

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 30 November 2010
title: Feedback from Performance Clinic on LPI HS1
submitted by: Chief Executive
principal author: Michelle Haworth – Principal Policy and Performance Officer

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report is to inform members of the outcome of the Performance Clinic looking at LPI HS1.

2 RELEVANCE TO THE COUNCIL'S AMBITIONS AND PRIORITIES:

- Council Ambitions: Monitoring and challenging our performance allows us to
- Community Objectives: ensure that we are both providing excellent services for our community as well as ensuring we meet the Council's
- Corporate Priorities: ambitions and objectives, which together formulate the corporate priorities. Monitoring the performance of our locally
- Other Considerations: provided services provides the key means of assessing how well we are meeting our corporate ambitions and objectives.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 A report to this committee in September 2010 reported performance on an exception basis for quarter one. Members queried the performance and target setting for LPI HS1 – number of empty properties returned in to occupation or demolished – and agreed a performance clinic would be useful.
- 3.2 Clinics are where those who are accountable for a service are asked to report on its performance. They can assess and remedy poor performance by developing an action plan or revising existing plans. At each clinic the accountable person is required to present details of their progress towards to their Director and Committee Chair.
- 3.3 The Performance Clinic was arranged for 9 November 2010. Minutes of the meeting are attached at Appendix A.

4 PROCEEDINGS

- 4.1 A brief explanation of the data collected and analysis of performance for LPI HS1 was provided to the group.
- 4.2 The group decided there was still some merit in continuing to collect and monitor LPI HS1, however, they agreed that a more appropriate indicator should be devised and monitored. A report will be presented to the next Health and Housing Committee outlining the new proposed local indicator.

5 RISK ASSESSMENT

- Resources: None
- Technical, Environmental and Legal: None
- Political: None
- Reputation: None.

Michelle Haworth
Principal Policy and Performance Officer

For further information please ask for Michelle Haworth, extension 4421

PERFORMANCE CLINIC – LPI HS1

Minutes of meeting on 9 November 2010

1. Attendance:

- Chair of O&S and Member Champion for Performance - Cllr Stephen Sutcliffe
- Member of O&S - Cllr David Berryman
- Chair of Health and Housing Committee - Cllr Stuart Hirst
- CEX - Marshal Scott
- Strategic Housing Officer - Rachael Stott
- Forward Planning Manager - Colin Hirst
- Principal Policy and Performance Officer - Michelle Haworth

2. Proceedings***Background Information***

Rachael Stott provided details for the group on the number of empty properties in the borough.

| Status | As at 01/04/2009 | As at 01/04/2010 |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Empty for less than 6 months | 346 | 336 |
| Empty for more than 6 months | 282 | 322 |
| Under renovation | 56 | 49 |
| Owner in a nursing home | 61 | 56 |
| Owner deceased | 77 | 92 |
| Property repossessed | 19 | 13 |
| Property is an unoccupied annex | 10 | 10 |
| TOTAL | 841 | 878 |

It was established that:

- The Strategic Housing section only targets those properties that have been empty for longer than six months ie in 2010/11 they are targeting the 322 empty properties on the list above.
- The total number of empty properties does not fluctuate much long-term – the number of empty properties is not on the increase.

A comparison was made between Ribble Valley and other Pennine Lancashire authorities, looking at the percentage of empty properties recorded.

| Local Authority | % of stock which are long-term empty | % of stock which are empty |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Burnley | 4.34% | 8% |
| Hyndburn | 3.77% | 6.77% |
| Blackburn with Darwen | 2.97% | 3.65% |
| Ribble Valley | 1.3% | 3.59% |
| Rosendale | | 3.3% |
| Pendle | N/A | N/A |

It was recognised that we do not have the same level of empty properties as neighbouring authorities, in deed the problem of empty properties is very different in Ribble Valley to what it is in the rest of Pennine Lancashire.

There are limited options available to the Council to return properties into occupation, but there are some tools available and the most successful of these over the part few years has been the Landlord/Tenant Grants (25 properties since April 2008). We've also used purchase and repair (Adactus) and Compulsary Purchase Orders (1 in Longridge).

7 properties have been returned into occupation this year (2010/11) so far as follows:

- Landlord/Tenant Grants:
 - Chapel Cottage , 94 The Square, Waddington (empty from January 2009 – renovated and occupied April 2010)
 - Flat above 82-86 Lowergate, Clitheroe (empty? – renovated and occupied May 2010)
 - Chapel House, 96 The Square, Waddington (empty November 2009 – renovated and occupied November 2010)
- Long Term Empty
 - 68 Knowsley Road, Wilpshire (empty 2007 – renovated and occupied May 2010)
 - 14 George Street, Clitheroe (empty 2003 and renovated and occupied August 2010)
 - 35 Fairsnape Avenue, Longridge (empty March 2006 – renovated and occupied September 2010)
 - The Grapevine, 87 Lowergate, Clitheroe (empty 2006 – renovated and occupied October 2010)

| 2010/2011 data | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| April – June Qtr1 | July – August Qtr2 | September – December Qtr3 |
| 3 | 2 | 2 |

The Strategic Housing section also maintains a 'Priority Empties' list which is regularly monitored. This list was compiled several years ago following both Housing Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Committee requesting further information in this area. A list of all properties which had been empty for longer than six months was drawn up and circulated to all members. Each member was then asked to identify 'problem'/priority properties in their ward. This formed the 'Priority Empties' list. Originally there were 12 properties on this list which has now been reduced to 5.

Moving Forward

The group discussed the actual performance indicator (LPI HS1) and agreed that although it provides useful information it isn't effective when it comes to setting meaningful targets for Ribble Valley.

The group proposes the following action:

- Rachael Stott to ask the council tax section to re-run the empty properties list to identify all long-term empty properties.
- Properties that have been empty for more than 3 or 4 years to be extracted from this list.
- The agreed list of empty properties is to then be circulated to all councillors (broken down into wards?).
- Ward councillors are to examine the list and firstly they are to review the list and add any properties which they think should be on it. (It was noted that council tax records do not capture all empty properties, for example, some owners pay full council tax on the property and as such it is not classed as empty on the system. Other properties may not have been empty for a long period of time but may still be seen to be a high priority by the community.) Secondly, they are to identify which properties they think are the priorities/biggest problems ie where should the efforts of the Strategic Housing section be targeted.
- This list will then become the revised 'Priority Empties' list which will identify the properties to be targeted in the future.
- A new indicator will be developed based on this information (along the lines of - % of the vacant properties identified on the 'priority empties' list returned in occupation.)
- The 'Priority Empties' list should be regularly reviewed – say every 2 years.

The above points will be raised at Health and Housing Committee on 11 November with a recommendation for a full report to be presented to that Committee in the near future – this report will be seeking approval for the way forward as outlined above. Health and Housing Committee will approve a new indicator and set targets based on this for future performance.