
REPORT TO:	HOUSING & COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 7
DATE OF MEETING:	24th APRIL, 2008	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	MARK ALFLAT (Ext. 5712)	DOC: s:\cent_serv\committee reports\housing & community services\24 april 2008\best value review of strategic housing services.doc
SUBJECT:	BEST VALUE REVIEW OF STRATEGIC HOUSING SERVICES	REF
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE: HCS01

1.0 Recommendations

1.1 That Members recommend that Finance & Management Committee at its meeting on the 1st May, 2008 approve a supplementary budget of a maximum of £18,000 to enable the District Council to present its best case to the Audit Commission Inspectors.

2.0 Purpose of Report

2.1 To request that Members approve a supplementary budget of £18,000 to cover the costs associated with the Best Value Review of Strategic Housing Services at South Derbyshire District Council.

3.0 Detail

3.1 The Audit Commission will be inspecting South Derbyshire District Council's Strategic Housing functions week commencing 16th June, 2008.

3.2 The Audit Commission are a Government body that inspect Local Authorities and other semi-public bodies, and reports on the quality of the services being delivered. There is a specialised section within the Audit Commission called the Housing Inspectorate who look into housing issues in Councils and Housing Associations.

3.3 The Audit Commission has decided that it wishes to inspect the Strategic Housing function of South Derbyshire District Council.

- 3.4 The Strategic Housing inspection will look at how the Council has delivered housing generally, and affordable housing specifically, through its own policies and procedures, that include use of its own current stock, land and through Section 106 planning agreements.
- 3.5 The inspection will also look at homelessness, general housing advice and Private Sector housing issues and also includes other areas such as Economic Development.
- 3.6 The inspection will include interviewing Members and clarifying the overall vision for the District.
- 3.7 The Performance Manager post of the Council is currently vacant and there is no spare capacity within Housing to progress further Strategies and improvements required prior to the inspection.
- 3.8 It is therefore proposed to second two members of staff within the Housing Department and backfill their posts for a temporary period. There will be associated costs of setting up Focus Groups, providing brochures and other costs which the District Council has to bear.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 The maximum cost of preparing for the Best Value Review will be £18,000. This compares with a similar sum expended on the Cultural Services Best Value Review. There is currently no budget for this expenditure.

5.0 Corporate Implications

- 5.1 The Local Authority will be judged partly on its Best Value inspection regime and it is important that all efforts are made to gain the maximum assessment rating possible.

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 Additional sources are required to support the Best Value Review of Strategic Housing Services.