

# **SOCIAL SERVICES, HEALTH AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**21 JANUARY 2016**

## **REPORT OF THE HEAD OF BUSINESS STRATEGY, COMMISSIONING AND PUBLIC PROTECTION – A. Thomas**

### **SECTION C: MATTER FOR MONITORING**

**WARDS AFFECTED: ALL**

#### **REPORT TITLE**

#### **HOUSING OPTIONS SERVICE REPORT CARD - 2015/16**

##### **Purpose of Report**

To provide Members with the information they require to scrutinise the performance of the Housing Options Service and in so doing discharge their functions in relation to performance management.

##### **Background**

The Council's Performance Management Framework requires service managers to produce service report cards.

##### **Report Card**

The Housing Options Service Report Card - a copy of which is attached at Appendix 1 - demonstrates what is being achieved for the resources invested in the service area from the perspective of customers, staff, internal processes and finance.

This provides a holistic view of service performance and is the means by which the service translates its vision and strategies into action by facilitating a culture of continuous improvement.

The Service is thus enabled to prioritise and target activity as workloads on the team have increased and yet resources reduced by focussing attention on essential tasks and so achieve optimal value for money.

The Report Card provides members with details of the services provided by the team, a review of performance thus far during 2015-16 and the focus of its work for 2016-17.

##### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1: Housing Options Service Report Card - 2015/16

##### **List of Background Papers:**

None

**Officer Reporting:**

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## APPENDIX 1: HOUSING OPTIONS SERVICE REPORT CARD - April to December 2015

### Brief description of the service

The Housing Options Service is responsible for discharging the Council's statutory homelessness duties under Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 which was implemented in April 2015.

The service currently has 32.5 substantive FTE staff but an overall net Housing General Fund budget of less than £160k because of the optimal use made of Welsh Government Homelessness and Supporting People specific grant allocations and the income generated by the Social Lettings Agency managed within the Service.

The Service continues to deal with over 2,000 approaches annually and all those who approach are provided with appropriate information, advice and assistance under the Council's ongoing universal duty to do so.

The number of homeless applicants to whom the Council owes a final duty to secure accommodation and provide support because they are in priority need by virtue of their vulnerability remains constant at around 10% of those who approach.

This accommodation and support currently continues to be directly provided by the Service, using a range of 24-hour supported Council owned and leased Housing Association temporary accommodation.

Since April 2015, however, the Council has significant additional duties to around 50% of those who approach in taking all reasonable steps to help prevent or relieve their homelessness and this early preventative intervention is developing into the necessary focus of most activity within the Service.

In this context, the Service's key Business Plan priorities for 2015/16 are:-

- Continue to prevent homelessness in an increasing proportion of cases;
- continue to increase access to suitable private rented sector tenancies;
- develop and implement Single Point of Access arrangements for housing related support services;
- develop and implement revised Review and Appeal procedures;
- ensure all public-facing staff receive training on the new homelessness legislation and all relevant aspects of ongoing Welfare Reform; and
- review the Housing Options Service structure to consider available opportunities to contribute to 2016/17 FFP savings targets.

**Service Performance**  
**Progress on our key priorities between April and December 2015**

- Service performance is currently measured against the following two indicators, which are Corporate Improvement plan measures reported in the **Prosperity for All** Improvement Objective. These measures are also reported to Scrutiny Committee (Policy & Resources and Social Services Health & Housing) on a quarterly basis:
  - I. **HHA/013** (Service Improvement Dataset)  
 The percentage of all potentially homeless households for whom homelessness was prevented for at least 6 months.
  - II. **HOS/001** (Local)  
 The number of private rented tenancies made available by the Housing Options Service that were suitable and likely to be available for at least 6 months.

<b>Housing - Homelessness and Housing Advice QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE (CUMULATIVE)</b>					
<b>PI Reference</b>	<b>Actual 2013/14</b>	<b>Actual 2014/15</b>	<b>Wales 2014/15</b>	<b>Quarter 3 2014/15</b>	<b>Quarter 3 2015/16</b>
<b>HHA/013</b>	95.2%	95.5%	65.4% (i)	<b>94.3%</b>	<b>92.1% (ii)</b>
(i) - A Wales Audit Office report published in 2013 identified a wide variation in how local authorities interpret guidance for indicator HHA/013 relating to homelessness prevention, resulting in a wide variation of performance reported. Due to these variations, the Welsh Government Statistical Release has advised in the publication of this data that the indicator should not be compared across local authority boundaries; however comparisons can be made over time within individual local authorities. This measure is no longer a statutory indicator. (ii) - Data excludes the period 1 <sup>st</sup> -26 <sup>th</sup> April 2015 because it was not possible to amalgamate data relating to the homelessness legislation prevailing at this time with that relating to the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 (which was collected from 27 <sup>th</sup> April 2015.					
<b>HOS/001</b>	N/a New	N/a New		<b>N/A New</b>	<b>66</b>

At 66, performance at the end of quarter 3 for HOS/001 has already exceeded the annual cumulative target of 50 private rented tenancies made available by the service.

Performance for HHA/013 has deteriorated slightly on last year at 92.1% but the service remains confident of achieving the cumulative year-end target of 92%.

- Our other key Priorities

- Single Point of Access development work is underway and arrangements will be in place before April 2016.
- Revised Review & Appeal procedures have been successfully implemented.
- Most training has been delivered and all outstanding sessions are being timetabled by Training & Development colleagues.
- A Management of Change exercise is currently underway which will successfully deliver the savings target for the service without any compulsory redundancies.

## Financial

- Since April 2013 the overall net service budget has reduced by around 40%.
- As at the end of December there was a projected potential current year-end overspend of nearly £40k but this is inclusive of an originally unbudgeted vacancy factor and recognised pressure in respect of over-provision for additional rental income generation.
- The service has no FFP savings to be delivered this year but a £210K budget saving has been identified in the draft FFP for next year (2016/17).

## Employee/Staffing

- Staff morale is anecdotally perceived to currently be generally positive.
- The staff team has undergone two prior Management of Change exercises in the last 3 years (i.e. 2012 to 2015) during which they have been generally flexible and accommodating.
- There is a current junior staff shortage within the accommodation and support arm of the service which is proving problematic and is necessitating the implementing of temporary changes to out-of-hours working and service delivery patterns and practices. These will however have no impact on the service received by those in emergency housing need out-of-hours.
- The Service has not conducted a staff satisfaction survey for some considerable time but one will be undertaken as soon as is practicable following the roll-out of the corporate standard currently being piloted.
- All staff will have received a 2015/16 EDR by the end of March 2016.
- Comparative sickness absence data for the service is available for the period 1 April to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2015 as follows:-

	<b>Quarter 2 2014/15</b>	<b>Quarter 2 2015/16</b>
FTE Days Lost	154	19
Average FTE Employees	31.8	31.7
<b>Average FTE Days lost per Employee</b>		
<b>Housing Options</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>0.6</b>
<b>Social Services Health and Housing</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>5.1</b>
<b>Council</b>	<b>9.4</b>	<b>4.2</b>

## Customer

- Until recently, efforts were made to contact all former users of the service monthly and conduct a brief satisfaction questionnaire exercise. This result of this exercise was consistently that over 90% of respondents were satisfied with the service they received. This exercise has had to be temporarily discontinued due to a staff vacancy.
- Negotiations are underway with a WG-funded Shelter Cymru Project that will facilitate former users of homelessness services conducting a further such one-off exercise on our behalf at no expense. An additional outcome of this exercise will be an assessment of how former users of our service would prefer to be involved in service planning and development on an ongoing basis.
- The service received 2 complaints, 1 of which was successfully resolved at Stage 1 and the other currently continues to be dealt with at Stage 2. This compares with 1 complaint successfully resolved at Stage 1 during the same period of 2014.