

ROCHDALE METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

SERVICE PLANNING 2010/11

Service... Strategic Housing.....

SERVICE PLAN UPDATE

Brief Description of the Service

The Service has four distinct divisions: Policy and Strategy, Private Sector Housing: Area Renewal: and Homelessness. The divisions have close links and working relationships. The main functions are as follows:

Homelessness

- Provides the statutory assessment of Homelessness.
- Provides temporary and emergency accommodation for homeless households.
- Provides advice and assistance for non statutory homeless clients
- Provides resettlement support for a range of needs
- Works to prevent homelessness through casework, advice and support
- Develops a homelessness strategy and seeks resources to develop new services
- Provides advice, support and accommodation to refugees and dispersed asylum seekers through contracts and sub contracts with United Kingdom Border Agency, Manchester City Council and others.

Private Sector Housing

- Administers and manages housing grant, loans and advice services for vulnerable homeowners to help maintain and improve their homes.
- Manages and develops a Home Improvement Agency for vulnerable residents across all tenures including a handyperson scheme, adaptations service.
- Manages the housing enforcement responsibilities e.g. Compulsory Purchase, Houses in Multiple Occupation
- Improves the management and property standards of the private rented housing stock through Landlord accreditation and other positive initiatives e.g. the Bond Board.
- Develops and maintains an up to date private sector housing strategy and policy; secures resources and develops a wide range of customer focussed services that are delivered to help the Council and its partners deliver on their agendas and key targets.

Area Renewal

- Delivers programmes of housing improvements in designated intervention areas.
- Delivers area based environmental improvement solutions and specific project based environmental improvement interventions e.g. derelict land, HRA-funded estate improvements.
- Develops area based intervention strategies and plans working across agencies and in support of Sustainable Communities objectives.
- Develop and implement the Build More Homes strategy.
- Responsible for the development and implementation of Housing Market Renewal interventions.
- Initiating and progressing CPOs for both the Council and other partner agencies across the Borough.
- Land acquisition and assembly in HMR neighbourhoods and other intervention areas.

Policy and Strategy

- Gathers relevant data in order to monitor housing supply and demand across the Borough and develop plans and strategies for influencing both the supply and demand to help maintain a balanced housing market.
- Maintains and develops the Borough's Housing Strategy including the BME Housing Strategy
- Monitors the performance of Rochdale Boroughwide Housing and other Social Landlords.
- Bids for, and makes the case for capital investment to meet the housing needs of the Borough.
- Responds to Government consultation and seeks to influence regional and national housing and housing related policies to enable Rochdale Borough to best meet local housing needs.
- Works with disadvantaged people with special housing needs to help them find suitable accommodation.
- Represents housing at strategic level on joint initiatives for older and vulnerable people e.g. people suffering from mental illness, the physically disabled and sensory impaired.
- Works with RBH to ensure that housing management and maintenance policies are appropriate and reviewed where necessary
- Co-ordinates the strategic housing service contribution to corporate initiatives and priorities including performance, quality and complaints

Broad Service Objectives

To make Rochdale a place, which offers QUALITY and CHOICE FOR ALL in Housing, throughout the Borough.

The following service priorities are framed in an overarching context of supporting community cohesion in all that we do; promoting health; involving children and young people; and supporting economic prosperity in the Borough

Top 10 Service Priorities

- To focus on **preventing homelessness** and promote independent living.
- To deliver on **Sustainable Neighbourhoods** including environmental improvements
- To **Build Homes for the Future**
- To achieve the **Decent Homes** standards
- To meet the needs of **vulnerable people**
- To respond better to the housing needs of the **B&ME** community
- To develop the commissioning role to better **meet housing need**
- To focus on **Performance**
- To improve how we **communicate** our services
- To develop more effective **partnership** working

PART A Review of the Year

Achievements and Headlines 2009/10

- All 3 of the LAA stretch targets have been achieved, contributing to a Reward Grant for the Authority of over £2 million:

Firestop Project

This is a joint project between the HIA and Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service, to reduce accidental dwelling fires in the Borough, by carrying out Home Fire Risk Assessments and fitting smoke alarms as required. Over the 3 year life of the stretch target, the Home Improvement Agency have carried out over 10,878 Home Fire Risk Assessments, contributing to the following reductions in accidental dwelling fires, from an original target of no more than 290 fires per year:

Year 1 – 98 reduction x £25,000 = £2,450,000*

Year 2 – 108 reduction x £25,000 = £2,700,000*

Year 3 – 108 reduction x £25,000 = £2,700,000*

*The ODPM report “The Economic Cost of Fire: estimates for 2004” states that the average cost to the economy of a domestic dwelling fire is £25,000, of which £15,000 is accounted for by the economic cost of injuries and fatalities. Other costs include building repair, Fire fighter costs, insurance costs, etc.

A further benefit to the partnership with the Fire and Rescue Service was that their reputation in the borough opened doors to the HIA, meaning that we could offer a range of services to customers who would not normally have come to us.

Decent Homes

The stretch target was to increase the number of vulnerable households in the private sector living in decent homes, by making 205 homes decent in 07/08, 175 in 08/09 and 175 in 09/10. We have exceeded the 09/10 target, having made 362 properties decent. This has been achieved by focusing all work within Private Sector Housing towards decency and offering a wide range of services, such as the Handyperson Scheme, grants and loans, referrals to Governments Warm Front scheme, Landlord accreditation scheme, response to private tenant complaints etc. This work also contributes to a national Government target and has helped vulnerable people to live in homes that are warmer, safer and in a reasonable state of repair.

Affordable Housing

- Helped secure through joint working with RSL partners and private developers over £5.5 million from the Government’s Kickstart Programme. This funding will deliver 153 new properties on stalled sites in Heywood and Middleton of which 93 will be affordable homes.
- Secured through joint working with RSL partner an additional £5.8 million from the National Affordable Housing Programme which will deliver 96 new homes
- In partnership with RHI, Riverside Pennine and Seddons brought back into use 26 long term empty property in the Langley HMR area
- Through joint working with RSL partners exceeded the initial three year LAA target for NI 155, i.e. the

delivery of 180 new affordable homes in 2 years.

- Completion of 4 new build bungalows, using new methods of construction , in the Heady Hill area of Heywood

Preventing Homelessness

- As part of our joint working with a wide range of statutory and voluntary sector agencies ,through the Safer Homes Scheme ,we have carried out enhanced security works to the homes of 148 families suffering from domestic abuse(in 2009/10).This has prevented the need for these families having to present as homes thus achieving a potential saving of approximately in £1.3million in housing costs .In addition this enables children to remain in schools, families to remain close to support networks, friends, employment etc and ultimately prevents the victims of this abuse from suffering further disruption .
- There has been a significant increase in the number of households at risk of becoming homeless as a result of the economic downturn and subsequent ability for people to pay their mortgages and other debts secured on their property. We have established a highly effective Mortgage Rescue Service that has assisted in excess of 100 households to remain in their own homes and successfully achieved mortgage rescue for 14 households through the Government's Mortgage Rescue Scheme.
- Achieved NI 156 target – to reduce the number of priority homeless households living in temporary accommodation by 50% from a baseline established in December 2004.
- Following a diagnostic visit in February 2010, by CLG in relation to the delivery of the PSA16 agenda, Rochdale was deemed to be an exemplar authority. In particular, CLG highlighted our excellent approach to person-centred planning, which is embedded across the Council and its partners.
- Developed a Mental Health Hospital discharge Protocol in response to PSA16 – sustainable accommodation

Other Key Achievements

- £3.0m of energy efficiency measures have been installed in residents homes in the '08/'09 financial year through partnership working with the Warm Front Team grant. The figures for '07/'08 were £1.9m and '06/'07 was £1.7m.
- A Heatseeker project was established during November 2009 in partnership with the Mark group and the Energy Efficiency Partnership. In excess of 54,000 properties in the borough have been thermally scanned and a potential insulation requirement has been identified in 23,000 homes. This may be cavity wall and/or loft insulation. The properties will be visited by Heatseeker surveyors over the coming months in order that residents have the opportunity of upgrading their home insulation. They will be offered free measures under the Carbon Emission Reduction Target obligation or discounted prices where they are in the "able to pay" group.
- 38 staff from Strategic Housing Services attended the "Smarter Driver Training" via the Energy Saving Trust to help reduce carbon emissions from staff vehicle usage.
- Rochdale AWARM (Affordable Warmth Access Referral Mechanism) has trained 183 professionals in Rochdale in affordable warmth awareness and referral training through the AWARM initiative, which has generated 706 referrals for clients vulnerable to fuel poverty in the Borough. Two teams have been trained during the last quarter and 86 referrals have been received. The Energy Saving Trust has recognised AWARM as a key service to alleviate fuel poverty.
- Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service and AWARM are working in partnership to cross refer. All 127 'watches' across GM will receive AWARM training by the end of the year.
- 77% of the targets in the Equality and Diversity action Plan have been achieved, the target at the time of the review was for 70% to have been achieved.
- 72% of the targets in the BME Housing strategy action plan have been achieved, the target at the time of the review was for 65% to have been achieved.
- Completed an extensive review of the Council's Housing Allocations Policy, including a large scale consultation exercise which has been recognised by CLG as best practice. This has resulted in the agreement of huge changes to the re-housing processes and procedures and the necessary development of the Choice Based Lettings scheme to address recent Government guidance and housing law cases.
- Established a working group of RSLs, RBH and RMBC's Economic Affairs Unit to discuss the worklessness agenda, to share best practice, pool resources and develop initiatives.
- Active representative on the Falinge In Focus Core Group, partaking in large scale consultation, Appreciative Enquiries, Full System reviews etc. Resulting in major changes to how housing services are delivered in the area.
- Independent Commission set up to look at options for the future of Council housing management through a review of the Housing Revenue Account.

- Re-negotiated contract for the collection of water charges by Rochdale Boroughwide Housing, to include a metering programme with local apprenticeships and training opportunities.
- Following a grant from CLG, a successful enhanced Handyperson Scheme has been established to deal with minor electrical and gas safety works for owner occupiers over the age of 60. 328 jobs have been carried out in 273 properties, which include works such as minor boiler repairs, gas fire repairs, boiler services, repairs to plug sockets, light fittings, security lights, electric showers etc.
- A success bid was made to the Electrical Safety Council for a £5,000 emergency fund to carry out small scale emergency works related to electrical safety for vulnerable people within the Borough, regardless of age or tenure.
- In partnership with RBH, the Home Improvement Agency (HIA) have established an under-occupation pilot scheme to offer incentives for RBH and RSL tenants who are under-occupying a property to move to a more suitable sized property, making a larger property available for an overcrowded family on the re-housing waiting list. 21 tenants who were under-occupying their property have moved through the scheme, enabling families suffering from overcrowding to be re-housed.
- The HIA have achieved the Local Performance Indicator target in relation to number of Handyperson Scheme jobs completed. The number of jobs completed by the Handyperson Scheme was 15,288, which was the highest number of jobs ever completed since the scheme was established in 2000.
- Continued consolidation of services with improvements to customer care and better efficiency created by bringing together the Asylum Support and Gateway Teams with those teams delivering Homelessness Prevention and Refugee Resettlement services under one roof with a single point of access.
- Successful delivery of HMR programmes
- Completion of Heywood Renewal Area ahead of programme
- Successful launch of Empty Property Strategy including the proactive targeting of Milkstone and Deeplish to tackle empty properties and derelict land using a wide range of legal powers including S.215.
- Delivery of ECR & Inner Rochdale HIP enveloping programmes
- Recycled 33 adapted properties, providing a potential saving of in excess of £200,000 on Adaptations budget
- Facilitated a 2 way move to free up a fully adapted property to accommodate a family who would otherwise have required full ground floor accommodation adaptations – saving at least £30,000 on adaptations budget
- 322 properties were inspected as part of the Landlord Accreditation Scheme and 192 new properties were accredited, all of which met the Decent Homes Standard.

PART B Key Changes to Service Plan since April 2009

Aiming High 2007 – 2010

Aiming High has an impact on all of the work undertaken by Strategic Housing, as it is important that all our work links into the Corporate priorities. The targets that Strategic Housing is responsible for are:

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1 – INCREASING JOBS AND PROSPERITY

SP1.O – Build 397 new homes and acquire 106 homes in the Housing Market Renewal priority neighbourhoods by 2009

SP1.P – Build 400 new homes per year (1200 in total by 2010)

SP1.Q – Build 60 new affordable homes per year (180 in total by 2010)

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3 – IMPROVING COMMUNITY SAFETY

SP3.B – Increase the number of domestic violence incidents reported to the police and reduce the percentage of incidents that are repeats from 5360 cases in 2007/08 (of which 55% are repeats) to 5896 cases (of which 45% are repeats) by 2010 L

SP3.L – Increase the number of vulnerable households in Private Sector Housing who are living in a home which meets the Decent Homes Standard

SP3.M – Prevent the number of households potentially becoming homeless from 99 in 2006/07 to 108 in 2009/10 and increase the number of households experiencing DV to maintain their housing from 30 in 2006/07 to 90 in 2009/10

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4 – CREATING A CLEANER, GREENER ENVIRONMENT

SP4.M – Carry out a programme of environmental improvements (84 estates in total) on the Council's socially rented housing estates by 2010

SP4.N – Implement the Respect Standard for socially rented and private landlords

SP4.O – Procure development partners for the priority neighbourhoods of Langley, East Central Rochdale, Kirkholt and Inner Rochdale

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5 – IMPROVING HEALTH AND WELL BEING

SP5.L – Reduce the number of older people aged 65 and over admitted to permanent residential/nursing home care from 104 to 83 per 1,000

SP5.N – Increase the take up of attendance allowance and related benefits by those eligible from 5,200 to 5,700

SP5.Q – The gap in health inequalities between the Borough and England average narrows (all-age all-cause mortality) per 100,000 from male 929, female 654 (2003-05) to male 815 and female 575 (2008-10)

Stepping Up

Strategic Housing Services recognises that the quality of our staff is essential if we are to deliver excellent services to customers and meet the challenges of our business. We are committed to the ongoing development, training and support of all staff and are keen to ensure that staff are prepared so that they are able to step up to any opportunities that arise within the Service.

Maximising the potential of our people

Workforce Planning and Development

There have been no significant changes to the Service plan since 2009 that aren't covered in the achievements or key improvement activity. There have been improvements since 2009 in relation to Workforce planning and development, which has become more of a key issue for the Council overall. Some of the work undertaken in Strategic Housing Services in this area:

- Flexible retirement has been agreed for one member of staff
- Certain elements of workforce planning are embedded into the service. All staff receive supervision, 1:1's and development interviews. We regularly review those staff coming up to retirement age over the next 3 years and make plans of how we need to replace/provide cover for the expertise that is to be lost. Flexible retirement is considered and has been agreed for at least one member of staff.
- Opportunities that arise are offered first within the existing team, to give staff the opportunity to step up and develop skills by covering for absences, or taking on a specific piece of project work.
- We consider the needs of the service and look to mould the workforce to meet them. There have been numerous transitions over a 10 year period, from traditional Technical Officer roles into 50:50 roles where Technical Officers can carry out inspections but also carry out practical works, such as fitting smoke alarms, security measures at the same time as inspections.
- The introduction of customer support officers to complement the role of Technical Officer, one role which we used to develop some existing admin support staff.
- The introduction of Handyperson Assistants, as it was recognised that most jobs require 2 members of staff but not necessarily 2 fully qualified staff. This has been an opportunity for unqualified staff to join the service and they are encouraged to develop their skills wherever possible and train to be Handypersons of the future.
- We recognise that many of our customers would like to see female Handypersons for a number of reasons and we actively try wherever possible to specify a female, especially on training schemes where this is possible e.g. Future jobs.
- We know how many staff we have what their skills are and what potential there is to develop some of these people in order to retain them and prepare them to step up when existing staff retire.
- Flexibility is encouraged amongst the team, allowing rotation wherever possible to allow staff to develop skills and knowledge. This skill sharing enables the service to switch staff into whatever roles are required to meet the needs of the service and the many temporary short term funding regimes that we have to adhere to. Several staff have been able to rotate within the team and a number of staff have been given the opportunity to take on some additional responsibilities in line with some new projects that are being delivered.
- Supervision, 1:1's and development interviews give an indication of staff satisfaction and levels of morale. Monitoring of sickness is also often another key indicator of levels of morale. An understanding of the change management process is important for managers to enable them to effectively implement change and take staff with them in as positive a way as possible. Managers observe how staff are interacting and this often gives a strong indication of satisfaction and morale. Exit interviews can often provide essential information for managers, as too can levels of staff turnover within the team/service.
- Staff have been encouraged to express their ideas for improvements, leading to the service becoming more efficient and ultimately better for customers. Staff regularly make suggested improvements that go

on to be implemented, such as:

- Scanning all plans and emailing them to Occupational Therapists to check and approve them, rather than putting them in the internal post. This can speed up the grant process by a couple of days and saves money on envelopes.
- Sending text messages to certain customer groups to confirm appointments, rather than sending letters in the post.
- Operational staff are given the opportunity to attend workshops provided by our software supplier, as this gives them the chance to see the planned changes and consider how these may be of benefit to our services, so that they can be developed to meet our needs

Customer Focus

Customers are highly valued within the Service and a significant amount of work takes place around satisfaction and customer service. Some of the activities that have taken place are as follows:

- All customers who receive services from the HIA are sent customer satisfaction surveys at the end of the process and the return rates are very good. The overall levels of satisfaction with the services we provide are between 95 – 98%
- All customers who are referred to the HIA for any services are sent a Customer Charter and compliments, comments and complaints form, to encourage them to provide feedback to us at any stage in the process
- Random sample visits are undertaken for the Handyperson Scheme to ensure that works are of a high standard and that customers have been satisfied with the service
- Changes to services and policies have been made in response to customer feedback on private sector housing and homelessness services.
- The HIA has a service user representative on the Advisory Board, to provide a customer focus on our work
- There is a service user forum operating around Domestic Abuse and the Safer Homes Scheme
- We have specific posts within the HIA of Customer Support Manager and Customer Support Officers, who have direct responsibilities for helping customers, dealing with complaints and contacting customers over the telephone-one and in person to ensure that they are satisfied with our services
- The HIA regularly attends user forums and customer events, to provide information and presentations on the services we offer and also to discuss with groups of customers how they would like to see services shaped in the future
- The HIA has listened to customers who have told us they would like the Handyperson Scheme to be able to offer help with electrical and boiler/heating repairs and have been delivering an enhanced service for the past 12 months, following a successful bid to CLG
- Private Sector Housing hold Private Landlord Forums several times per year
- Roch Vale Residents Consultation is regularly undertaken in a number of ways to engage with the families living on the travellers site, to ensure the services we provide for them are meeting their needs
- The Homelessness team interviews individual service users when they leave temporary accommodation to get feedback on the services provided.
- Hard to reach clients are encouraged by the Homelessness Team to take part in specific focus groups and special events to engage in discussions about the service
- Consultation is ongoing within the Urban Renewal team as part of the Borough and Neighbourhood Level Masterplanning, Kirkholt Steering Group, Wardleworth & Hamer Panel, Sandfield, Sparth, Deeplich & Milkstone area forums and through the Heywood Housing Partnership
- The Urban Renewal team seeks feedback from customers by sending out satisfaction surveys to all beneficiaries of block scheme works, CPO/Area clearance consultations (area, blocks and individual)

Value for Money

- Work on the Health Impact assessments will demonstrate the financial cost benefits of the various interventions carried out by the Service in tackling non-decency, preventing accidents, dealing with fuel poverty etc.
- All corporate efficiency targets for 2009/10 have all been achieved.
- We are leading regionally and one of the best nationally (if not the best) in the use of Equity Release with a portfolio of over £3million.
- We also recycle stairlifts, through floor lifts, ceiling track hoists and prefabricated extensions, used in our major adaptations work, to make limited resources stretch further. Our Senior Housing OT helps match

people with disabilities needing major adaptations to their homes to properties in the social rented sector that are already adapted to meet their needs.

- As an Overcrowding Pathfinder we have developed an Under-occupation scheme with RBH and through this we are incentivising willing occupiers of RBH properties to move to smaller properties thus freeing up larger family homes for use by overcrowded families on our waiting lists.
- Evaluations of the Firestop Project, Safer Homes and Mortgage Rescue Schemes show massive savings to the public purse as well as many other related benefits to the society as a whole.
- National research shows the cost–benefits to health of the hospital discharge works we undertake on behalf of Adult Care.

Township Devolution

We recognise the Township focus within the Borough and have responded to Township requests to promote HIA services more widely in each of the Townships and have attended numerous events, providing presentations about our services, including a very popular quiz about our Services and the Borough at one of the Pensioners groups. The HIA was successful in bidding for funding from both Middleton and Pennine Township to increase the number of Handyperson Scheme jobs in those areas.

Financial Planning and Budget Update

STRATEGIC HOUSING

| 2009/10 REVISED ESTIMATE £' 000 | | 2010/11 ORIGINAL ESTIMATE £' 000 | 2011/12 ORIGINAL ESTIMATE £' 000 | 2012/13 ORIGINAL ESTIMATE £' 000 |
|--|--|---|---|---|
| | Budget by Service Area | | | |
| | Strategy, Policy and Management Services | | | |
| 1,309 | <i>Expenditure</i> | 2,494 | 2,577 | 2,608 |
| -144 | <i>Income</i> | -1,367 | -1,411 | -1,420 |
| 37 | <i>Net effect of Internal service recharges</i> | 84 | 81 | 78 |
| 10 | <i>Contribution to/-from a reserve</i> | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| 1,212 | Total | 1,221 | 1,257 | 1,276 |
| | Homelessness | | | |
| 3,742 | <i>Expenditure</i> | 3,631 | 3,691 | 3,731 |
| -3,468 | <i>Income</i> | -3,487 | -3,506 | -3,526 |
| 432 | <i>Net effect of Internal service recharges</i> | 402 | 423 | 424 |
| 706 | Total | 546 | 608 | 629 |
| | Area Renewal | | | |
| 988 | <i>Expenditure</i> | 985 | 1,006 | 1,023 |
| -826 | <i>Income</i> | -778 | -780 | -782 |
| 185 | <i>Net effect of Internal service recharges</i> | 171 | 181 | 180 |
| 347 | Total | 378 | 407 | 421 |
| | Private Sector Housing | | | |
| 1,180 | <i>Expenditure</i> | 1,016 | 1,046 | 1,061 |
| -895 | <i>Income</i> | -908 | -930 | -952 |
| 231 | <i>Net effect of Internal service recharges</i> | 231 | 240 | 241 |
| 516 | Total | 339 | 356 | 350 |
| | | | | |
| 2,781 | Net cost of providing services to the Public | 2,484 | 2,628 | 2,676 |
| | Budget by Expenditure Type | | | |
| 4,000 | Employees and related expenses | 3,771 | 3,835 | 3,900 |
| 1,040 | Premises related expenses | 1,062 | 1,082 | 1,102 |
| 78 | Transport related expenses | 80 | 81 | 81 |
| 1,737 | Supplies and services | 2,700 | 2,798 | 2,809 |
| 218 | Agency and contracted services | 367 | 378 | 385 |
| 146 | Depreciation | 146 | 146 | 146 |
| 0 | Management costs | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 7,219 | Total Service Expenditure | 8,126 | 8,320 | 8,423 |
| 964 | Central departmental and support services | 944 | 982 | 981 |
| -79 | Less internal service departmental recharges | -56 | -57 | -58 |
| 885 | Net effect of internal service recharges | 888 | 925 | 923 |
| | | | | |
| 8,104 | Total Service Expenditure net of Internal Service Recharges | 9,014 | 9,245 | 9,346 |
| | Income | | | |
| -3,735 | Rents, Fees & Charges | -4,814 | -4,896 | -4,943 |
| | Grants | | | |
| 0 | Dedicated Schools Grant | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| -1,598 | Other Grants | -1,726 | -1,731 | -1,737 |
| -5,333 | Total Income | -6,540 | -6,627 | -6,680 |
| | | | | |
| 10 | Contribution to/-from a reserve | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| | | | | |
| 2,781 | Net cost of providing services to the Public | 2,484 | 2,628 | 2,676 |

Tackling Health Inequalities

The Government recognises that non-decent housing can affect health and educational attainment and can impact negatively on life chances. Poor housing conditions can cause a range of physical and mental illnesses, and people living in poor housing conditions are far more likely than their counterparts living in decent homes to suffer from ill-health and disability. Many older people live in the worst housing conditions or lack suitable accommodation, with a third of older people (2.1 million households nationally) living in non-decent or hazardous housing. These hazards bring many costs which could be significantly reduced, for example, if we could prevent older people from falling and being hospitalised or institutionalised too early.

Older people are also twice as likely to be unable to afford fuel in winter and thermally inefficient housing has been linked to the increase in deaths during the colder months. Older people are also at highest risk of dying in an accidental dwelling fire and we know that poor housing conditions can exacerbate existing medical conditions. The HIA provides help in increasing energy efficiency by referrals to the Warm Front scheme and minor works. We also assist in bringing homes up to the decent homes standard and carry out hospital discharge works, providing excellent examples of how we link into the wider picture

The Housing Green Paper, Quality and Choice: a Decent Home for All (April 2000) set out a strategy to achieve the Government's aim that 'everyone should have the opportunity of a decent Home'.

Private Sector Housing are leading and piloting the development of the methodology of a Health Impact Assessment on Decent Homes in the Private Sector (working with the University of Warwick and the Building Research Establishment). The main purpose of this research which has been commissioned thro'4NW is as follows:

- To identify, document and quantify the range of private sector renewal activities in the Borough and across the North West, either currently or recently. The research will also look at other examples of good practice outside the region, such as Birmingham, Bristol and Derby.
- To identify the impact of these renewal activities on (a) housing decency and (b) health and well-being and health inequalities within each local authority area.
- To make recommendations for maximising the positive public health impacts of private sector renewal activity and to identify good practice.
- To calculate the financial health values of the wide range of housing interventions used to deliver the private sector housing decency programme and other associated programmes of works e.g. accident prevention. crime prevention delivered by Private Sector Housing.

The commitment to deliver health and well-being is extremely high within the service. This is part of the day to day services delivered by the staff. It has further been shown by full and active engagement with the Council Health Improvement Group by leading on the Health & Wellbeing Priorities such as Fuel Poverty and Falls Prevention.

Tackling Deprivation

Much of the work undertaken within Strategic Housing targets vulnerable people who are living in the most deprived neighbourhoods within the Borough. Some work has been undertaken using spatial analysis and MOSAIC to improve service delivery to the vulnerable households we serve and where appropriate to ensure services are focussed on the 3% and 10% most deprived LSOAs. Some examples of this are on the work we do on the Mortgage Rescue Scheme, Safer Homes Scheme and the Firestop Project. These schemes are undertaken in partnership with Citizens Advice Bureau, The Bond Board and Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service.

Collaborative Working

Strategic Housing Services has very close working relationships with a number of voluntary sector organisations such as Age Concern, The Bond Board and Victim Support & Witness Services together with the strong partnership working with statutory agencies such as the Greater Manchester Fire Services and GM Police which has helped us to deliver and shape a wide range of preventative services e.g. fast track burglary reduction scheme, safer homes scheme (domestic abuse), firestop scheme (reduction of accidental dwelling fires), hospital discharge scheme, fast track electrical/gas safety scheme.

Strategic Housing has always been very strong in the area of partnership working, recognising that Housing has

such clear and direct links to many other aspects of people's lives, such as health, education, employment, social inclusion etc. It is also crucial that we work with as many partner agencies as possible, to provide joined up services that provide value for money and help to bridge the gaps that exist around health and deprivation. We also work closely with Adult Care and the Team for Children and Young people with a disability, to ensure adaptations offer people with a disability the opportunity to live as independently as possible, giving them as many choices and options as possible.

Age Concern, Victim Support and Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service are close partners, who enable the HIA to get into the homes of vulnerable people, living in deprived areas that would not normally approach the Council for services but yet who clearly need our help and intervention.

The Single Equality Bill

The Government has introduced a PSA 16 target to support adults who are at risk of social exclusion. PSA 16 aims to increase the proportion of at-risk client groups in settled accommodation, employment, education or training. However many individuals have a combination of problems and circumstances which make it very difficult for them to participate in society. Too often these people fall between different service providers, are not given the range of support they need, or fall out of contact with services entirely. Therefore an effective local multi-agency partnership approach is essential to successful delivery of PSA 16.

There are four at-risk clients groups within the PSA. These are:

- i) offenders under probation supervision;
- ii) care leavers aged 19;
- iii) adults with moderate to severe learning difficulties; and
- iv) adults in contact with secondary mental health services.

Without the firm foundations of a job or settled accommodation, vulnerable people and their children risk a lifetime of social exclusion. This can lead to a lifetime cost on society. In order to deliver positive outcomes for the area there needs to be a sustainable and preventative focus.

Work to improve performance on these indicators can help to achieve other National Indicators relating to adult and youth re-offending, drugs and effective treatment; young offenders in suitable accommodation and engagement in education employment and training; and the number of households in temporary accommodation.

- CLG views Rochdale as an exemplar authority in terms of delivery of the PSA16 agenda. A PSA 16 Development Group has been established, which is a partnership made up of the key senior staff relating to the PSA 16 client groups. There is a clear action plan which will be closely monitored to ensure it meets its objectives. This group also has clear links to the LSP and thematic groups so it is accountable.
- Partnership working is effective and consultation with service users and key stakeholders is meaningful and productive.

Communities and Local Government (CLG) carried out a PSA16 Diagnostic Visit to Rochdale in early February 2010. Verbal feedback received from the inspectors was very positive – praising our “can do” outcome focussed approach, our strong partnership working and the high quality of service user involvement in the shaping of new and existing services to meet identified needs.

Legislative Changes

There are no legislative changes that we are currently aware of that will have any significant impact on our services.

Key Improvement Activity 2010/11

- Refresh the Borough's Housing Strategy
- Complete a Boroughwide Strategic Housing Market Assessment which will shape current and future housing and planning policies and the update of the borough's housing strategy.
- Develop an enhanced housing options service for the borough that co-ordinates the services provided by the Council, RBH and other key delivery partners.
- Complete the first Council new build scheme in 22 years, which will create 22 properties for rent in 2010/11.

- SHS will be working with RSL partners and RBH to secure maximum funding from the £30 million Greater Manchester NAHP funding Pot for 2010/11.
- Contribute to the Statutory City Regions Pilots by developing Local Lettings policies to address local issues.
- Play a full part in the Statutory City Region pilot to develop a common accreditation scheme for Greater Manchester and as part of the work around landlord licensing submit and get approved by CLG an additional HMO Licensing Scheme for the Borough.
- Develop a common Housing Register for all providers in the borough.
- Complete the development of the Gypsy and Travellers Allocations Policy considering recent Government guidance
- Complete an Affordable Housing Economic Viability Study which will identify the potential implications that new requirements for affordable housing would have on the viability of housing developments throughout the Borough.
- Heatseeker will work with SHS to carry out visits/surveys to the identified 23,000 homes that could potentially benefit from improved energy efficiency measures across the borough.
- A Low Carbon Retrofit project will commence on a property (yet to be identified) in the borough to establish an occupied property where a mixed of low carbon technologies are installed to serve as a best practice model of a low carbon home. Before and after monitoring will take place. The Energy Saving Trust has endorsed the project and will assist with technical advice and monitoring.
- AWARM will investigate the potential of working with the ambulance service over the next quarter. It is hoped they will embrace AWARM in a similar manner as the Fire Service to increase referrals across each local authority.
- An on-line AWARM training facility is being developed to provide a medium of training which is accessible for all at any time.
- Lead the implementation of the new Housing Allocations policy, CBL scheme developments, briefings, training and launching of the new service and monitoring the impact.
- Continue the on-going partnership working with the utility companies particularly with reference to the Government's "Greener Homes: A Strategy for Household Energy Management"
- AWARM is currently being developed to be embedded within the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) to ensure that vulnerable children whom live in homes that have poor thermal properties are identified.
- Undertake a Boroughwide stock condition survey
- Predicted changes to external capital funding regimes will necessitate changes to service delivery, which will in turn inform the service improvement plan, leading to a review of the service structure. A review of the Strategic Housing Service is part implemented at present with the creation of cross-agency and cross-departmental Sustainable Communities Teams for the main intervention areas of East Central Rochdale, Langley, Inner Rochdale and Kirkholt.
- To achieve 60% targets in the PSA 16+ Development Plan
- Recommendation to be made on the future management of Council Housing.
- Ensure partner RSL's are on board and participate in the pilot scheme of Tackling Unlawful Sub-letting
- Continue to improve standard of older person accommodation, including extra care.
- Lead on the implementation of the empty property and derelict land strategy.
- Continue the development of a successful under-occupation scheme in partnership with RBH and RSLs and develop a wider set of solutions to deal with overcrowding, following pilot work in 2009/10.
- Complete Health Impact Assessment research.
- Further develop the role of the private rented sector team to address the growing significance of this sector in Rochdale. This is particularly in development of greater affordable housing choices for our residents and in raising the quality of the housing offer in this sector to help support the economic growth of the Borough.
- The Home Improvement Agency has taken on the management of the Careline and Support at Home Service, initially for 12 months and will be seeking to make improvements to the delivery and monitoring of the schemes and also improve the use of assistive technology across the Borough, leading to more vulnerable people being able to remain independent within their homes for longer, achieving efficiency savings.
- In April 2009 the IDeA launched the New Equality Framework and we have migrated to this framework. This new framework has 3 levels and since we were at level 4 of the old Equality Standard for Local Government, we were placed in the interim category "moving towards excellence" which is on the New Equality Framework. This level is located between level 2 and level 3. We have set a target to achieve level 3, Excellent by March 2011.

- Renew the Customer Service in Excellence and Quality Mark awards for the HIA, in line with the changes to both of the award schemes.
- Continue to find ways of delivering an effective housing options approach against diminishing resources by working with colleagues in RBH, the Bond Board and Advice Services to develop an Enhanced Housing Options Service. In April 2010 we will launch our Triage Assessment tool for all frontline staff so that we can assess the needs of vulnerable households more effectively by creating pathways to services. We have an Enhanced Housing Options Development plan that will run alongside our PSA 16 Plus Development Plan that will bring together the wider services including access to education, training and employment.
- Continue to develop the case management approach to supporting vulnerable households and as well as extending the role of newly established community development worker currently working with refugees, we will continue to provide access to practical skills and training for households using our accommodation based services. This includes Basic Lifeskills such as cooking and literacy, support into education via Hopwood Hall, Parenting skills and decorating and basic DIY.
- Deliver more of our services in the home and we have a target of achieving 50% of all interactions in the home as we find that this is often the most effective tool in preventing homelessness and gaining a better understanding of our customers needs. Likewise, we are changing our approach to vulnerable households that are at risk of homelessness as a result of their own actions and working more effectively with colleagues in Childcare Services.
- To continue to roll out the S.215 environmental issues programme across the Borough. Much success has been achieved in Heywood, Milkstone and Deepdish and East Central Rochdale.
- To deliver the next year of HMR intervention programmes in ECR, Inner Rochdale, Kirkholt and Langley and to develop a methodology to continue the regeneration of Heywood.
- To participate, via the Sustainable Communities teams, in the delivery of new, affordable housing across the Borough.
- Roll out hospital discharge protocol across all inpatient facilities
- Work with RSL's to improve nomination outcomes and contribution to move-on from supported accommodation
- Build on the pilot Under-occupancy scheme, by evaluating the outcomes of the pilot and improving the policy and procedures. Also, increase the involvement in the scheme from RSL's.
- Review and update all risks on the Council's Risk Register which relate to Strategic Housing Services activity
- Development of a range of local standards (local offers) to supplement the new national standards produced by the Tenants Services Authority

Asset Management

The HMR asset register is in the final stages of refinement and agreement has been reached as to how assets in transition should be treated. The register will be the first step in addressing issues raised by the forecast winding-down of HMR funding and how those assets will be dealt with through the development process, especially given the current difficulties with the land and property markets.

One of the Interim Heads of Strategic Housing Services sits on the Asset Management Group. The group's remit includes decision making authority over use of Council assets and land and prioritisation of schemes in the capital programme. The Asset Management Group has two sub-groups; the accommodation sub-group, which is a central body to deal with accommodation issues and the bids sub-group, which is detailed below.

The Interim Head of Service chairs the bids sub-group, which includes finance, planning and regulation, asset management and environmental management representatives. The group's role is primarily to consider PAMPs; assessment focuses on financial viability, strategic fit and risks. The group reports to the Asset Management Group, but is able to support proposals for submission to ELT and Cabinet directly. The remit of the group also includes review of and input to the capital programme and monitoring the progress of capital schemes.

Service contribution to SAMPs, PAMPs and the wider asset management agenda:

SAMPs for the service have been completed. In addition, the service is involved in a number of projects relating to the management of Council assets:

- Review of Council housing
- Sustainable Communities areas (East Central Rochdale, Langley, Kirkholt, Inner Rochdale & Heywood;

contribution to delivery in these areas and development of PAMPs for the same)

- Brighter Horizons pipeline: Sites to be developed by the RBH development subsidiary, Brighter Horizons. Included are sites which are within Sustainable Communities areas and those identified by the Building Homes for the Future group; the first five sites have been agreed by Cabinet and a PAMP agreed by the bids sub-group.
- Building Homes for the Future (BHF): Identifying unused Council-owned land suitable for housing use and progressing schemes on these sites, to make maximum use of Council land assets. PAMPs to be prepared for schemes as sites come forward.

Sustainable Development

Living within environmental limits is one of the key drivers of sustainable development.

The UK sustainable development principles identify that respecting the limits of the planet's environment, resources and biodiversity are necessary to improve our environment and ensure that natural resources needed for life are unimpaired and remain so for future generations.

The Council is committed to the above principles and therefore all services will ensure that when making decisions about spending and service delivery, they consider the effects purchases and service delivery have on the environment and the depletion of natural resources. There is also an intention to reduce services' reliance on carbon based products e.g. electricity, gas, fuel and oil and make progress in reducing the carbon footprint in line with the Carbon Reduction Commitment.

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| Approved by Portfolio Holder | Cllr Brophy-Lee..... |
| Opposition Member | Cllr Imtiaz Ahmed..... |
| Opposition Member | Cllr Dearnley..... |
| Head of Service | Paul Gordziejewicz..... |