REPORT TO:	**COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE**	**AGENDA ITEM:**	**12**
DATE OF MEETING:	**18 JULY 2002**	**CATEGORY: DELEGATED**	
REPORT FROM:	**SANDRA WHILES HEAD OF COMMUNITY SERVICES**	**OPEN**	
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SUBJECT:	**PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION**	**REF:**	
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	**All**	**TERMS OF REFERENCE: CS01**	

1.0 Recommendations

1.1 Members are asked to note the contents of this report, and that performance information will be developed further over the next six months.

1.2 Members are asked to comment on the proposed Housing Briefing document shown at annexe A

2.0 Purpose of Report

2.1 To advise members of the proposed structure for performance monitoring and reporting in the housing service

3.0 Background

3.1 The housing service has not operated a rigorous performance management information system in the past. The proposed performance information framework will enable the council to understand performance during the year and to plan to take any necessary actions in good time, or to reconsider action plans to better direct resources.

4.0 Performance management information

4.1 Local Authorities are required to gather, and publish, details of performance as part of the drive for efficient public services and best value. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), previously DTLR, issues advice and national Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI) annually.

4.2 In addition to these national performance indicators (that are in some cases accompanied by national targets set for 2005), local authorities are encouraged to set and monitor local performance indicators which specifically address local issues, concerns and priorities.

4.3 These local indicators will measure performance in areas of interest to the council, and will be used to drive improvements or monitor the success or otherwise of policies and procedures. Monitoring in this way on a regular basis will enable the council to take early alternative actions if necessary in a considered way, rather than it merely receiving year-end performance information when it is too late to take actions to influence performance.

4.4 The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan working group has established a list of objectives for the landlord business that influenced the local performance indicators chosen for the service to ensure that performance improves in these key areas.

Recommended performance indicator framework

4.5 A series of indicators are considered crucial in managing and understanding the
- landlord business. These relate, in the main, to income and expenditure, and to government requirements such as national performance indicators and decent homes compliance.

1.   The government sets particular importance to performance in the fowling areas

- Rent arrears
- Meeting decent homes standards
- Homelessness
- Reducing reliance on bed and breakfast accommodation
- Affordable homes
- Turn round of voids

4.6 Information will be collected on a monthly, quarterly or annual basis. Performance will be compared to previous years' performance, to top quartile performance nationally, and against the service targets for the year as well as against national targets for 2005. This will enable managers in housing to better understand performance against that of other councils and its own service targets, and to identify gaps in areas that require further support and areas of good performance.

Collecting data on performance

4.7 This approach to monitoring performance is a significant change from the previous practice of monitoring and reporting on simply Best Value Performance Indicators annually, and as would be expected, it will take the housing service some time to put in place the systems to capture all of the information required. However, some information is already available

4.8 Staff are currently working to establish an access database which will enable statistical information on void properties and relets to be produced as a matter of routine, this database will be available for use in July and will produce reports from August 2002.

4.9 Rental information (with the exception of housing benefit information) is available from the existing rent system, as is information on repairs performance against targets and number of repairs orders issued. Information systems to capture appointments made and kept and post inspections are being introduced now, and will be reported before the end of the calendar year.

4.10 Systems were introduced in April to monitor centrally the number of service enquiries and complaints from members, and to check responses within agreed timescales by service area. This system is now being expanded to include complaints from tenants, which will be monitored and reported in a similar way in the future.

Setting targets

4.11 The service is required to set targets for national Best Value performance indicators and has already done this for those housing indicators that form part of the Council's Best Value Performance Plan, and these will be used to monitor performance in the future and are included in this report.

4.12 The government expects council's to achieve a level of performance equivalent to the top twenty-five percent performing authorities by 2005 in those areas where it has set national targets; rent collected, rent loss due to voids, average relet time in days, % of emergency and non urgent repairs completed within target. It also requires councils to meet the decent homes standard by 2010, with an interim target in 2004 of reducing non-decency by one-third from the level assessed at 2001.

4.13 Targets will be set in all areas over the next couple of months as information on past performance is gathered, these targets should 'stretch' those involved in service delivery but should not be unattainable, and should take into account the resources available in these service areas. In some areas, for instance reletting void properties, the service will need to do a considerable amount of work, and to introduce new systems and procedures, which take some time to do, before significant performance improvements can be made.

4.14 The collection of information and setting of targets is merely a way of establishing performance at any point in time, the value of performance management information is that it enables actions to be identified, appraised, and implemented to improve service in areas that seem to be under-performing, or to understand why other areas perform well. The Audit Commission report *Acting on facts; using performance measurement to improve Local Authority services* May 2002, confirms expectations that Council's will be able to demonstrate that they have considered and acted on performance information – not merely collected it.

4.15 The targets set in areas of the service will be included in this year's business plan where available and in future year's plans, and will be cascaded down to managers and staff so that all involved are clear how they contribute to the overall service improvements required.

Benchmarking with others

4.16 The service is also investigating the benefits and costs associated with membership to a benchmarking facility for housing services such as those offered by Housemark. This would give members and staff access to comparable information to enable the council to understand its performance against that of many other local authorities, as well as providing access to good practice information and briefings.

4.17 Benchmarking is not just a financial exercise, although cost is an important driver in services, it is not the only one. Benchmarking satisfaction and demand is just as relevant as benchmarking the costs of services compared to others. The value of comparing services is that those leading the field can be identified, and the reasons for better performance considered – rather than constantly 're-inventing the wheel' this enables organisations to learn from others, and adapt procedures or solutions to suit their local circumstances to improve performance.

Implementing the performance information framework

4.18 When considering the performance information framework it is necessary to acknowledge that the Council does not have an integrated IT system which will readily produce user friendly reports, indeed some of this information cannot be obtained at all without considerable manual manipulation of data. However, a specification is being drawn together for a new IT system which will integrate repair and housing management information and provide valuable performance management outputs, and it is anticipated that this system (which will include the requirement to provide this and further performance information requirements in the future) could be in place in the next financial year, subject to resources.

4.19 In the meantime the service is to establish a stand-alone database to provide information on voids and lettings, and to monitor complaints and other information in similar databases that reduce manual work in collating statistics. Staff training on these systems has been, and will be provided, as they are operational, and information sessions are being run for all staff through team meetings about the use of this information and its value to the service.

4.20 It is expected that all this information (backdated to start from April 2002) will be gathered incrementally until it is fully available

4.21 Key performance information will be reported regularly to members, staff and tenants representatives. The first Housing Briefing is attached at Annexe A. as a basis for discussion and to clarify what service based information will be most useful to members. It is intended that this briefing will be produced every two months and sent to members and staff

5.0 Financial Implications

5.1   There are no additional costs associated with these proposals.

6.0 Implications

6.1 The improved performance management information within the housing service will feed into corporate and financial reporting arrangements.

7.0 Community Implications

7.1 It is anticipated that improved performance monitoring will ensure that a more consistent and focused service will be delivered to tenants.

8.0 Conclusions

8.1 Performance management arrangements will enable members, and officers, to consider objective information on performance and satisfaction rates. This will provide a focus on priority areas in the future.

9.0 Background Papers

9.1 Audit Commission report *Acting on facts; using performance measurement to improve Local Authority services,* May 2002. Audit Commission report Best Value Performance Indicators 2002/3.