

Housing Service Review

Findings of The Review Team
7 September 2007

1

Overview

- Background
- The Objectives
- What we did
- What we learnt
- Issues Identified
- What we are going to do – Quick wins
- Any Questions?

2

The Review Team

- Linda Milton – EH Residential Admin
- Ashley Grist – Interim Housing Strategy Officer
- Cathie Powell – Corporate Director
- Cllr Susan Band – Portfolio Holder
- Cllr Sue Fisher - Scrutiny Member
- Kelly Handley – Facilitator
- Sue Kirkwood – Service Review Team
- Nigel Preston – HoS and Review Leader

3

The Service

- Housing Strategy & Enabling, Housing Needs, Private Sector Housing, Pest Control & Dog Warden
- 07/08 net revenue budget – approximately £1m
- Delivered by: HoS + 22 Officers, including part-time and partner officers based in Civic Offices

4

The Objectives

- Open to challenge
- Listen and learn from range of “customers”
- Prioritise
- Another step towards “Housing Excellence”
- Continue the improvement process

5

What we did

Preparation work

- Meetings with staff and managers
- Wide range of on-going customer satisfaction surveys
- Benchmarking
- NB we have a visit in preparation for October

6

What we did

THE REVIEW WEEK

- Mon – am - Meeting with internal stakeholders
- Mon – pm – Meeting with housing grants service user
- Tues – am – Meeting with range of external partners
- Tues – evening(1) – meeting with private landlord
- Tues – evening(2) - Meeting with members
- Weds – am - Team Meeting
- Thurs – Reviewed info gathered and agreed outputs
- Fri – Presentation of findings

7

What we learnt

- Positive reaction from most stakeholders to the range of services we are providing
- Confirmation from partners of the sustained nature of improvement in the service
- Identified a significant list of actions most of which are within the service
- Very useful, if intense, experience

8

Issues identified

SERVICE GENERAL ISSUES

- Greatest strength the staff
- Importance of partnership working
- Further training needs
- Relocation of all housing service staff to ground floor
- Add to core consultation work – synergies with existing consultation in other services, community groups
- Where is HDC on equalities and diversity issues?

9

Issues identified

HOUSING STRATEGY & ENABLING

- Affordability, unsurprisingly, a major issue
- Closer working with Planning Service
- Discovering the housing needs of young people
- Working towards safer communities
- Building relationships with Parishes re rural housing schemes

10

Issues identified

HOUSING NEEDS

- How do we communicate with vulnerable/ minority groups?
- Review Choice Based Lettings (CBL) scheme
- Fundamental role of Rent Deposit Scheme, more work with private landlords and more promotion of scheme
- How will Local Housing Allowance affect the rent deposit scheme?
- Discretionary Housing Payments
- What could be the value of home visits prior to allocations?

11

Issues identified

PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING

- Totally reactive service, need an additional officer
- Empty properties – info sharing & joint working
- Level of Minor Works grants needs raising to £5k
- Alternative to grants needed - loans/equity release
- Need to know level of grant requirement
- More service promotion – older persons info pack?
- Enforcement an issue – potential synergies with other departments
- Annual Landlords' Forum, ideas to make more effective
- Landlords' Accreditation scheme?

12

Issues identified

DOG WARDEN

- Need to have Dog Warden available every working day
- Future need for 24/7 service, with kennelling available
- Effect of Clean Neighbourhoods legislation

13

Issues identified

PEST CONTROL

- Service generally well appreciated by customers
- Resume customer satisfaction surveys
- Benchmarking data re costs not located
- Heavy seasonal workload – use of Contact Centre?
- Rota works well, but need to accommodate some flexibility
- Could website be used to book service?
- What other options are there for service delivery?

14

Issues identified

OLDER PEOPLE

- Input required for Advice Pack (due March 08)
- CBL – how are older people coping?
- Under-occupancy of larger houses

YOUNG PEOPLE

- Limited accommodation and service options in Hart
- How to understand housing needs of this group?
- Co-ordination of activity across HDC

15

ESTABLISHING SERVICE PRIORITIES

- Communication with range of customers
- Address capacity issue in Private Sector Housing
- Review CBL scheme – demonstrate “success”
- Working with Parish Councils re rural housing schemes
- Establishing corporate position on equality and diversity and planning future housing progress
- Assessing future service delivery options in dog warden and pest control services

16

What we are going to do

17

What we are going to do

QUICK WINS:

- Improvement Plan
- Plan future programme of customer satisfaction surveys – with pest control at start
- Investigate benchmarking information re pest control and dog warden
- Older persons information pack
- Landlords Forum, increased publicity

18

Summary

- Hard work
- Enjoyable
- We listened
- We have learnt a lot
- The real work starts here

THANK YOU!
&
ANY QUESTIONS?