

**To the Chair and Members of the
AUDIT COMMITTEE**

**AUDIT COMMISSION – REVIEW OF STRATEGIC HOUSING - PROGRESS ON
RECOMMENDATIONS**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report provides an update on the implementation of the recommendations arising from the review of Strategic Housing completed by the Council's external auditors, the Audit Commission, during 2010 and reported at the January 2011 Audit Committee.
2. The report informs members of the near completion of all recommendations arising from the report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3. The Audit Committee is asked to note the progress made in implementing the recommendations arising from the above review and to note that these improvements are in addition to the positive opinion provided by the external auditor on the Strategic Housing and its contribution to the Borough Strategy.

BACKGROUND

- 4 Summary of progress for Strategic Housing recommendations since last update:
 - Improve telephone access to customers – improvements have been made to date however the new 'Golden Number' has not been introduced due to current resource issues in Customer Services. The Housing Options Service has successfully transferred in to the one stop shop and has received excellent performance feedback within the first weeks of opening.
 - Improve Value for Money – progress has been made through benchmarking, redirecting resources from responsive to planned repairs and maintenance, and 'systems thinking' reviews of services; Both Private Sector Housing and the Gypsy / Traveller Liaison Service have been reviewed and we are now in the process of implementing the recommendations, in line with the review of the overall service of Strategic Housing. Additionally by invitation only, we attend a newly configured Sounding Board, which includes local authorities in the North of England to share good practice, look at pressure points and looking at Housing options service going forward.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED & RECOMMENDED OPTION

5. All recommendations were accepted with a timetable agreed for their implementation. All recommendations are on track to be implemented by the end of March 2013.

IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OBJECTIVES

6. The strength of Internal Audit impacts upon the Council's internal control environment and judgements about internal control, for example as part of the Council's Annual Governance Statement.

RISKS & ASSUMPTIONS

7. Failure to deliver an effective internal audit would significantly weaken the Council's internal control arrangements and increase the risk of erroneous and / or irregular activities.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8. There are no specific legal implications associated with this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9. There are no specific financial implications associated with this report.

CONSULTATION

10. This report consults with members of the Audit Committee over the ongoing work of the Committee.
11. This report has no specific significant implications in terms of the following:

Procurement	N/A	Crime & Disorder	N/A
Human Resources	N/A	Human Rights & Equalities	N/A
Buildings, Land and Occupiers	N/A	Environment & Sustainability	N/A
ICT	N/A	Capital Programme	N/A

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