

# **NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH & HOUSING CABINET BOARD**

**13 December 2016**

### **REPORT OF THE HEAD OF COMMISSIONING AND SUPPORT SERVICES – A. THOMAS**

#### **Matter for Information**

**Wards Affected:** All

#### **HOUSING OPTIONS SERVICE REPORT CARD - 2016/17**

##### **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 thereby 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 2016-17, and the focus of its work for 2017-18.

##### **Appendix 1:**

Housing Options Service Report Card - 2016/17

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## Appendix 1

### Housing Options Service Report Card - 2016/17 (Progress on our key priorities between April and November 2016)

#### 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.

The service currently has 27 but an overall net Housing General Fund budget of less than £180k because of the optimal use made of Welsh Government (WG) Homelessness and Supporting People specific grant allocations and the income generated by the Social Lettings Agency managed within the Service.

During 2015/16, the Service was contacted by over 2,000 households, all of whom were provided with appropriate information, advice and assistance under the Council's universal duty to do so.

Of these nearly 1,000 of the households were owed further duties to take all reasonable steps to help prevent or relieve their homelessness and this early preventative intervention was the ongoing focus of most activity within the Service.

The number of homeless households to whom the Council ended up owing a final duty to secure accommodation and provide support was 71.

This accommodation and support was directly provided by the Service's in-house support staff team, using 21 units of leased Housing Association temporary accommodation.

The Service's key Business Plan priorities continue to be to:-

- Prevent and relieve homelessness in an increasing proportion of cases;
- Increase access to suitable private rented sector tenancies;
- Implement Single Point of Access arrangements for housing related support services;
- Further develop the multi-disciplinary/agency hub of homelessness prevention and relief services; and
- Review the Service structure to consider available opportunities to contribute to FFP savings targets.

### Service Performance

Service performance is currently measured against the following two indicators, which are Corporate Improvement Plan measures reported under 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:

HHA/013 (Service Improvement Dataset)

The percentage of all potentially homeless households for whom homelessness was prevented for at least 6 months.

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</b>					
<b>QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE (CUMULATIVE)</b>					
Reference	Actual 2014/15	Actual 2015/16 (i)	Wales 2015/16 (i)	Quarter 2 2015/16 (i)	Quarter 2 2016/17
<b>HHA/013</b>	95.5%	92%	(ii)	94%	99%
(i) - 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). (ii) - 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.					
<b>HOS/001</b>	N/a	92		33	34

At 34, performance at the end of quarter 2 for HOS/001 has marginally improved on performance during the same period in 2015/16.

At 99%, performance at the end of quarter 2 for HHA/013 has significantly improved on performance during the same period in 2015/16.

**Service Performance contd.**

The National homelessness dataset developed since the implementation of Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 is now established and the homelessness prevention measure included in this dataset is a Wellbeing of Future Generations National Measure.

Performance against this and the other key measures included in the dataset will be additionally be reported on in future and performance during 2015/16 against these measures is set out below:

<b>HOMELESSNESS SERVICE</b>	<b>Wales</b>	<b>NPT</b>
<b>Prevention - HOS/002</b>		
The % of those households assessed as being eligible for assistance and threatened with homelessness within 56 days for which homelessness was successfully prevented for at least 6 months (Wellbeing of Future Generations National Indicator).	64.5	52.2
<b>Relief - HOS/003</b>		
The % of those households assessed as being eligible for assistance, homeless and owed a duty to help to secure accommodation for which homelessness was relieved and they were helped to secure accommodation that was suitable and likely to be available for at least 6 months.	45.1	45.7
<b>Final Duty - HOS/004</b>		
The % of those households accepted as being eligible, unintentionally homeless, in priority need and owed a duty for accommodation to be secured for which the duty was positively discharged through the acceptance of an offer of accommodation that was suitable and likely to be available for at least 6 months	78.7	54.5

**NOTE:**

The WG have heavily caveated the pan-Wales comparative validity of this first statistical release and so no effort has been made to justify any unfavourable variances.

**Service Performance contd.**

The service will therefore discontinue reporting on HHA/013, from this point forward (other than for Corporate Improvement Plan purposes, if required), and the revised suite of local Housing Options Service measures will be as follows:

**HOS/001**

The number of private rented tenancies made available.

**HOS/002**

The % of households for which homelessness was successfully prevented.

**HOS/003**

The % of households for which homelessness was successfully relieved.

**HOS/004**

The % of those households for which a final homelessness duty was successfully discharged.

**HOS/005**

The overall % of successful outcomes for assisted households.

Cumulative performance against these measures, as at 30 September 2016, is detailed overleaf.

**Service Performance contd.**

<b>Housing - Homelessness</b>					
<b>2016/17 QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE (CUMULATIVE)</b>					
<b>Reference</b>	<b>Actual 2014/15</b>	<b>Actual 2015/16</b>	<b>Wales 2015/16</b>	<b>Quarter 2 2015/16</b>	<b>Quarter 2 2016/17</b>
HOS/001	N/A	92	N/A	33	34
HOS/002	N/A	52.2%	64.5%	19.4%	73.3%
HOS/003	N/A	45.7%	45.1%	24.1%	36.4%
HOS/004	N/A	54.5%	78.7%	100%	43.3%
HOS/005	N/A	N/K	N/K	23.1%	47.8%

**Note:**

2016/17 performance has improved to varying degrees on 2015/16, in respect of all measures except HOS/004.

HOS/004 - the level of unsuccessful discharge of final homelessness duty is being monitored but it should be noted that this only represents 17 of the more than 1,000 households that approached the Service during the period.

**Our other key Priorities**

- The phased roll-out of Single Point of Access arrangements for Supporting People funded services will begin in early 2017/18.
- A Social Worker specialising in younger persons' accommodation issues will be recruited to the Service shortly and arrangements for priority access to homelessness preventative Welfare Rights Service intervention will be put in place in early 2017/18; and
- A Service re-structure will be implemented in early 2017/18 which will significantly contribute to the successful delivery of the £330k 2017/18 FFP savings target for the service, without any necessary compulsory redundancies.

### Financial

- As at the end of October 2016, there was a projected 2016/17 year-end overspend of approx. £233k but this was inclusive of an acknowledged pressure in respect of over-provision for hostel rental income of approx. £165k;
- The service is nevertheless on target to successfully deliver on its £210k FFP savings target for 2016/17 and contribute significantly to the delivery of the £330k 2017/18 target for the wider Homelessness & Supporting People Service area.

### Employee/Staffing

- A Management of Change exercise is to begin in early 2017, in order to deliver on the Service's required contribution to the Directorate's FFP savings target and in preparation for this, staff have been generally flexible and accommodating in piloting experimental changes to service delivery;
- There is an ongoing difficulty in recruiting junior staff to 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 are having no impact on the service received to those in emergency housing need out-of-hours;
- Comparative sickness absence data for the period 1 April to 30 September 2016 as follows:-

Measure	2014-15 Actual (Full Year)	2015-16 Actual (Full Year)	2015-16 Qtr. 2 (cumulative)	2016-17 Qtr. 2 (cumulative)
<b>Corporate Measure (CM04): Average FTE (full time equivalent) working days lost due to sickness absence</b>				
<b>Housing Options</b>	7.5 days	8.9 days	0.6 days	2.2 days
Total Service FTE days lost in the period	244	277	19	63
<b>SSH&amp;H Directorate</b>	11.7 days	13.0 days	5.1 days	6.7 days
<b>Council</b>	9.4 Days	9.7 Days	4.2 Days	4.6 Days



## Customer

In May 2016 the Shelter Cymru Take Notice Project was engaged to undertake a peer research survey of former user of the Service and a summary of their findings is set out below:

- Overall the feedback shows broadly positive responses from the people who took part in the survey with regards the initial presentation to the council.
- respondents were generally happy that they were received by staff who were polite, helpful and respectful;
- respondents were also happy with the support they were given to get in touch with other agencies;
- the three main areas in which respondents to the questionnaire were less positive were:
  - The levels of privacy afforded when presenting and discussing their housing situation;
  - on-going communication received about their case and the extent to which they felt that they were kept up to date about the progress of their applications and informed about decisions reached; and
  - the provision of information about service user involvement initiatives

Steps have taken to address the first two issues above and the Take Notice Project is going to be further engaged to progress the third.

Of most concern, on face value, is that less than half the respondents said that their housing situation has improved as a result of approaching the Council for assistance. However, many of those cited having to “help themselves” to some extent - eg by sourcing private rented accommodation for themselves - as the reason for holding this opinion and such is fundamental to the joint personal housing planning ethos of the Welsh homelessness legislation.