
REPORT TO:	HOUSING & COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 10
DATE OF MEETING:	9th OCTOBER, 2003	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	MARK ALFLAT (Ext. 5712)	DOC: s:\cent_serv\committee reports\housing & community services\9 oct 2003\cpa-thematicreview-balancinghousingmarkets.doc
SUBJECT:	COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT - BALANCING HOUSING MARKETS - THEMATIC REVIEW	REF:
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE: HCS04

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 That Members note the report and the progress made on the Balancing Housing Markets Thematic Review.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To update Members on the progress of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment - Balancing Housing Markets - Thematic Review.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 The Balancing Housing Markets group has consisted of Officers from Environmental Health, Housing, Planning, Policy and Best Value and Finance.
- 3.2 A baseline assessment was drawn up and from this a summary of key issues was established (attached at Annexe A).
- 3.3 Many strengths have been found with the way that South Derbyshire District Council works to balance its housing markets. Some examples of these are: a recent Housing Needs and Market Survey of Public Sector stock condition information, a unifying of the Disabled Facility Grant Service, good links between Planning and neighbouring districts and inclusive development of housing and homeless strategies and local plans, clear links to regional and national priorities, good partnerships to balance housing markets, clear action plans and good integration of affordable housing units.

- 3.4 Areas for improvement were identified as: no programme of updating needs analysis work, out of date private sector stock condition information, poor cross-authority working, no Parish level black minority, ethnic and special needs data.

There were poor links with some partner strategies, no formal linkages between departments, no maximising of available resources and poor links between the Housing Strategy and other strategies.

- 3.5 Members of the group consulted staff, TACT, developers, private landlords and others to test out the findings and discover whether there were any other areas for improvement that should be built into an improvement plan.

Consultations

Planning Staff

- (i) More information needs to be fed down to staff on the workings of the Housing Strategy and its impact on Planning staff.
- (ii) Planning and Environmental Health need to share more information gypsy movement and site requirements.
- (iii) More work needs to be carried out to achieve effective Section 106 agreements. Links between service plans and PDRs need to be made clearer.

Housing Staff

- (i) Staff below Management level need briefing on the work the Council carries out to understand its housing market/strategy.
- (ii) Staff achievements in improving the service are not publicised enough.

Private Sector Housing Staff

- (i) The Strategy, such as the Housing Renewal Policy, needs risk management built in. For example, if Members do not allocate sufficient funding to carry out the Policy, this needs to be made explicit to Members and alternative actions explored.
- (ii) Staff felt that there was a wealth of information across Departments that needed sharing. This should be addressed by the setting up of a Corporate Strategy group. The Private Sector Housing section and the Housing Department should work more closely together.

TACT Members

- (i) Tact members felt that whilst policies were developed, information and milestones were not communicated to tenants to enable them to determine whether their views have made a difference or not.

Developers and Landlords

No responses to consultation with these groups have yet been received.

Next Steps

A draft Improvement Plan is being formulated which will then be circulated to all the previous consultees with a view to an adopted Improvement Plan being in place by the end of October, 2004.

4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 These will be assessed from the Improvement Plan, once finalised.

5.0 Corporate Implications

5.1 These will be assessed when the Improvement Plan is adopted.

6.0 Conclusions

6.1 The Balancing Housing Markets Review has identified considerable strengths in the way that the Council carries out this important area of work. The Improvement Plan, and the delivery of it, will further strengthen this important strategic area.

