

## Report of the Interim Head of Planning and Local Development

## HOUSING SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT

**1 Purpose of report**

To provide a performance progress report on the housing service to enable members to track service demands, performance and delivery. This report relates to all the corporate priorities of PRIDE.

**2 Executive summary**

This report informs members of the service volumes and performance of the housing service from April 2013 to January 2014.

**3 Appendices**

None.

**4 Proposed action:****4.1 The committee is invited to RESOLVE that the report be noted.****5 Background**

At Community Committee on 22 October 2012, members resolved to receive a performance report of the housing service. Members last received a performance report on 16 September 2013 reporting for the period April 2012 to July 2013. This report provides members with an analysis of performance delivery from April 2013 to January 2014, plus an outturn figure for April 2012 to March 2013.

**6 Discussion****6.1 Choice-based lettings: 'Keyways' – this is the ICT system which holds the list (housing register) of people who need housing.**

Month	Paper applications per month	Paper application backlog	Internet applications per month	Internet application backlog
<b>2012 TOTAL</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2039</b>	<b>0</b>
April 2013	12	0	164	0
May 2013	15	0	99	0
June 2013	10	0	0	0
July 2013	60	0	482	0
August 2013	30	0	256	0
September 2013	30	0	190	0
October 2013	25	0	157	0
November 2013	40	0	87	0
December 2013	10	0	43	0
January 2014	30	0	79	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1557</b>	<b>0</b>

6.1.1 In June 2013, ICT changes to Keyways were made to take account of the allocation policy changes, associated with the Localism Act 2011, and approved by members in October 2012. Applicants were required to re-apply. A high volume of housing applications continue to be received each month, which are all processed immediately. There are no outstanding applications and all applicants are able to bid for properties immediately. As at 31 January 2014 there are **652** applicants actively registered for housing. There is also a high number of properties being advertised – in January 2014, 103 were advertised compared with an average of 44 properties per month in April to December 2013.

<b>Housing register applicants – property bed need</b>	
1	353
2	197
3	80
4	22
<b>Total number of housing register applicants</b>	<b>Total 652</b>

6.1.2 Following a discussion at Community Committee on 9 December 2013 relating to the allocation policy and the availability of rural homes, and the number of bids and nominations to these homes, the table below has been prepared. There is a need to encourage people in rural settlements to apply for housing through Keyways, whether they do or do not have a housing need. The new allocations policy enables people who do not have a housing need but do have a local connection to be considered for affordable housing on rural exceptions policy sites ie Rookery Close, Little Harrowden, and Palmer Close, Sywell.

<b>Housing register - local connection and allocation to void property (July 13 to Jan 14)</b>				
<b>Address</b>	<b>Village</b>	<b>Number of bids made</b>	<b>Number of bidders with a local connection to the village</b>	<b>Let to applicant with local connection?</b>
High Street	Ecton	22	0	Yes
Walkers way	Finedon	3	1	Yes
Hinwick Road	Wollaston	1	0	No
Mackworth Green	Finedon	1	0	No
Wentworth Road	Finedon	3	1	No – would not meet needs due to medical issue
Poplar Close	Finedon	20	1	Yes
Holcot Lane	Sywell	17	0	No
Walkers Way	Finedon	3	2	Yes
St Nicholas Road	Great Doddington	DIRECT LET within Wellingborough Homes	N/A	N/A
Well Street	Finedon	14	2	No – 1 x refusal, 1 x would not meet needs due to medical issue

Address	Village	Number of bids made	Number of bidders with a local connection to the village	Let to applicant with local connection?
Orlingbury Road	Lt Harrowden	3	0	No
Victoria Close	Earls Barton	9	2	Yes
Allen Road	Finedon	4	1	Yes
Westfields	Lt Harrowden	8	1	Yes
Howard Road	Wollaston	8	1	No – unable to verify details, applicant did not supply supporting evidence
School Lane	Irchester	31	4	Yes
Allen Road	Finedon	5	0	No
Main Road	Wollaston	50	0	No
Avenue Road	Finedon	2	0	No
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>8</b>

## 6.2 Housing options – provision of advice and assistance to people in housing need.

	Total 2012	Apr 13	May 13	Jun 13	Jul 13	Aug 13	Sep 13	Oct 13	Nov 13	Dec 13	Jan 14	Total to date
Total no. of interviews inc homeless applications.	823	66	63	57	54	63	52	68	65	58	76	622
Homeless applications.	247	21	15	19	13	21	16	8	10	10	14	147
Total placements into temporary housing inc B&B.	185	13	13	14	9	14	11	9	8	8	12	28
Placements into B&B.	96	10	5	8	3	7	7	2	1	4	8	55
Total homeless decisions issued.	249	24	21	14	11	16	22	11	7	4	12	142
Homeless acceptances.	129	6	9	8	6	6	15	4	5	2	4	65
Recorded advice or prevention.	166	64	69	41	55	23	36	31	15	32	109	475

### Homelessness acceptances by quarter:

	2011	2012	2013
Q1	48	51	22
Q2	40	37	23
Q3	39	33	27
Q4	43	36	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>83</b>

6.2.1 It is noticeable that the number of homelessness acceptances has dropped significantly in 2013. This is mainly due to the increase in the number of social

rented properties becoming available through Keyways. The new affordable housing developments detailed in paragraph 6.5, such as Corrie Close, Knights Court and Laundry Close, Wellingborough, have provided opportunities for the council to place families through the housing register rather than through homelessness. Another reason why there are fewer people applying as homeless is the offer of a private sector tenancy. Until the legislation changed in 2012, applicants applied as homeless to increase their opportunity of obtaining a social rented home; this is no longer the approach as applicants are more likely to be offered a private rented sector home.

6.2.2 There has been a significant reduction in homeless acceptances for Q4 of 2013, however this is not due to a lack of applications or decisions made, but due to a number of cases pending investigation. These cases will likely show in 2014 Q1 statistics.

6.3 **Grant scheme – private rented homeless initiative** – a scheme to provide private landlords with a grant, to enable the council to nominate homeless applicants to discharge the council's homeless duty.

6.3.1 In 2013, members approved a capital bid to provide funding for private landlords to provide accommodation to homeless households in the private rented sector. At the end of January 2014, five capital grants had been issued to landlords to secure accommodation for homeless households. Five families have been housed as homeless discharges using this fund.

6.3.2 The council has previously provided a deposit and rent in advance scheme (rent assistance scheme) to help people access a private rented property where the council had a homeless duty. This scheme relied heavily on resources to administer the scheme by providing frontline support for both the landlord and tenant. The housing service could not continue to provide this level of support within existing resources and the grant scheme was introduced to continue the council's discharge of homeless duties.

6.3.3 Take-up by landlords has been slow, as there is not the management incentive, however we have landlords who are interested in continuing to work with us in this new way, and we are working with Bromford Housing (a housing association which offers floating support to help people maintain their tenancies) to direct any clients with support needs to their service.

6.3.4 In 2012, the Department for Communities and Local Government provided funds to help councils provide interest-free loans to people who were facing eviction or repossession. Twenty-two loans have been issued between April 2013 and January 2014 to people faced with homelessness to whom the council would have a homeless duty. Officers have collected £1,290 during the same period and continue weekly calls and visits to recover the outstanding amounts. Payments must be regularly received to be eligible for social rented housing under the allocations policy.

6.4 **Private sector housing** – activities to improve the condition of the borough's housing stock.

6.4.1 The first table shows there are approximately 84 disabled facilities grants in various stages ie financial assessment, tenders and construction. The next two tables show the activity within the team.

Month	OT adaptation recommends	Estimated value (£)	DFG waiting list	Estimated value (£)	Total DFG spend to date from budget
<b>TOTAL 2012</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>£440,589</b>
Apr 13	17	78,000	76	£519,080	£19,595
May 13	13	61,000	73	£468,600	£36,892
June 13	9	46,000	71	£455,350	£66,698
July 13	10	55,000	76	£426,500	£85,310
Aug 13	7	24,000	80	£480,000	£127,613
Sept 13	13	52,000	84	£521,000	£146,920
Oct 13	12	50,000	86	£503,000	£168,995
Nov 13	8	39,000	80	£564,000	£182,761
Dec 13	7	40,000	82	£588,000	£233,335
Jan 14	8	26,000	84	£604,000	£274,822
<b>TOTAL 2013</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>471,000</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>£604,000</b>	<b>£274,822</b>

Key: OT – Occupational Therapist  
DFG – Disabled Facilities Grant (aids and adaptation)

Month	Empty property inspection	Empty property reduction and compulsory purchase order (CPO) activity	Renovation grant enquiries	Renovation grant commitments
<b>TOTAL 2012</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>NA</b>
April 13	9	67	6	£5,954
May 13	16	41	2	£24,736
June 13	3	7	4	£10,810
July 13	10	7	5	£47,894
Aug 13	17	15	10	NA
Sept 13	19	16	8	NA
Oct 13	16	10	6	NA
Nov 13	NA	7	2	NA
Dec 13	4	3	3	NA
Jan 14	4	NA	6	£94,104
<b>Total 2013</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>£94,104</b>

Month	Houses in multiple occupation inspections (HMO)	HMO licenses granted	Housing health and safety rating scheme (HHSRS) inspections	Border Agency inspections – fee income collected
<b>Total 2012</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>7</b>
Apr 13	5	0	7	1
May 13	5	0	17	1
June 13	3	0	14	0
July 13	2	0	12	3
Aug 13	0	0	12	2
Sept 13	4	0	7	1
Oct 13	2	0	16	1
Nov 13	2	0	16	0
Dec 13	0	0	11	0
Jan 14	6	0	15	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>10</b>

6.4.2 The number of empty properties has reduced significantly from 423 in April 2012 to 187 in December 2013. This has been the result of policies and actions taken by the council through enforcement, CPOs and changes to the council's local council tax support scheme.

6.4.3 Housing health and safety rating scheme (HHSRS) inspections and action have increased, to ensure all private sector lettings through the grant scheme and private sector leasing scheme for temporary accommodation and repossession and eviction fund loans meet this legislation.

6.4.4 Inspections of houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) are a priority for the service and additional licensing arrangements for HMOs and private rented stock will be investigated further. Compulsory purchase order administration is from officers within the service and the policy and regeneration team. Border Agency inspections have provided the council with £1,100 income since April 2013.

**6.5 Housing development – provision of new affordable homes.**

Month	Affordable housing completions	
	Social/affordable rent (up to 80% of market rent)	Shared ownership
<b>TOTAL 2012</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>4</b>
April 13	0	0
May 13	0	0
June 13	0	0
July 13	0	0
Aug 13	0	0
Sept 13	0	0
Oct 13	8	0
Nov 13	26+18	6
Dec 13	7	0
Jan 14	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>6</b>

6.5.1 Market conditions in 2013-2014 are improving and successful affordable housing completions have been 26 units at Da Vinci, 42 Croyland Road, and 31 units at Corrie Close.

6.5.2 By end of March 2014 there will be 10 affordable homes at Great Doddington, 23 at Laundry Close and 11 units at Palmer Court, Wellingborough, completed.

6.5.3 There are currently 108 affordable housing units on sites at 200 Doddington Road, Wellingborough; Dun Cow, Gold Street, Wellingborough; Meadowlands, Little Harrowden; and Cranwell House at 47 Doddington Road, Wellingborough which will be completed throughout 2014.

6.5.4 The housing service is seeing a significant shift in the increase in number of affordable development opportunities coming through and delivery of those homes, which reduces the burden on homelessness accommodation and housing options services of the council. Resources are being considered to continue to deliver affordable housing services.

6.6 **Code for Sustainable Homes** – new developments which are to attract grant from the Homes and Communities Agency require a CODE assessment.

Month	Assessments	Construction	Post-construction	Income	Potential income
Dec 13	5	4	1	£2,648	£14,114
Jan 14	4	2	2	£2,815	£11,339
<b>Total</b>				<b>£5,463</b>	

6.7 **Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)** – homes for sale or letting require an EPC to advise on the energy assessment for the property.

Month/2013	Assessments	Income
Apr 13	1	£60
May 13	1	£60
June 13	1	£60
July 13	0	£0
Aug 13	1	£75
Sep 13	1	£75
Oct 13	1	£75
Nov 13	1	£75
Dec13	1	£75
Jan 14	1	£75
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>£630</b>

6.7.1 Four audits have been required by the governing organisations of these EPCs and the council has been commended for the standard of the EPCs undertaken. A future outcome for the service will be undertaking EPCs and generating an income from non-domestic buildings which will commence in 2014.

6.8 **Telephone calls April to December 2013** – this section monitors the level of calls.

	April 2013		June 2013		July 2013		August 2013	
	Internal	External	Internal	External	Internal	External	Internal	External
Housing options and allocations	1922	1978	1031	749	1934	1797	1635	1431
Private sector renewal	215	331	105	143	226	339	210	304
Housing Manager and affordable housing	57	65	53	28	110	69	96	74
<b>Total</b>	<b>2194</b>	<b>2374</b>	<b>1189</b>	<b>920</b>	<b>2270</b>	<b>2205</b>	<b>1941</b>	<b>1809</b>
	September 2013		October 2013		November 2013		December 2013	
	Internal	External	Internal	External	Internal	External	Internal	External
Housing options and allocations	Statistics not available	Statistics not available	1261	1432	935	1437	734	976
Private sector renewal	Statistics not available	Statistics not available	212	367	198	387	126	236
Housing Manager and affordable housing	Statistics not available	Statistics not available	124	62	85	91	71	107
<b>Total</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>Na</b>	<b>1407</b>	<b>1861</b>	<b>1218</b>	<b>1915</b>	<b>931</b>	<b>1319</b>

Statistics are not available for September 2013 due to the introduction of a different phone system reporting not being configured.

## 7 Legal powers

The work of the team is primarily in accordance with the Housing Acts 1985, 1996 & 2004, the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995, the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England & Wales) Order 2002 and the Climate Change Act 2008.

## 8 Financial and value for money implications

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

## 9 Risk analysis

Nature of risk	Consequences if realised	Likelihood of occurrence	Control measures
Performance declines.	The housing service would not deliver the statutory requirements.	Unlikely due to the level of investment of council.	Identify on risk management audit and provide control measures for specific areas of risk.

## 10 Implications for resources

There are no direct resource implications arising from this report. The new grant scheme to landlords is less reliant on officer support, however we need support agencies to assist clients who are deemed more vulnerable with tenancy support.

Interest-free loans to prevent eviction has reduced the demand on bed and breakfast and temporary accommodation. Officers within the service continue to collect loan repayments, and restrictions to accessing future affordable housing are in place if payments are not made, in line with the allocations policy.

## 11 Implications for stronger and safer communities

The performance of this housing service impacts on the health improvement, community cohesion and community safety of the borough.

## 12 Implications for equalities

The performance of this housing service impacts on the council's duty to design and evaluate the impact of its services, policies and activities on different groups of society to eliminate discrimination.

## 13 Author and contact officer

Vicki Jessop, Principal Housing Manager.

## 14 Consultees

Abigail Morgan, Housing Development Officer.  
Agnes Piatek- Bednarek, Energy Efficiency and Carbon Reduction Officer.  
Andy Miles, Technical Housing Officer.  
Clive Culling, Assistant Principal Housing Officer.  
Fred Hottinger, Housing Options Officer.  
Tracey Cave, Senior Accountant.

## 15 Background papers

H:/Corporate/ H&PTechnical Support/ Monthly Services Levels