
REPORT TO:	Community Scrutiny Committee	AGENDA ITEM:	6
DATE OF MEETING:	25 September 2006	CATEGORY:	DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	Chair of Community Scrutiny Committee		
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	Councillor Ron Lane	DOC:	
SUBJECT:	Arrangements for Improving Homelessness Services - BVPI183 (a) and BVPI183(b)	REF:	
WARD (S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE:	

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Housing Service investigates how other local authorities approach homelessness issues and how they achieve top quartile performance for BVPI183 (a) [Length of stay in temporary accommodation (bed & breakfast)]

2.0 Purpose of the Report

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to contribute to the arrangements for improving services, in respect of BVPI 183 (a) [Length of stay in temporary accommodation (bed & breakfast)] and BVPI183 (b) – [Length of stay in temporary accommodation (hostel)]
- 2.2 To consider the approach adopted by the Council in respect of homelessness issues

3.0 Setting the Scene

- 3.1 Both BVPI183 (a) and BVPI183 (b) have been identified as priority indicators for the Council. Therefore, a number of general principles identified by the Improvement Panel on the 14 July 2005 will have to be met.
- 3.2 The Best Value Performance Plan (2006) indicated that the outturn performance for BVPI 183(a) in 2004/05 was bottom quartile and this trend has continued into 2005/06. However, it was noted that during the same period, BVPI 183(b) was top quartile and trends reveal continuing improvement during 2005/06
- 3.3 An explanation for the existing performance levels of these two indicators was provided in the Best Value Performance Plan. However, it appears that our plans to achieve top quartile performance for BVPI 183(a) by March 2009 are being addressed and although continuous improvement has been identified in the target setting process

4.0 Consideration by the Community Scrutiny Committee

4.4 These issues have been discussed on two occasions as outlined in the table below.

Date / Minute Reference	Summary of d Discussions undertaken
31 July 06 CYS / 7	Consideration of actions required to achieve the 2006/07 targets for BVPI 183 (a) and BVPI183 (b) A number of questions relating to the Council's approach to homelessness issues identified.
11 Sep 06 CYS / 15	Background report on the reduction and prevention of homelessness provided Council's approach to homelessness clarified.

5.0 Community Scrutiny Committee's Findings

5.1 It was noted from a Housing Service Performance report (dated 31st August 2006) that performance of 3 weeks is currently being achieved in respect of BVPI183 (a), this performance is better than the published target of 4 weeks. With regards to BVPI 183(b), the performance is still top quartile

5.2 There appears to be some positive aspects to this performance level, because the Service has now moved its focus from being 'reactive' to one that aspires to prevention. In response to customer requirements, housing staff, have now been trained to mediate and counsel potential homeless people, by offering a more flexible advisory service.

5.3 In addition, Housing Officers are also able to adopt more flexible solutions to prevent homelessness by supporting or stabilising difficult circumstances

5.4 Housing Officers have indicated that they are confident that the homelessness services they provide will meet the needs of the community, but due to the relative low levels of need, one difficult case has the potential to distort the underlying performance

5.5 This Committee has been reassured that Council's Homelessness Strategy document is currently being reviewed.

6.0 Conclusions

6.1 This Committee are satisfied that the Council is providing a good level of service, but recommends the Service investigates how other local authorities approach homelessness and how they achieve top quartile performance in respect of BVPI183 (a)

6.2 This Committee would like to thank all Officers for their contributions in making this report possible.

7.0 Financial Implications

7.1.1 None directly from this report