> <li>• Service Charges</li> <li>• Current Arrears</li> <li>• Contact Centre</li> </ul>	March 09	Work to implement all the recommendations made by Internal Audit is progressing steadily with many of the recommendations having already been completed. Progress on each of the action plans has been reported regularly to the Governance, Standards & Audit (GSA) Committee with feedback also provided to Internal Audit. When all the tasks on each plan are completed, the GSA Committee is asked to sign off the work. Follow-up reviews by Internal Audit are planned or are in progress.
DHN	Improve performance around management of homelessness		Intensive performance monitoring and management introduced, extensive staff training undertaken and continuing, improved case management and documentation being developed.
DHN	Maximise use of existing stock to meet housing need		Studies of under-occupation, overcrowding and mutual exchange procedures under way.
ALL	Improve performance on void relet times	March 09	Continued improvement is being made as reported to Board on 2 <sup>nd</sup> September 2008. The number of voids outstanding and the average relet time were both at their lowest for many years during the first quarter of 2008/09.

DHN	Improved income collection in respect of temporary accommodation		<p><b>Brecon rents are now on our IT system (SX3).</b> Focus of accommodation officers on Housing Benefit maximisation.</p> <p><b>Introduction of Plain English “This is what you need to pay” letter to explain the complex charges in place.</b> Effective liaison with Housing Benefits re-claim progression.</p> <p><b>Tighter control on completion of Housing benefit forms when people admitted to temporary accommodation.</b></p>
DHN	Business planning by accommodation types		Work just beginning on business plans for the furnished homes service and other temporary accommodation types.
DHN	Decreased use of temporary accommodation		<p><b>Intensive performance management and monitoring, identifying causes of “blockages” and tackling them. Regular meetings – one sequence to discuss service development and one to review individual cases and learn lessons.</b> Development of a “Discharge of Duty” flow chart and guidance.</p> <p><b>Child In Need Assessments and Children’s Act support for homeless 16/17 year olds.</b> Essentials Packs produced to enable people to move quickly into their permanent homes.</p> <p><b>Effective use being made of Credit Union loans for provision of furniture etc.</b> Use of Department for Works &amp; Pensions Independent Review Service to challenge decisions and process for Community Care Grants. Speeds up decisions and appeals.</p> <p><b>More effective negotiation with Landlords/families to prevent people needing temporary accommodation.</b></p>

DoR	Implement procurement strategy and management of it	Summer 2008	Strategy presented to Board and agreed. Available on the intranet and staff being encouraged to utilise it.
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Business Enablers Supporting Service Delivery			
Director Lead	Task	Dates	Comments
DCE	Continue to progress Job Evaluation work	By March 09	All interviews and moderation completed. <b>Job overviews sent out and appeals dealt with.</b> Extensive pay modelling undertaken and initial findings considered by MT. Further pay modelling work currently being done to reflect MT's initial response. <b>Negotiations started with Trade Unions in November</b>
DCE	Conduct Equal Pay Review (linked to Job Evaluation)	By March 09	Initial work done but need to determine scope of the work and whether to do incrementally, gender first, across all aspects.
DoR	Developing New Build "financial infrastructure"	March 2009	Meeting with the Council's Director of Business Support, David Smith, arranged and this will be on the agenda but there is also a need to establish the company structure before this can be finalised
DCE	Development of Company's Website and Intranet	Website Jul 08 Intranet Mar 09	Revised website launched July 09. Systems in place to keep content current. <b>Intranet content constantly expanding but more work needed on layout and organisation of information.</b> Both areas will require ongoing management
CE	Development of response to staff survey	March 2009	Staff group formed working on prioritising and developing ideas

<b>Governance etc.</b>			
<b>Director Lead</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Comments</b>
DoR	Introduce Board Member development Programme	August 2008	Company Secretary, Phil Brown, has already prepared the programme and started delivery to a new Board Member.
CE	Develop a Social Responsibility Framework	March 2009	Report to Board in April 2008 established policy direction. Currently in research phase, report to March 2009 Board.
DoR	Contribute to review of national HRA subsidy system	September 2009?	Ongoing. Ministers are receiving updates mid September and it is expected that the review will drift into next year.