

<b>AUDIT COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS</b> <b>Identified in Strategic Housing Inspection Report August 2010</b>					
Audit Commission Recommendation	Deadline set by the AC	Actions we will take	Lead Officer	Target Date	Expected Benefits
<b>R1 Strengthen the service to customers and take steps to embed a customer-focused service</b>					
Improve the range of and accessibility to information on private sector housing assistance and complaints handling (corporately)	Jan 2011	Review current leaflet/literature/website information	Geoff Smith	Jan 2011	Better access to services  More accountable services  Services that respond to the needs of customers
		Work with Communications Team on required updates			
Involve customers and develop service standards for the private sector housing function	Jan 2011	Introduce new approach to complaints monitoring	Adrian Webb/Corporate Team	Apr 2011	
		Introduce enhanced local standards in consultation with users and partners	Geoff Smith	Apr 2011	
Routinely monitor and publish performance across the range of service standards	Jan 2011	Develop effective monitoring systems to monitor strategic housing performance against service standards	Roz Millership	Jan 2011	
Introduce a systematic and consistent approach to measuring customer satisfaction across the strategic housing functions	Jan 2011	Include performance information in Housing Newsletter and website			
		Undertaken review of customer feedback mechanisms	Roz Millership	Apr 2011	
		Devise new processes to ensure all elements			

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		strategic housing gather feedback information			
Routinely monitor and publish performance on complaints handling	Jan 2011	Review the complaints procedure and enhance the system to ensure learning from complaints is used to improve services	Adrian Webb/Corporate Team	Apr 2011	
<b>R2 Improving the Council's approach to diversity and take steps to embed an equalities-focused culture</b>					
Develop a SMART action plan for diversity, that incorporates statutory requirements and the needs of the community of Uttlesford	Apr 2011	Update current plan ensuring that it is SMART and incorporates the requirements of the Single Equality Act	Sue Locke	Apr 2011	
Develop performance indicators that measure the delivery of the approach to diversity	Apr 2011	Work with performance team to develop meaningful PIs	Sue Locke	Apr 2011	Fewer barriers to services
Develop comprehensive customer profiling information across the six nationally recognised diversity strands to monitor access to services and take action to remove barriers to accessing services	Apr 2011	Establish a system to capture monitoring information on protected characteristics for service access, take up and satisfaction  Develop and maintain a thorough corporate understanding of the profile and needs of local people through continuing liaison with representative community organisations and robust research  Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic by actively	Sue Locke	Apr 2011	More accountable services  Services that respond to the needs of customers and confirms a culture where everyone is treated with respect and dignity.

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		<p>involving the community in the decision making process</p> <p>Research customer profiles and how they access the service</p> <p>Use diversity information to improve services</p>			
Enhance the delivery of equality impact assessments, through training and monitoring of their quality	Apr 2011	<p>EIAs already completed for all Housing Service areas</p> <p>Training available to ensure staff have the skills to complete the EIA</p> <p>Staff Equality Group will support and scrutinise EIAs when completed</p>	Sue Locke	Apr 2011	
<b>R3 Strengthen the strategic approach to housing</b>					
Develop robust monitoring arrangements to assess progress and delivery of the approach to strategic housing against the initial defined timescales and outcomes	Apr 2011	<p>Provide quarterly updates to Housing Initiatives Working Group consisting of member and Tenant representation.</p> <p>Investigate role of tenant panels in monitoring of Housing Strategy at a local level</p>	Martin Ling	Apr 2011	<p>Increased accountability across the strategic housing functions</p> <p>Improved co-ordination across the strategic housing functions</p>
Ensure private sector housing features as a strategic area of delivery	Apr 2011	In anticipation of private housing being featured prominently in 2012 Housing Strategy update, review current strategic issues, identify emerging issues and	Martin Ling	Apr 2011	Sustained delivery of new sustainable homes

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		bring forward priority areas for delivery if appropriate			
		Consult with existing private sector forums on emerging proposals			
Improve the co-ordination and promotion of sustainability in housing delivery	Apr 2011	Ensure minimum sustainable development policies and requirements are adopted on all schemes  Work closely with delivery partners to identify how and where improved sustainability outcomes can be delivered	Martin Ling	Apr 2011	
<b>R4 Make better use of the existing and future housing stock and service arrangements</b>					
Improve liaison arrangements with private sector landlords and identify and explore best practice with them	Jan 2011	Continue to hold regular landlord forum events and ensure that landlords are provided with up to date information	Judith Snares	Jan 2011	Improving the condition of existing housing
Develop information regarding housing association provision in the areas of lettings, decency, under-occupation and aids and adaptations, and utilise the provision to develop and support the better use of existing housing	Jan 2011	Review existing information from CORE and other data sources to ensure the District has clear understanding of current RSL performance  Open up a dialogue with Housing Association partners through existing liaison groups to identify best practice in ensuring all housing stock in the District is used to maximum effect	Martin Ling	Apr 2011	Maximising the use of existing housing  Housing services which better meet local need and more effectively address health and safety.

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Improve access to the HomeOptions Choice Based Lettings scheme for new applicants	Jan 2011	Survey new applicants	Judith Snares	Oct 2010	
Improve performance on re-letting Council homes and continuing the improvements in processing planning applications	Jan 2011	Improving re-let times - Improve voids systems & processes to improve service delivery taking into account best practice and feedback from residents  Implement the revised void process to achieve a 28 day average key to key target by April 2011	Roz Millership Mike Ovenden	Jan 2011	
Develop a strategic approach to proactively improve the condition of private sector housing, and return empty homes back into use, using all available options	Jan 2011	Introduction of empty homes monitoring and performance data	Geoff Smith	Apr 2011	
Improve the monitoring arrangements for the delivery of disabled facility grants	Jan 2011	Engage with partners and review and develop a more streamlined process for the delivery of DFGs  Introduce dfg monitoring and performance data	Will Cockerill	Jan 2011	
<b>R5 Improve the approach to value for money</b>					
Develop and regularly review a comprehensive understanding of costs and how these, and service outcomes, compare with others	Jan 2011	Develop and implement a benchmarking strategy with particular regard to embedding VFM to drive service improvements	Adrian Webb	Apr 2011	Better understanding of the balance of cost and quality in service assessments
At a corporate level, develop a strategic framework for value for money to ensure it is embedded	Jan 2011	develop action plan to respond to identified poor VFM	Adrian Webb	Apr 2011	Increased capacity through more value

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consistently across the Council		Implement effective procurement of all commissioned services and products	Stephen Joyce		for money services
At a corporate level, develop a programme of service reviews to be led by the Business Improvement and Performance Team, that comprehensively prioritises areas for review	Jan 2011	Identify the cost of services and individual components  Routinely review service cost performance alongside service performance	Adrian Webb		
Establish clear and measurable value for money targets in improvement plans	Jan 2011	Ensure all appropriate senior staff objectives have VFM targets within them and are reviewed at one to one progress meetings	Simon Martin		
Carry out impact assessments of partnerships, services and funding streams related to strategic housing services	Jan 2011	Housemark and internal benchmarking to be used to determine priorities	Roger Harborough		
<b>R6 Strengthen improvement planning and performance management</b>					
Review action plans and ensure that all action plans are SMART	Jan 2011	Commence a review of strategic housing action plans  All action plans to be SMART	Roz Millership	Apr 2011	Improved monitoring arrangements and the ability to identify areas of weakness or delay  The increased likelihood that targets and improvements will be met
Ensure a consistent and robust approach is in place to monitor the delivery of action plans, with reports that reflect progress against the initial defined timescales and outcomes	Jan 2011	Develop a performance management report which monitors all elements of the strategic housing service	Roz Millership	Oct 2010	
Develop SMART objectives on improving the Council's	Jan 2011	Review and further develop the performance	Richard Auty	Apr 2011	Improved services

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improvement planning and performance management frameworks		management framework, with particular reference to the Government's intended changes to national indicators and amendments to the inspection regime.			
Develop the use of benchmarking, and setting targets that reflect challenging benchmarked performance	Jan 2011	Continued involvement in Housemark benchmarking programme (ongoing)	Roz Millership	Jan 2011	
		Establish other appropriate benchmarking opportunities, with particular reference to the Government's intended changes to national indicators and amendments to the inspection regime	Richard Auty	Apr 2011	
		Ensure benchmarking information is utilised in annual divisional plan development	Richard Auty	Apr 2011	