

Cheltenham Borough Council

**Social and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee
4th November 2002**

**Progress on Best Value Review Improvement Plans:
Homelessness**

Report of the Best Value Manager

1 Summary and recommendation

1.1 This report provides members with an update on progress with the improvement plans arising from the best value reviews as at September 2002.

1.2 I therefore recommend that the actions taken to date be noted.

2 Introduction

2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Overview and Scrutiny Social and Community Committee with an update on progress with the implementation of the improvement plans that were agreed and approved as a result of the best value reviews carried out over the last three years. The intention is that this report will not only enable members to consider the progress made to date, but will enable members to have the opportunity to question relevant officers should they wish to do so.

2.2 Please note: if members wish to question officers about specific actions outlined in this report, could they please notify the Best Value Manager before the meeting so that arrangements can be made for the officer to attend.

3 Background

3.1 To date, sixteen best value reviews have been undertaken. The progress achieved against the resulting improvement plans will be considered by the respective overview and scrutiny committees. They are therefore split as follows:

	Completed
Environment	
Engineering	1999/2000 - pilot
Development Services	2000/2001
Operational Services Support	2000/2001
Protecting Our Environment	2002/2003 - due to start

Social and Community

Homelessness	1999/2000 - pilot
Art Gallery and Museum	2000/2001
Managing Council Housing	2001/2002 - update 9/9/02
Crime and Disorder	2001/2002
Funding of External Bodies	2001/2002 - sub-group
Sports Facilities and Development	2001/2002 - not complete

Economy and Business Improvement

Audit and Assurance	1999/2000 - pilot
Complaints & Customer Services	1999/2000 - pilot
Legal Services	1999/2000 - pilot
Property Services	2000/2001
Festivals and Entertainments	2000/2001
Central Support	2000/2001
Effective Communications	2001/2002
Exchequer Services	2002/2003 - due to start
Elections & Civic Administration	2002/2003 - due to start

3.2 Attached to this report (Appendix A) is a table which outlines the recommendations made for the homelessness review, the officer responsible for implementing the recommendations and the target implementation date. Progress against each action is shown in the right-hand column against the respective action. Please note that the titles of many of the responsible officers will have changed under the re-structure.

3.3 It should be noted that the 2002/2003 reviews are shown above for information purposes only. These are due to start and it is unlikely that a report and improvement plan will be available before next year. A further exception includes the review of Managing Council Housing, since the committee received an update on the implementation of the improvement plan at their meeting on the 9th September 2002.

4 Implications

4.1 Financial	The action plan identifies service improvements for which no further financial resources are required at this stage. However, financial implications may arise as a result of the establishment of the ALMO.
4.2 Legal	None in this report
4.3 Personnel	None as a direct result of this report
4.4 Equal opportunities, social justice and anti-poverty	None as a direct result of this report
4.5 Environmental	None as a direct result of this report

Background papers

Best value review reports and supporting papers

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Accountability

Social and Community Overview and Scrutiny
Committee

Homelessness Action Plan

Appendix A

Recommendation	Responsible Officer	Target Date	Present Position
A needs and requirements study must be undertaken in order to determine accurate and comprehensive information relating to homelessness people, including accurate recording of all casework.	Head of Housing Strategy	April 2000	This has been carried out. Preliminary results are available and were reported in the Housing Strategy and at the Housing Conference, and a briefing was held for Housing and Planning Chairs and Officers.
CBC is to establish a forum to ensure that : there is effective exchange of information about homelessness cases between agencies; and that a clear shared policy exists to enable CBC and the partner agencies to complement each other's activities.	Housing Manager/ Head of Housing Strategy	April 2000 Revised: Jul 2003	There have been difficulties in co-ordinating this development with social services, and therefore this recommendation has only been developed in one key area: the young person's forum. This deals with homelessness and receives voluntary sector funding. The Homelessness Act 2002 will enable this good practice to be rolled out to other groups.
Performance related funding protocols will be established with agencies, based upon clear and concise performance targets (subject to further On-going discussion).	Housing Manager	On-going	All seven Gloucestershire Authorities (including the County Council) have now agreed a joint funding protocol for the agencies they support. Clear measurable targets have also been included in the protocol.
An exit poll must be carried out with all clients in both CBC and other agencies to provide feedback about service quality	Housing Manager	February 2000	Exit polls have been carried out on a sample of cases. In most cases people wanted direct access to a home, or advice.
A review of the full range of options for housing the homeless will be, undertaken, once the extent of the client base is established.	Head of Housing Strategy	2000/2001	Options are outlined in the Housing Strategy. The intention is that there should be a move away from B&B towards social housing.

Recommendation	Responsible Officer	Target Date	Present Position
		Jul 2003	The full review is being undertaken as a statutory requirement of the Homelessness Act 2002. The results of which will be published by July 2003.
Homelessness prevention initiatives will be developed in conjunction with other agencies.	Housing Manager	On-going	<p>A number of initiatives have been introduced including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot pathway scheme for care leavers Private sector bond scheme Outreach work in schools Supported young parents scheme (see Special Needs Housing Strategy) <p>The key initiative here is the establishment of tenancy outreach workers, who monitor new tenants to try and reduce turnover. A new special needs team was also established in May 2001, which includes joint working with health and social services to provide extra support. (It also provides services to older people).</p> <p>There is also a local forum dealing with domestic violence, and through Safer Estates we take out injunctions against the perpetrators of domestic violence, rather than treat the victim as homeless.</p>
The awareness and use of life skills training courses will be increased.	Housing Manager	On-going	A number of tenants have now been through this training. However, much of the work of the outreach workers is to provide new tenants with the basic skills they need to cope in keeping a tenancy.
Current service level agreements with agencies will	Head of	December	Such targets are in the funding protocol. See

Recommendation	Responsible Officer	Target Date	Present Position
be revised, in order to provide clear measurable targets which can form part of performance protocols.	Housing Strategy	1999	comments above.
A more proactive support approach to landlords and landlords will be adopted - including regular contact.	Housing Manager	On-going	There is a named contact officer for landlords and landlords. They also receive a daily phone call - partly to find out whether there are vacancies, but also to see if there are any problems.
<p>Key Performance Indicators will be established in addition to Citizens Charter.</p> <p>Performance Indicators and systems for measuring them will be established.</p> <p>The KPI's will include :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the number of cases of homelessness prevented by area housing intervention (the aim being to improve on this); the total number of new tenancies sustained for more than six months and the proportion within this that were previously homeless households. 	Housing Manager	October 1999	<p>The number of prevented homelessness cases is being monitored using the KPIs drawn up.</p> <p>Process maps have also been drawn up and performance times will be set for each stage in the process.</p> <p>These KPIs and the development of local PIs will be included in the ALMO contracting process.</p>