

THE EXECUTIVE

11 MARCH 2003

JOINT REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF HOUSING & HEALTH & DIRECTOR OF LEISURE & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

COUNCIL'S HOUSING STRATEGY, HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUSINESS PLAN 2003/06, CAPITAL STRATEGY & ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN	FOR DECISION	
<p><i>This report concerns corporate strategies of the Council.</i></p> <p><u>Summary</u></p> <p>This report informs the Executive of the evaluations made by the Government Office for London (GoL) of the Council's:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Housing Strategy• Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan• Asset Management Plan (AMP)• Capital Strategy <p>The report highlights the advances made by the Council – the Comprehensive Performance Assessment gave a good rating (scoring 3 out of 4) for the Housing Strategy and HRA Business Plan. The report then sets out the pointers given by GoL for a further submission to be made so that a “fit for purpose” assessment will be achieved for both strategies.</p> <p><u>Recommendation</u></p> <p>The Executive is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Support a further submission to GoL to seek fit for purpose assessments for the Council's Housing Strategy and HRA Business Plan; and2. Note the good assessment for the Capital Strategy and satisfactory for the Asset Management Plan and support the actions being undertaken to raise this assessment for 2003. <p><u>Reason</u></p> <p>This will raise GoL's assessment of the Council and will also contribute to raising the Council's future Comprehensive Performance Assessment.</p>		
Contact: Ken Jones	Interim Head of Housing Strategy	Tel: 020 8227 5703 Fax: 020 8227 5799 Minicom: 020 8227 5755 Email: ken.jones@lbbd.gov.uk
Jim Mack	Head of Asset Strategy & Development	Tel: 020 8227 3532 Fax: 020 8227 3231

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council's Housing Strategy 2 years ago was assessed by GoL as being below average. Last year the assessment basis was changed and the categories were above average, average and below average. The Housing Strategy was again considered by GoL to be below average. The Balanced Scorecard for Housing Strategy Division included a target to raise our rating - achievement of fit for purpose will meet this objective.
- 1.2 The Council's Asset Management Plan (AMP) has been assessed by GoL as being satisfactory for both this year and last.

2. Current position

- 2.1 The assessments by GoL of the Housing Strategy 2003/06 and the HRA Business Plan were recently confirmed (APPENDIX A). This shows that for the Council's Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) both rated good, scoring 3 out of a maximum of 4. GoL also now assess both documents in terms of being fit for purpose. Their view is that the Strategy and Business Plan are "moving close to being fit for purpose" and that relatively little work is needed to respond to the few areas of outstanding concern. This represents a significant improvement which reflects the advances made, indeed GoL state that Barking & Dagenham is one of the most improved of all London Boroughs.
- 2.2 It is worth noting that just 10% of English Housing Authorities were given a fit for purpose rating and no other London Borough was included in that number.
- 2.3 The letter from GoL makes clear that the documents and plans are considered to be fully fit in almost all areas. However, reference is made to some specific issues, which require attention. Due to the closeness of achieving the objective, GoL have invited the Council to make a further submission by the end of March 2003 in order that a reassessment might be made.
- 2.4 The Capital Strategy was assessed as good, the highest rating. Again GoL noted the improvement made in this document on last year. There are 2 areas in which it is suggested that improvement can be made – these issues will be noted for future inclusion.
- 2.5 The GoL assessment on the AMP was that all of the primary requirements of the plan were met. However of the 26 secondary requirements the Council met only 12 and guidance has been given as to areas where improvements should be made. These include:-
 - a) demonstration of examples of shared use and integration of property services. In particular the Council can point to the joint working of the Council and Primary Care Trust and the property and service initiatives currently being undertaken.

- b) giving examples of the consultation with stakeholders and how their views have influenced property use and service performance. The Customer First Review would be a good example of this consultation led work.
- c) GoL will wish to see what progress we have made with our property information systems currently being set up.
- d) the Council needs to show a more defined link between surveys done and the development of performance measurement and monitoring.
- e) GoL will wish to see an authority wide strategy emerging from the setting up of the new Asset Management and Development Division. The strategy will need to demonstrate how property supports the provision of services and how the Council will analyse the gaps in provision and work to narrow them.

2.6 The Council must submit a further AMP by 31st July.

3. Proposal and justification

3.1 It is proposed that the issues highlighted in the GoL letter where it is felt that the Housing Strategy and HRA Business Plan were inadequate, be addressed in a further submission. In order to do so there will be close working with TMT.

3.2 There is confidence that action has been taken on these matters so that fit for purpose assessments should be achieved for both. This will be of benefit to the Council and community in a number of ways:-

- enhancement to the Council's reputation with Central Government and other agencies
- possibility of higher Housing Investment Programme allocations and other resource opportunities
- positive impact on the Council's future CPA.

3.3 An AMP action plan has been agreed to address GoL's concerns, as highlighted in 2.5. This will lead to a submission in July 2003 capable of achieving a good assessment. Contact has been maintained with GoL so that they are aware of the work invested and priority accorded to Asset Management Planning. It is considered that the "Framework for Corporate Asset Management" now in place which includes the Asset Utilisation Group, Corporate Asset Forum and Corporate Asset Management Group will address all highlighted areas.

Background papers used in the preparation of this report:

- Letter from Government Office for London 20/1/03