
Report To:	Health and Social Care Committee	Date: 22nd October 2009
Report By:	Robert Murphy Acting Corporate Director, Social Care	Report No: SW/41/09/JA/BK
Contact Officer:	Robert Murphy Acting Corporate Director, Social Care	Contact No: 01475 714011
Subject:	Progress on Post-Inspection Improvement Plan (Scottish Housing Regulator Inspection of Homelessness Services)	

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To advise members of progress made in relation to the post-inspection improvement plan approved by Health & Social Care committee on 23rd October 2008, in response to the inspection carried out on Inverclyde Council's homelessness service published in August 2008.
- 1.2 It was previously agreed to provide Health & Social Care Committee with an interim report marking progress, prior to submission of full report to Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR), which is due in August 2010.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 Inverclyde Council's homelessness service was subject to re-inspection by the SHR in the spring of 2008. Following post-inspection discussions with relevant Council officers, the inspection report was published in August 2008. The Council, as required, submitted an approved improvement plan in response to the 8 key recommendations made within the report.
- 2.2 The Council has made good progress on most areas contained within the Improvement Plan, and will make further progress on outstanding issues once the new Homelessness Strategy to cover the period 2009 – 2011 is approved by Health & Social Care Committee and developed accordingly by relevant officers and partner organisations.
- 2.3 One of the main recommendations made within the SHR report was that the Council was not securing enough permanent accommodation for homeless households, causing them to wait lengthy times for housing. Although regular contact with RSLs has been made at both strategic and operational levels in order to stress the importance of this issue, it remains an ongoing requirement for improvement, with figures for 2008/09 indicating that the percentage of social rented lets in Inverclyde was considerably lower than the national average.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 Members are asked to note the progress made on achieving the anticipated outcomes contained within the Improvement Plan; and to further note the work still required in securing a higher percentage of lets to homeless households from our partners in the Registered Social Landlord (RSL) sector.

Robert Murphy
Acting Corporate Director, Social Care

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Inverclyde Council's homelessness service was the subject of a re-inspection by the SHR in 2008. The inspection report was published in August 2008. The report noted an improvement in service delivery since the initial Pathfinder Inspection by Communities Scotland in 2004; however 8 key recommendations were made as to how the service could be further improved.
- 4.2 In response to the recommendations, the Health & Social Care Committee approved an improvement plan on 23 October 2008. It was agreed that an interim report on progress would be made to members prior to the official response on progress to the SHR, which is expected in August 2010.
- 4.3 Good progress has been made in most areas contained within the improvement plan and much of the outstanding work required will be addressed within the Action Plans contained within the *Interim Homelessness Strategy 2009-2011*, which will also come before members for approval. There is however, a remaining concern over the low numbers of permanent houses that are being offered to homeless households from the RSL sector. It is the position of RSLs that these numbers reflect the increasing priority of the ongoing demolition and regeneration of housing stock in Inverclyde in the wake of stock transfer, and subsequent government investment in the area.

5.0 PROPOSALS

- 5.1 The Council and partner agencies active within the Homelessness Strategy Steering Group continue to pursue outstanding issues contained within the improvement plan to ensure that all 8 key recommendations are effectively and conclusively addressed within the 2 year timescale implemented by the SHR.
- 5.2 The Council continues to actively engage with partners in the RSL sector in Inverclyde to ensure that the housing needs of homeless households are given due priority within the RSLs individual letting plans, and that these needs are firmly reflected within the Council's Strategic Housing Investment Programme (SHIP).
- 5.3 Progress on the improvement plan continues to be regularly monitored, and that the Council takes all available steps to ensure that the rights of homeless households are upheld and achieved in line with the Council's objectives in mainstreaming equalities.
- 5.4 The final report on the Improvement Plan will be submitted to members of the Health & Social Care Committee for approval prior to submission to SHR in August 2010.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Legal: There are no direct legislative implications other than our duty to respond to the inspection process and to be available for other inspections. The delivery of the homelessness service is provided under statute.
- 6.2 Finance: The progress report in itself does not identify any specific financial commitment. Any proposed changes to staffing structures necessary to achieve the outcomes contained in the improvement plan will require further approval from Corporate Management Team and subsequently Health & Social Care Committee with assistance from Corporate Finance. All other identified impacts on the service will be maintained within existing budgets.

- 6.3 Human Resources: As noted above, issues contained within the Improvement Plan which have staffing implications have been discussed with Organisational Development and Human Resources, and will inform reporting arrangements via CMT and Committee.
- 6.4 Equalities: It is acknowledged that a specific action within the implementation plan is to continue to enhance the existing processes relating to equalities. This is evidenced in the implementation of an equality impact assessment and the involvement of service users in service development. Issues around inclusion and disability can be evidenced as being tackled and developed.

7.0 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The cross-sector Homelessness Strategy Steering Group has been fully consulted on the progress of the improvement plan actions, and discussions have taken place with relevant RSLs at Director level.

8.0 APPENDICES

- 8.1 Appendix One – Improvement Plan Progress Report – September 2009

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	Recommendation	Required action noted on Improvement Plan 2008	Progress to date (September 2009)	Further Action Required	Lead Officer
1	Source more permanent accommodation to prevent homeless people waiting lengthy times for houses.	<p>1. Letters to be sent to Directors of all local RSLs, highlighting the inspection report findings in this area, current position in respect of permanent accommodation offers, and future expectations of joint working in this area.</p> <p>2. Numbers of permanent housing offers received in relation to Section 5* referrals to be included in quarterly performance report to Social Work Management and Corporate Management Teams.</p> <p>3. Numbers and trends of permanent housing offers received in relation to Section 5* referrals to be included in half-yearly report on Homelessness Services to the Health & Social Care Committee</p> <p>4. First full annual review on progress to be carried out, report submitted to Social Work Management and Corporate management teams, and copied to Directors of RSLs for comment and required follow up.</p>	<p>1. Completed October 2008.</p> <p>2. Implemented and ongoing.</p> <p>3. Current position still falls short of expected numbers of lets. Issue raised with RSL at both strategic and operational level.</p> <p>4. Completed. Findings presented to meeting with RSL Directors and Corporate Director on 13 August 2009.</p>	<p>None.</p> <p>Quarterly input.</p> <p>Ongoing discussion with RSLs.</p> <p>None.</p>	<p>Head of Social Work Services.</p> <p>Service Manager (Homelessness)</p> <p>Service Manager (Homelessness)</p> <p>Service Manager (Homelessness)</p>

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2	Source more temporary accommodation, in line with current estimates, to continue to reduce the use of Bed and Breakfast establishments.	<p>1. To continue to schedule ongoing increase in temporary furnished units from both RSL and private rented stock to reach target figure of 90 contained within Homelessness Strategy.</p> <p>2. To increase number of temporary accommodation units by a further 12 to facilitate anticipated drop in capacity of units at Inverclyde Centre for the duration of planned Phase 3 refurbishment works.</p>	<p>1. Completed. Target achieved, with one-third of units now provided from Private Sector Leasing Scheme in conjunction With Oak Tree HA.</p> <p>2. Not required. Existing stock proved adequate. Phase 3 works now complete.</p>	<p>None</p> <p>None</p>	<p>Asst. Homelessness Services Manager (Temporary Accommodation)</p> <p>Asst. Homelessness Services Manager (Temporary Accommodation)</p>
3	Further develop the Council's approach to strategic planning for temporary accommodation.	<p>1. Review effectiveness of Temporary Accommodation Strategy to include capacity planning and cross-cutting issues with hospital discharge protocol and de-commissioning of Ravenscraig Hospital in conjunction with Community Mental Health Team.</p> <p>2. Explore options within the Homelessness Strategy for the possible development of supported accommodation for single adults to address issue of repeat homelessness.</p>	<p>1. Review carried out by Sub-Group of Homelessness Strategy Steering Group. Findings and agreed Action Plan included in Interim Homelessness Strategy pending approval.</p> <p>2. Discussions commenced with accommodation providers, several sites under consideration. Anticipated difficulties with future revenue funding.</p>	<p>Implement Action Plan in line with new strategy as/when approved.</p> <p>Explore further option in terms of sources of revenue funding. Ensure any future plans are included in SHIP.</p>	<p>Service Manager (Homelessness)</p> <p>Service Manager (Homelessness)</p>
4	Improve the quality control and consistency in decision making.	1. Establishment of 'one-to-one' casework service via staffing re-structure proposal.	1. Proposal submitted to CMT for consideration.	Await CMT approval prior to implementation.	Service Manager (Homelessness)

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		<p>2. Carry out further homeless assessment training with relevant casework staff.</p> <p>3. Review Quality Assurance check system, and incorporate improvements/additions as necessary.</p> <p>4. Establish dedicated alcohol worker support for Homelessness Services in order clarify and improve decision-making process in cases involving clients with alcohol dependency issues.</p>	<p>2. Training scheduled for late 2009 including Staff Development Day.</p> <p>3. Completed. Implemented January 2009.</p> <p>4. Completed, Homeless Alcohol Detox Team established March 2009 via FSF award.</p>	<p>Deliver training to reflect new procedures in line with proposed staffing re-structure.</p> <p>Ongoing monitoring.</p> <p>None.</p>	<p>Assistant Service Manager (Homelessness)</p> <p>Assistant Service Manager (Homelessness)</p> <p>Service Manager (Homelessness)</p>
5	Implement an improved performance management framework using information collected on services and outcomes to improve homelessness services.	1. Carry out a full review of the performance management framework within Homelessness Services and establish new performance management framework to detail reporting and follow-up arrangements.	1. Review complete. New framework will be available for reporting for 2 nd Quarter 2009/10.	Submit completed framework document for next performance reporting cycle.	Service Manager (Homelessness)/ Assistant Service Manager -SW Strategy Team.

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6	<p>Ensure that equalities are mainstreamed throughout Homelessness Services activities.</p>	<p>1. Develop capacity of the Homelessness Strategy Group by involvement of PAiH to facilitate training and community engagement on equality themes planned, including extending equalities subgroup to support mainstreaming of equalities. PAiH will offer training and work alongside Homelessness Services to plan a development/information day scheduled for early 2009.</p> <p>2. Implement actions identified through impact assessment of Homelessness Strategy. Link to developing capacity and skills as noted above and roll out through partnership approach via Homelessness Strategy Steering Group.</p> <p>3. Develop performance information/ indicators including better analysis of information to inform and improve service delivery support from Social Work Strategy Team</p> <p>4. Support Equality Representative to undertake training and participation in Corporate Initiative (Equality and Diversity Champions Network) to further enhance and embed</p>	<p>1. Completed. Training carried out in conjunction with PAiH** in February 2009.</p> <p>2. Completed. 2007 - 2009 Strategy now expired.</p> <p>3. Completed. New software integrated. Performance measurement framework complete.</p> <p>4. Completed.</p>	<p>Equalities Sub-group to continue as dedicated support to Strategy Steering Group. Carry out analysis of further training requirements of Strategy stakeholders on equalities issues.</p> <p>Repeat exercise for 2009 -2011 strategy when approved.</p> <p>Include performance analysis narrative in completed framework document for next performance reporting cycle.</p> <p>To receive ongoing input from representative at Strategy Steering Group.</p>	<p>Assistant Service Manager -SW Strategy Team.</p> <p>Assistant Service Manager -SW Strategy Team.</p> <p>Service Manager (Homelessness)/ Assistant Service Manager -SW Strategy Team.</p> <p>Assistant Service Manager -SW Strategy Team.</p>
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		<p>equalities within Homelessness Services and throughout the wider partnership through the Homelessness Strategy Steering Group via its Equalities Sub-Group.</p> <p>5. Develop information in various languages and formats to encourage improved access to Homelessness Services.</p>	<p>5. Received completed commissioned research on Advice and Information. Findings and agreed improvements to be included in Action Plan in new Strategy document.</p>	<p>Implement agreed improvements in line with new Strategy development.</p>	<p>Service Manager (Homelessness)</p>
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7	Continue and enhance service user involvement in the design of homelessness services.	<p>1. Service Standards to be finalised and published within the service, following detailed input from IHF.</p> <p>2. Inverclyde Community Care Forum (ICCF) to provide assistance to IHF in developing Service Standards.</p> <p>3. Receive final report from Scottish Churches Housing Action on research carried out on feasibility of 'drop-in' service and report to Homelessness Strategy Steering Group/take required action as appropriate.</p>	<p>1. Service User consultation completed. Service Standards will form part of new Strategy document Action Plan.</p> <p>2. Completed. Also further consultation carried out with existing service-users via SW Strategy Team.</p> <p>3. Completed. Agreed recommendations will form part of new Strategy document Action Plan.</p>	<p>Publish in new strategy document pending approval.</p> <p>None.</p> <p>Publish in new strategy document pending approval.</p>	<p>Service Manager (Homelessness)</p> <p>Service Manager (Homelessness)</p> <p>Service Manager (Homelessness)</p>
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8	Publicise the homelessness service better	<p>1. Seek advice from PAiH** on use of other languages and formats for use on all posters and leaflets. Order and display new posters/leaflets to reflect agreed improvements.</p> <p>2. Update information displayed on Council website in respect of Homelessness Services, and discuss with IT services ways of improving access to WebPages on Homelessness Services.</p> <p>3. To arrange and carry out regular spot-checks on poster displays in public access buildings.</p> <p>4. To receive findings from research carried out by Legal Services Agency on Advice & information strategy, adopt Strategy, and put in place recommendations on the access to, and publication of Homelessness Services in Inverclyde.</p>	<p>1. Consultation complete with PAiH**.</p> <p>2. Some information updated to assist with ease of access to the service (contact numbers etc).</p> <p>3. Checks carried out on ad-hoc basis when staff resources available</p> <p>4. Completed August 2009. Agreed recommendations to form part of new Strategy Action Plan.</p>	<p>New posters/leaflets to be published and will reflect changing practices in line with proposed staffing re-structure.</p> <p>Full web page re-design to be implemented to reflect improvements in service delivery when complete.</p> <p>Incorporate into regular homeless prevention duties for staff when new structure implemented.</p> <p>Publish in new strategy document pending approval.</p>	<p>Service Manager (Homelessness)</p> <p>Service Manager (Homelessness)</p> <p>Assistant Service Manager (Homelessness)</p> <p>Service Manager (Homelessness)</p>
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* Section 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, which refers to statutory responsibilities of RSLs to assist local authorities in discharging duty to applicants under homelessness legislation.

** Positive Action in Housing.