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<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>HOUSING &amp; COMMUNITY SERVICES</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM:</b> 9
<b>DATE OF MEETING:</b>	<b>20<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER, 2003</b>	<b>CATEGORY:</b> <b>RECOMMENDED</b>
<b>REPORT FROM:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES</b>	<b>OPEN PARAGRAPH NO:</b>
<b>MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:</b>	<b>MARK ALFLAT (Ext. 5712)</b>	<b>DOC:</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>BEST VALUE REVIEW - STRATEGIC HOUSING</b>	<b>REF:</b> s:\cent_serv\committee reports\housing & community services\20 nov 2003\bvreview-strategichousing.doc
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL</b>	<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE: G</b>

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### **1.0 Recommendations**

- 1.1 That Members approve the report and formally sign off the Best Value Review on Strategic Housing.

### **2.0 Purpose of Report**

- 2.1 To advise Members of the progress made with the Best Value Review of Strategic Housing.

### **3.0 Detail**

- 3.1 The scope for the Strategic Housing Review included:-
- Strategic Housing - assessing housing needs, supporting sustainable home ownership, raising the quality of solid housing, increasing the availability of affordable housing, dealing with social exclusion
  - Private Sector Housing - supporting a strong and high quality private rented sector, administering housing grants, dealing with empty homes, home energy conservation
  - Homelessness and Housing Advice - strengthening protection for the homeless
  - Housing Allocations and Housing Register - promoting choice through lettings
- 3.2 The Review built on issues from early work and issues from the Strategic Housing Review that were postponed in February 2001 and included:-
- Working with Partners
  - Methods for procuring maintenance of the Council's housing stock
  - Consultation

- Gathering and analysing housing needs information
- Options for the future of the Council's housing stock

3.3 A Review Team was set up comprising of staff, stakeholders, tenants and Members. A small Steering Group of officers was also set up with the responsibility for planning and co-ordinating the Review Team and providing information to the team.

3.4 The Review Team organised themselves into four teams to work with officers in carrying out a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis of the existing service provision.

3.5 To compliment the Best Value Review work a group was established to develop the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan. The group consisted of the Chair of Housing & Community Services plus 3 other Members, 4 Tact members, Head of Community Services, Housing Services Manager, Housing Special Projects Officer, Building Maintenance Officer and the Tenant Participation Officer. The purpose of this group was to agree objectives for the Housing Services and examine the options available to the Council to meet these objectives.

3.6 A baseline assessment was established and a challenge meeting took place attended by the Deputy Chief Executive, Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), Social Services and a Registered Social Landlord. The challenge led to four key issues for improvement being identified, which were:-

- Achieving an integrated service for property adaptations for disabled people
- Effective measurement and use of housing and community needs information to develop and deliver practical housing programmes
- Prioritising and targeting resources to achieve effective regeneration of areas
- Achieving effective strategic and operational housing partnerships

3.7 The Review Team developed consultation and benchmarking/comparison strategies. These strategies were produced by two sub-groups who then presented their work to the wider Review Team.

### 3.8 Outcomes

- A unified adaptation service was established within the Private Sector Housing Section in the Environmental Health Division.  
The member of staff working on disabled adaptations in the Housing Division transferred to Environmental Health, along with the budget control.  
A new service standard was agreed with County Architects and Social Services. Occupational Therapist assessment and means testing of all applicants for disabled facilities grants has led to a fairer system of allocation. Waiting lists have reduced from two years to nil.  
Additional administration support was provided for the extra work.
- A new Homeless Strategy as developed based on an in depth needs assessment. Links with the Good Shepherds Trust have provided 24 hour homeless advice and support for the first time.  
Building on the work for Sheltered Housing, two schemes have been decommissioned and the properties actively marketed. A vision for Sheltered Housing based on demand will be presented to Committee.

Consultants have been appointed to carry out a study into Black, Minority and Ethnic needs and this information will direct the Housing Strategy work.

Links with Social Services are examining mental health needs and again these results will be fed into the Housing Strategy by May 2004.

RSL Partnerships have been established and opportunities for joint development work linked to need are being used e.g. Coton Band Room

3. A new Private Sector Housing Team was approved by Members, incorporating the new Regulatory Reform Order requirements and more effective targeting of resources achieved, particularly for the most vulnerable.  
A 100% expenditure of capital monies was achieved.

4. A full day consultation on the Housing Strategy was held with the Council's key partners and stakeholders.

Improvements on strategic delivery and presentation have led to the Housing Strategy being reassessed from "below average" to "average".

The separation of the Strategic Housing function from Public Sector Housing has led to further improvements and the establishment of new partnerships.

The Authority has an agreed programme with the Government Office of the East Midlands (GOEM) to hopefully bring the Authority the new 'Fit for Purpose' standard by the middle of 2004.

- 3.9 The thematic reviews of Balancing Housing Markets and Decent Homes have built on the work of this review to formulate an improvement plan to take services to an even higher level of delivery.

#### **4.0 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 None arising out of the report.

#### **5.0 Corporate Implications**

- 5.1 None.

#### **6.0 Conclusions**

- 6.1 The Best Value Review of Strategic Housing has led to real improvements in service across tenures. Improvement opportunities are being actively explored for future delivery by the establishment of a Corporate Housing Strategy Group. The Authority is moving towards a position of one of the leading Authorities on Strategic Housing delivery.

