

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO HEALTH & HOUSING COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 20 MARCH 2014
title: HOUSING STRATEGY SERVICE 2013
submitted by: CHIEF EXECUTIVE
principal author: RACHAEL STOTT – HOUSING STRATEGY OFFICER

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To report summarises to the achievements of the strategic housing service over the past 12 months.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities

- Community Objectives – To meet the identified housing needs in the borough.
- Corporate Priorities – To provide efficient services based on identified customer needs.
- Other Considerations – N/A

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The services delivered within strategic housing can be separated into four key functions:

- Housing needs service
- Grant service
- Energy efficiency
- Affordable housing delivery

Housing Needs Service

2.2 Appendix 1 provides an overview of all the cases opened by the housing needs service in the year. The total number of households assisted is 248 and the majority of these are households seeking accommodation followed by loss of accommodation due to relationship breakdowns. The service provides 30 minute interviews throughout the day Monday to Friday.

2.3 Each applicant who seeks advice is interviewed and given verbal and written advice to take away. This initial interview will then open up the case that may then lead to intensive casework with various partner organisations or may require only minimal intervention.

2.4 The service also manages admissions to nine temporary accommodation units and eight young person supported accommodation units in the borough. Of the households placed in temporary accommodation, the average length of stay over the year is 16 weeks. This is one of the main issues facing the service, once

households move into temporary accommodation, it is very difficult to secure affordable accommodation to move on to. This is particularly a problem for the young people in supported accommodation.

- 2.5 The tenancy protection scheme continues to be a crucial initiative in supporting the alternative option of utilising the private rented sector for suitable accommodation. There are currently 42 live bonds which equate to 42 households in private rented where the Council have supported entry into the property through a three way agreement between landlord, tenant and the Council. Each bond requires an inspection of the property to approve release of the bond.
- 2.6 The repossession prevention fund has prevented four households from becoming homeless. Of these, two were mortgage arrears and were registered as a charge on the property and two were rent arrears.
- 2.7 In 2013 we also commissioned a youth homeless support scheme, which is a homeless prevention initiative which supports 16-19 year olds facing homelessness. The support provides immediate one to one support, which includes mediation with family that can often result in prevention of homelessness and the young person returning home.
- 2.8 The support provision at the Joiners and The Sidings has been re-commissioned during 2013. Places for People now provide support for both schemes and which allows utilisation of the weekend night cover and pooling of resources. Appendix 2 sets out the management statistics for the year and demonstrates a number of full homeless applications received and decisions made during the period.

Grant Service

- 2.9 In the year 45 disabled facilities grants were approved with the key aim to assist households to remain in their home. The purpose of an adaptation is to modify the environment in order to restore or enable independent living, privacy and dignity. Administering the disabled facilities grant process is a statutory duty for the Council during the year

No	Type of adaptation	Average Cost
2	Paediatric extensions to include bedroom and bathroom extension	£29,000
27	Level access shower facilities	£4,228
2	Through the floor lifts	£4,228
1	Remodelling for wheelchair access	£4,228
1	Specialist bath installed	£4,228
14	Stairlifts	£2,994

- 2.10 With the exception of paediatrics all applicants are means tested and six households were asked to make a contribution. Any schemes of over £10,000 are registered as a charge against the property and repaid on sale of the property.
- 2.11 Another grant administered by the grant service is the landlord/tenant grant. The grant offers 50% towards the cost of renovation of private rented sector properties. The cost of investment is shared between the owner and the Council on the condition that for five years the rent level and the nomination rights are under the Council's control. The maximum grant is £15,000. There was five approved in total – 3 in Clitheroe, 2 in Longridge (Council Tax bands A & B), 3 were two bed

properties and two were one bed properties; and on one of these grant aided properties it was negotiated that a single person room rent would be applied. In each case, the maximum grant was awarded and the owner spent more than RVBC in terms of investment.

- 2.12 In 2013, the Council also offered grants towards boiler replacement for over 65 year olds on an income related benefit, where their boiler was in need of repair or replacement. In total 25 new boilers were installed across the borough.
- 2.13 The service also includes empty property work in total 10 empty properties were returned to occupation through input by the Council. This is an ongoing role of monitoring properties, visiting and liaising between neighbours and owners.

Energy Efficiency

2.14 This area of work involves a wide variety of initiatives. Over 2013 we were fortunate to receive a public health grant award which came to the Council via Lancashire County Council and was awarded by the Department of Health. This grant has allowed us to deliver the following services.

- 480 bags of rock salt delivered to individual households where the householder is over 70 years old.
- Assisted 13 vulnerable households with direct improvements to their energy efficiency.
- Provided 36 emergency warm packs.
- Delivered 60 snow angel kits to communities across the borough.
- Provided home improvement hours to 11 older persons to reduce the risk of falls in their own home.

2.15 There is also a programme underway to provide energy efficiency advice to households to demonstrate heat loss using a thermal imaging camera. There is a registered list of over 150 households and planned programme to visit between 3-4 each day.

2.16 During the year the service has delivered an energy awareness event with over 100 local residents attending. The service has also provided a drop in advice surgery for rural villages considering renewable energy. The service has also attended Age UK events and Clitheroe Health Centre to promote energy efficiency initiatives.

Affordable Housing Development

2.17 Through the year there have been housing needs surveys carried out in Longridge, West Bradford and Osbaldeston. The service has also monitored the sale of Section 106 properties and during that period has approved 11 sales with affordable restrictions. The service organised two housing forums, one homeless forum and a registered provider forum each year.

2.18 Affordable housing development has increased with a total of 69 units being completed. This figure is made up of 50 new build properties and 19 achieved through mortgage rescue, purchase and repair of existing stock delivered through registered providers and the landlord/tenant grant scheme. Appendix 3 sets out the

performance information report for the full year and which details all aspects of the service.

- 2.19 The service also seeks to address specialist housing need. The development of 8 apartments for people with learning disabilities to live independently with care on site has commenced. The first bungalows built to lifetime home standards began construction in 2013. Housing for older persons has been secured on all sites over 30 units.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications

- Resources – No implications identified.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal - No implications identified.
- Political - No implications identified.
- Reputation – No implications identified.
- Equality & Diversity – No implications identified.

5 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The strategic housing service continues to play an essential role in ensuring the current and future housing needs of the borough are met.

RACHAEL STOTT
HOUSING STRATEGY OFFICER

MARSHAL SCOTT
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

For further information please ask for Rachael Stott, extension 4567.

REF: RS/200314/H&H

ADVICE ENQUIRY ANALYSIS - CASES OPENED IN PERIOD

Period 01/01/2013 to 31/12/2013

Ethnicity: All Ethnicities

Officer: All Officers

	Number	Percent
Mortgage Arrears	7	2.8
Rent Arrears	12	4.8
Unsuitable/disrepair	22	8.9
Debt	1	0.4
Relationship breakdown	75	30.2
NTQ	21	8.5
Possession Proceedings	6	2.4
Harrassment/Eviction	12	4.8
Security of Tenure	10	4.0
HB	0	0.0
Council Tax	0	0.0
Seeking Accommodation	107	43.1
Homefinder	0	0.0
Fleeing Violence	7	2.8
Health	6	2.4

	Number	Percent
Discharge from Hospital	3	1.2
Sale of property	8	3.2
Loss of Tied Accommodation	0	0.0
Discharge from Armed Forces	1	0.4
Returning to UK from Abroad	1	0.4
Release from HMP	2	0.8
Affordability	15	6.0
Other	1	0.4

Total number of enquiries in period: 248

Management Statistics for Period 01/01/2013 to 31/12/2013

Applications Processed

	No. of applications received:	19
	No. of decisions made in period:	18
Of which, No. Accepted as	Eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need	6
(Eligible, homeless and in priority need but intentionally s	2
(Eligible, homeless but not in priority need	3
Not Accepted	Eligible but not homeless	4
(Ineligible:	0

Applicants Rehoused

Permanently housed:	
Housed by RVBHR:	
Housed by other:	
Temporarily housed:	

Applicants in Bed and Breakfast

	At start date	At finish date
Accepted as in Priority Need:		
- Emergency:	0	0
- Dependent children:	0	0
- Expectant mothers:	0	0
- 16/17 year olds:	0	0
- 18 to 20 yr old formerly in care	0	0
- Old age:	0	0
- Physical disability	0	0
- Mental illness or handicap:	0	0
- Drug dependency:	0	0
- Alcohol dependency:	0	0
- Classified as former refugee or as asylum seek	0	0
- Other special reason:	0	0
- Having been in care:	0	0
- Having served in HM forces:	0	0
- Having been in custody/on remand:	0	0
- Having fled violence (domestic):	0	0
- Having fled violence (non-domestic):	0	0
Total in B&B accepted as in Priority Need	0	0
Awaiting Decision:	0	0
Not Accepted:	0	0

Applicants

No. of applicants leaving
Average

Pri

COVALENT PERFORMANCE INFORMATION REPORT (1ST APRIL 2012 – 31ST MARCH 2013)

Code	PI Short Name	Q1 2012/13		Q2 2012/13		H1 2012/13		Q3 2012/13		Q4 2012/13		H2 2012/13		2012/13	
		Value	Target	Value	Target	Value	Target	Value	Target	Value	Target	Value	Target	Value	Target
PI RH9 (BV225)	Actions Against Domestic Violence	Not measured for Quarters				Not measured for Half Years		Not measured for Quarters				Not measured for Half Years		54.5%	54.5%
PI RH1 (BV64)	No of private sector vacant dwellings that are returned into occupation or demolished	2	3	2	6	Not measured for Half Years		2	9	4	12	Not measured for Half Years		4	12
PI RH2	Homeless: Number of applications for assistance	41		97		Not measured for Half Years		40		62		Not measured for Half Years		240	
PI RH3	Homeless: Number of applications accepted	4		4		Not measured for Half Years		5		3		Not measured for Half Years		16	
PI RH5 (BV183b)	Length of stay in temporary accommodation (Hostel)	13.00	9.00	27.00	9.00	Not measured for Half Years		15.00	9.00	24.00	9.00	Not measured for Half Years		19.75	9.00
PI RH6 (BV213)	Preventing Homelessness - number of households where homelessness prevented	.81	1.25	1.17	2.50	Not measured for Half Years		1.60	3.75	1.88	5.00	Not measured for Half Years		1.88	5.00
PI RH7 (NI 155)	Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)	Not measured for Quarters				6	33	Not measured for Quarters				69	65	69	65
PI RH8 (NI 156)	Number of households living in temporary accommodation	7		7		Not measured for Half Years		5		5		Not measured for Half Years		5	7