

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

STRATEGIC HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD

08 November 2010

**Joint Report of the Director of Health and Housing and Cabinet Member for
Housing**

Part 1- Public

**Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Non-Key Decision (Decision may be taken
by the Cabinet Member)**

1 HOUSING STRATEGY 2009-2012: ACTION PLAN PROGRESS AND REVIEW

Summary

This report summarises progress made towards achieving the objectives set out in the Housing Strategy Action Plan, which was approved by Members in November 2009. It also presents for approval a reviewed action plan for the twelve month period to October 2011.

1.1 Progress Update

1.1.1 Progress against each objective in the action plan is summarised at **[Annex 1]**.

1.1.2 Of particular significance are the following:

- a further 260 new affordable homes were delivered in the borough during 2009-10 (objective one);
- the draft Local Investment Plan (LIP) was submitted to the HCA in October 2010. This is the subject of a separate report to this Board (objective 13);
- the three West Kent authorities have appointed West Kent Consulting to review and develop the *2011 West Kent Homelessness Strategy*. The review is underway and will be the subject of a report to the Board in February 2011 (objective 14);
- the reduction in the number of households in temporary accommodation. This key Government target was achieved in July 2009, well in advance of the April 2010 deadline, and numbers are continuing to reduce steadily (objective 23);
- with Russet Homes, the development of a system to manage and monitor the processing and funding of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) to their tenants (see separate report on this agenda); and

- nine (long term) empty homes brought back into use during 2009-10.

1.2 Review of Action Plan

- 1.2.1 Members will recall that the original action plan that was approved in November 2009 included a commitment to review individual objectives and targets on an annual basis.
- 1.2.2 A copy of the reviewed action plan is attached at **[Annex 2]**. This has also been informed by an evaluation of the Housing Service against four of the Audit Commission's Key Lines of Enquiry, which is the subject of a separate report to this Board.

1.3 Legal Implications

- 1.3.1 The Housing Strategy is a statutory requirement under section 7 of the *Local Government Act 2003*.

1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.4.1 The resources for some objectives in the draft action plan have yet to be secured. Some are subject to approval by the HCA through the adoption of the Local Investment Plan and local Investment Agreement.

1.5 Risk Assessment

- 1.5.1 Failure to develop an effective and forward-looking housing strategy and action plan will compromise the Council's ability to meet identified housing need and to attract the necessary funding required for that purpose.

1.6 Equality Impact Assessment

- 1.6.1 See 'Screening for equality impacts' table at end of report

1.7 Recommendations

- 1.7.1 **CABINET is RECOMMENDED to APPROVE** the reviewed Housing Strategy Action Plan attached at **[Annex 2]**.

The Director of Health and Housing confirms that the proposals contained in the recommendation(s), if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

Background papers:

contact: Janet Walton

Housing Strategy 2009-2012: Action Plan
(November 2010)

John Batty
Director of Health and Housing

Councillor Jill Anderson
Cabinet Member for Housing

| Screening for equality impacts: | | |
|--|---------------|--|
| Question | Answer | Explanation |
| a. Has an equality impact assessment on the policy (to which the activity relates) already been carried out? | No | |
| b. Is the decision in line with the policy? | Yes | |
| Note: <i>If the answer is 'no' to either of the above questions, then the activity must be 'screened' for equality impacts using the questions below.</i> | | |
| c. Does the activity have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community? | Yes | There is some potential for discrimination, e.g. in the enforcement of private sector standards because equal opportunities data is not collected from the customer. This will be addressed in the forthcoming year – see objective 37 in the Action Plan for November 2010 – October 2011. Any other potential will be identified during the equality impact assessments that are scheduled for the housing service during 2011-13. |
| d. Does the activity make a positive contribution to promoting equality? | Yes | All groups have equal access to the housing service. |
| Note: <i>If the answer is 'yes' to any of the above questions, then a full equality impact assessment is required.</i> | | |

| When a full equality impact assessment is required: | |
|---|---|
| Note: <i>If this is an interim report seeking clarification or guidance, then this section should be deleted and details included in the main report; if a final report, then questions e and f below should be filled in.</i> | |
| Question | Answer |
| e. Please provide a summary of the impacts | There is potentially an adverse impact on some groups (e.g. large families and gypsies and travellers due to limited choice of accommodation). The extent to which this may be the case will be identified during the full equality impact assessments scheduled for 2011-13. |
| f. What weight do the equality impacts have with regard to other factors relating to the decision? | Absence of adequate funding. Every effort is made to maximise funding, however this is a limited resource. |