
REPORT TO:	COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 8
DATE OF MEETING:	11th SEPTEMBER 2006	CATEGORY: RECOMMENDED
REPORT FROM:	DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	VICKI TAYLOR-STOKES PERFORMANCE MANAGER EXT 5940	DOC:
SUBJECT:	HOUSING PERFORMANCE INDICATORS BV183 a/b	REF:
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE:

1.0 Recommendations

1.1 To discuss and comment upon the contents of this report.

2.0 Purpose of Report

2.1 To show performance of BV183a and BV183b and the actions required to achieve 2006-07 targets.

2.2 The Chairman of this Committee has also provided a list of background questions, which this report aims to give clarification on.

3.0 Background

3.1 Reducing homelessness and the prevention of homelessness has been set as a high priority for all Councils by Government. As well as our longstanding requirement to assess applicants presenting themselves as homeless to the Council, from April 2006 we now have a formal obligation to provide a statutory homelessness prevention function within the Council. Our homelessness team since April has consisted of two homelessness officers and a housing options adviser.

4.0 Detail

4.1 The first of the questions (Q1) supplied by the Chairman was; Define "unintentionally homeless". This is where applicants are assessed as having had a direct and determining influence on their homelessness situation either by their own specific action or inaction e.g. not making mortgage payments when having the resources to do so and then being evicted.

4.2 (Q2): "How do we place unintentionally homeless permanently?" If we have a suitable vacancy at the time of acceptance then they are placed immediately. We can and do nominate accepted applicants to housing association partners. In some circumstances the lack of suitable accommodation being readily available means that

the applicant and family will need to go into temporary accommodation that can be in the form of traditional housing, hostel or B+B accommodation.

- 4.3 (Q3) Members will be aware that a successful service development bid has enabled the introduction of a new post of Housing Options Adviser into the establishment from April of this year. In addition to this new post the service has been refocused towards prevention of homelessness wherever possible rather than reacting to homelessness. The refocus and additional post should enable reduction in need for both bed and breakfast and temporary accommodation as more clients will be assessed earlier in the process. Such earlier intervention provides more opportunity to negotiate with landlords to maintain existing accommodation or to work towards planned moves rather than emergency re-housing. Unfortunately temporary accommodation usage may never be zero as some cases will only ever present in an emergency.
- 4.4 (Q4) In addition the Homelessness Team are making more creative use of our Spend to Save budget. This financial allocation comes from grant monies received from DCLG and allows for more creative usage to prevent homelessness. Recent examples include an occasion where a young man was being temporarily re-housed by elderly parents while we sought secure accommodation on his behalf. His parents were benefit dependant and found the extra electricity and gas usage hard to manage, creating tension and jeopardising his stay. They evidenced the difference in cost and we paid them £50 to cover the extra costs of his stay. He was able to stay with supportive family members for two weeks at a cost of £50 to SDDC. Temporary accommodation for two weeks would have cost a minimum of £350. In addition he would have been isolated from existing support networks.
- 4.5 (Q5) Swadlincote is a rural area, which in comparison to larger councils does not experience high instances of homelessness. Therefore a small change in the number of applicants reported under either of these BVPIs can make a large impact on performance. This explains why the past three years could appear to show 'variations' figures for both targets and actual performance as trends have been affected by this factor (appendix 1). As previously shown, performance in the area of BV183a has declined as depicted in the appended graph. This was due to one family who were not case managed in a proactive manner, therefore their stay in bed and breakfast was longer then it initially needed to be. This one case has distorted the figures and had an adverse impact on this indicator. With the increased staffing levels now in the homelessness team and the recent recruitment into the vacant post, we are confident that these types of situations will not happen in the future.
- 4.6 (Q6) Performance has improved in the past twelve months in the area of BV183b. The attached graph shows performance in this area. After reviewing the performance figures the target for 2007-08 is 0 weeks as listed in the BVPP, which is in line with top quartile performance.
- 4.7 (Q7) The most significant part of the Homelessness Act (2002) was in extending the categories of applicant to be accepted as priority need.
- 4.8 (Q8) In general terms the Service is working towards full compliance with the 23 point CRE level 1 code of practice.

5.0 Financial Implications

5.1 No additional implications at this time.

6.0 Corporate Implications

6.1 Additional requirements place upon us by Government in meeting new BVPIs.

7.0 Community Implications

7.1 Additional preventative homelessness role will benefit the community.

