

PART 1 - PUBLIC

Decision Maker: **ADULT & COMMUNITY SERVICES POLICY DEVELOPMENT & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND PORTFOLIO HOLDER**

Date: **For Pre-Decision Scrutiny by the A&C PDS Committee on 22nd June 2010 and subsequent decisions by the ACS Portfolio Holder**

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Non-Executive Non-Key

TITLE: HOUSING AND RESIDENTIAL SERVICES: 2009/10 PERFORMANCE REPORT

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1. Reason for report

This report provides an overview of the performance of Housing & Residential Services against the key objectives and targets for 2009/10, together with a summary of the key drivers and objectives for 2010/11

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The PDS Committee are asked to :-

- a) Note the performance against the key objectives and targets in the 2009/10 Portfolio Plan and Work Plan for these service areas.
- b) Comment on the priorities identified for 2010/11 in response to the key drivers outlined from paragraph 1.3.

2.2 The Portfolio Holder is recommended to:

- a) Consider recommendations from the PDS Committee particularly in response to the key drivers and relevant priorities.
- b) Agree the actions being taken as detailed throughout the report and the key priorities for 2010/11 (paragraph 1.17) to meet the range of housing duties and needs in Bromley and to deal with increased pressures on the service resulting from the recession.

Corporate Policy

Existing policy:

Financial

1. No cost existing Budgets All areas of work detailed within this report are contained within existing Budgets
 2. N/A
 3. Budget head This report is in relation to the work of the entire Housing and Residential Services Division and all the budgets they are responsible for.
 4. Total budget for this head £5.174m revenue Gross - less grants, fees and other income of £4.829m = net cost of £345k some of which will come back in future years as loans for grant work are repaid. These figures include a contingent budget of £1.8 for B&B which is covered by income from the occupants. In addition c£1.7m of capital from Payments in Lieu on planning permissions; £200k capital budget and £1.581m for Home Repair Assistance and Disabled Facilities Grants and Loans - for which the Council receives grant from Government of £710k
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Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional) – This report is in relation to the work of the entire current Housing & Residential Services and does not involve any additional staffing
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours – 77.35 FTE posts
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Legal

1. Statutory requirement: The work of the Housing Needs Service is governed by a strict legislative framework in relation to homelessness and allocations (The Housing Act 1996 & Homelessness Act 2002) which sets out the key duties of the Local Housing Authority. This is accompanied by a Statutory Code of Guidance to which all Authorities must have regard in discharging their functions. The Housing Development Team supports the Housing Needs Service and Social Services and other Departments to fulfil the Council's statutory obligations in relation to preventing homelessness and providing housing.
The work of the Residential Services staff covers statutory action to improve the condition of the housing and licensing of houses in multiple occupation which is governed by the Housing Act 2004. The award of mandatory disabled facilities grants is governed by the Housing Grants, Construction & Regeneration Act 1996. Activities in respect of improving domestic energy efficiency are governed by the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995. Reduction in domestic carbon emissions forms part of the NI 186.
2. Call-in is not applicable:

Customer Impact

Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected) - There are currently around 6100 households on the Housing Register with, on average a further 400 applications being received each month. Housing Advice and Options work with in excess of 4000 households each year who are experiencing a variety of housing difficulties, of which in excess of 1900 are faced with imminent homelessness.

The Council assists around 155 people with disabilities with disabled facilities grants annually. Around 150 elderly people receive help with repairs or small adaptations via small home repair assistance grants, and a further 16 are assisted with major repairs via interest free loans. The handyman service assists approximately 1600 people annually.

1. COMMENTARY

1.1 The objectives and targets set for 2009/10 were designed to achieve both the Council’s statutory duties and key national targets in respect of Housing, whilst ensuring that these were tailored to address local needs and priorities within Bromley.

Summary of performance during 2009/10

1.2 Progress against the specific priorities in the Housing & Residential Services Division Business Plan that arise directly from the Portfolio Plan priorities are detailed below. This shows that overall significant progress has been made across all areas towards achieving the key priorities set.

Status Indicator: ✓ Action on target. ➤ Work commenced on target to achieve in year.
 ✗ Action not yet commenced/ not achieved within year.
 ↑ Above target; ↓ Below target: → on target

1. Housing Options & Homeless Prevention.

What we are doing?	Status	Commentary
Reduce the number of people who are supported in temporary accommodation (TA) to achieve the government target to halve the number from the 2004 baseline by 2010.	✓ Green	Continued steady reduction in the number of households residing in TA. On track to meet the overall 50% reduction by the end of 2010. However, increased pressure resulting in housing difficulties arising from the current recession has meant that whilst we have met the local TA reduction target, it has not quite been possible to meet the stretch target set for 2009/10. To date we have achieved a 53% reduction from the highest level of TA use & a 45.5% reduction from the baseline target (which equates to a 25% reduction during 2009/10).
No 16/17 year olds will be housed in bed and breakfast accommodation by 2010 unless in an emergency.	✓ Green	Achieved. Action plan in place to continue to sustain achievement through 2010/11. In addition the service has implemented new procedures and systems jointly with CYP to effectively deal with the new duties on LAs for 16 and 17 year olds arising out of the Southwark Judgement and thereby negating a potential significant budget pressure for the Council.
Increase the number of people assisted through homeless prevention and option schemes by providing practical support to applicants to assist them in remaining in their own home or access private rented accommodation or otherwise resolve their housing need.	✓ Green	Despite increases in the numbers approaching as a result of the current economic climate we continue to proactively promote homeless prevention and housing options to all households who approach facing potential homelessness. During 2009/10 we assisted 1290 households to remain in their home or access an alternative housing option thus obviating the need for a homelessness application and placement into TA. Overall we have experienced around a 40% increase in those approaching for some level of assistance. Despite this, the housing advice and homelessness prevention work has continued to reduce the level of homelessness acceptances, with an overall reduction of 59% since the baseline target and a 15% reduction during 2009/10.
Maximise access to mortgage rescue funds to Bromley eligible residents.	✓ Green	A number of awareness raising initiatives undertaken, production of new leaflets, talks at a variety of forums and updated information on website. Procedures in place. Staff trained in mortgage assistance options and the mortgage rescue scheme to ensure they make full use of this prevention tool. A dedicated officer coordinates this work ensuring best use of all possible homeless prevention initiatives. During 2009/10, 101 households assisted in respect of mortgage difficulties, with 70 cases through the possession prevention fund and 15 mortgage rescue scheme completions – the highest number in London. Developed a Bromley specific mortgage rescue scheme (approved by the Portfolio Holder in June 2009) for households who may not be eligible for other prevention initiatives. Two families with physical disabilities assisted
Ensure that a suitable level of financial and debt management advice is available to those in danger of	✓ Green	Blackfriars Money Advice commissioned to provide dedicated money advice via weekly surgeries based within the Housing reception. Service well received. All surgeries fully utilised to assist both homeowners and tenants facing financial difficulties.




losing their homes.		Blackfriars also offer telephone advice and visits to their offices to increase capacity as required. Based upon the success during 2009/10 and demonstrable continued demand for this service, funding secured for the continued operation of surgeries in 2010/11.
Continue to work in partnership with private rented sector (PRS). Landlords to assist households to remain in or access privately rented accommodation.	✓ Green	Publicity initiatives undertaken to increase access to the PRS. Tenancy sustainment support also offered to assist people to remain in PRS accommodation. Landlords forum held in October and was well attended and with positive feedback. Closer work between Housing Needs & Residential Services with landlords to encourage access to the PRS for lower income households. Protocol agreed with 'Social Homes' (a private sector letting agent) which contracts with national agents and offers underwritten rent guarantee to further increase access to a range of private sector accommodation.
Increase home visiting to improve the robustness of the housing assessment and to assist the aim of reducing homeless presentations and make the best use of properties/options.	✓ Green	Home visiting is well established as part of the initial housing options & homeless prevention/assessment processes. In addition ongoing visiting takes place for households residing in temporary accommodation to continue to monitor their circumstances and consider all potential housing options that may be available to them. We are now starting to see an increased take up of alternative housing options from households already residing in temporary accommodation.

Key Performance Indicators:	07/08 Actual	08/09 Target	08/09 Actual	09/10 Target	09/10 Actual	Status
Number of households living in temporary accommodation. NI 156 (LAA).	717	600	641	490 TA action plan target 438: stretch targets	477	→
Homeless households approaching Council housing advice service(s) for whom housing advice casework intervention resolved their situation. Actual households. BVPI 213. (definition for indicator is the number of households per 1,000 households in the Borough)	838	1,000	1,088	1,200	1,290	↑
Number of households assisted to access the private rented sector	89	160	198	250	262	→
Number of homeless acceptances	551	410	489	410	414	→
Proportion of households accepted as homeless who were previously accepted as homeless. BVPI 214.	0.7%	3%	3.25%	3%	0.92%	↑
% change in number of homeless households including dependent children or pregnant women, placed in temporary accom compared with the previous year.	-13.88%	-12%	-6.63%	-10%	-20.17%	↑

2. Maximising Supply and Making Best Use of All Available Accommodation.

What we are doing	Status	Commentary
Work with additional Housing Associations to encourage them to open up their property registers to Bromley Homeseekers increasing available properties.	✘ Red rescheduled for 2010/11	Initial work undertaken to agree process map for this work and timescales to roll out to each housing association. However, this work is dependent upon the implementation of automated banding of the Housing Register. As the decision was made during 2009/10 to migrate to the new Northgate housing system and automated banding within the migration project on the grounds of longer term system delivery and value for money, this area of work was put on hold pending the IT migration during 2010/11

Work with the Private Rented Sector to encourage them to let their properties through Bromley Homeseekers	✖ Red rescheduled for 2010/11	Work undertaken to scope potential interest from private landlords and to consider what further website development was required to facilitate PRS advertising. This work is in its infancy as there is a lot to consider in terms of website development and the legal aspects of setting up this new business area. Also developmental work cannot be costed or commissioned until the current IT system migration has been completed. This work has also been put-on hold until the end of 2010/11.
Continue to work closely with RSLs to identify overcrowded households and to address under occupancy	✓ Green	Ongoing liaison has taken place throughout the year, both in terms of awareness raising to identify and find individual solutions for households. During 2009/10 assisted 258 households to alleviate the level of overcrowding/Underoccupation.
Seek to develop peer education in schools to raise awareness and reduce homelessness amongst young people	✓ Green	Peer education scheme implemented. Sessions held & well received at identified at schools within Bromley. Currently awaiting the SELHP regional funding bid decision for its continued operation.

Work with RSLs and Developers to maintain the required level of affordable and special needs housing (eg ECH, LD and Foyer)	 Amber	<p>New-Build Completions 2009/10</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Tenure</th> <th>Total Unit Completions</th> <th>3 Bed unit or Larger Unit</th> <th>Wheelchair Units</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Social Rent General Needs</td> <td>111</td> <td>48</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>LB Bromley PCT Re-provision</td> <td>6</td> <td>0</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Intermediate Housing (Shared Ownership / Intermediate Rent)</td> <td>104</td> <td>2</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> <td>221</td> <td>50</td> <td>11</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Tenure	Total Unit Completions	3 Bed unit or Larger Unit	Wheelchair Units	Social Rent General Needs	111	48	10	LB Bromley PCT Re-provision	6	0	1	Intermediate Housing (Shared Ownership / Intermediate Rent)	104	2	0	TOTAL	221	50	11
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		<p>Purchase of Existing Stock 2009/10</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Initiative</th> <th>Number of Properties</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Open-Market HomeBuy</td> <td>30</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2009-11 SELHP Settled Homes Initiative</td> <td>1</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Initiative	Number of Properties	Open-Market HomeBuy	30	2009-11 SELHP Settled Homes Initiative	1														
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		<p><u>Elderly Extra Care Housing (ECH)</u>: Onsite - work began at Crown Meadow Court (Blue Circle) on 55 x 1bed flats and 5 x 2bed flats due to complete in Feb 2011. Detailed planning negotiations underway and £4.9million HCA funding secured for 50 ECH units at Ann Sutherland House. Funding negotiations underway and a Planning approved for a further 60 ECH units (42 x 1bf and 18 x 2bf) on the Blue Circle site.</p>																				
		<p><u>LB Bromley Supported Living Initiative</u>: Planning consent granted and £ 1.8million HCA funding secured on 3 new build schemes - currently onsite -to deliver 13 homes for people with learning disabilities. Detailed planning negotiations underway and £711k HCA funding secured for a scheme to provide a further 7 homes.</p>																				
		<p><u>LB Bromley PCT Re-provision</u>: 6 units completed at Lancaster House. Planning permission secured on 3 schemes delivering 16 wheelchair accessible units for people with learning disabilities. Schemes start on site in Q1 2010-11. Ongoing work to identify further development opportunities and work up planning proposals in partnership with private developers and RSLs.</p>																				
		<p><u>Supported Housing</u>: Works commenced at Stafford House to re-configure existing facilities and provide 3 additional units to provide self-contained units for 13 mental health clients.</p>																				
		<p><u>Foyer</u>: Establishing which RSLs would be interested in developing and identifying sites suitable for this provision and the revenue implications plus service partner interest.</p>																				
Clear the current backlog of housing register Applications and introduce auto banding.	 Green	<p>In 2009/10 we have experienced a 300% increase in new housing register applications being received. Coupled with the outstanding number of new applications from temporary closure of the register & re-registration of all existing applications to enable implementation of the new system resulted in backlog of unassessed applications in the first half of 2009/10. Project plan put in place and backlog cleared ahead of schedule. Since this time an average initial assessment time of 3 weeks has been maintained, with actions in place to sustain this performance.</p>																				
Work with Planning Department to ensure effective implementation of the affordable housing policy.	 Green	<p>Housing Development Team is invited to provide detailed planning comments and be involved in negotiations with developers/applicants on all pre-application and planning applications which trigger the Affordable Housing Planning Policy as well as commenting on reports to Members. To ensure new affordable housing meets local strategic need, the Development Team has set up quarterly meetings and agreed a protocol with Housing Solutions officers, Strategic Commissioning officers and OTs</p>																				

Re-configuration of the homeless hostels to ensure no more shared facility units.	✓ Green	4 x 2b 4p flats, 9 x 3b 5p houses, 3 x 4b 6p houses for general needs and 3 x 1b 2p flats for the ongoing use of temp accom completed. A further 10 units to be used for TA and 12 units for general needs, negotiated as part of the Programme, to complete July 2010. This work has also resulted in three very large houses being freed up for the Council to sell.					
Implement the Temporary to Settled Initiative (T2S)	✓ Amber	GLA targeted funding available for RSL's to continue the initiative. Development Team secured £7.7m for 140 units within Bromley.					
Performance Indicators:		07/08 Actual	08/09 Target	08/09 Actual	09/10 Target	2009/10 Actual	status
Number of newly completed social rented & shared ownership units		225	200	227	350	221*	→
Number of units provided for the LD Supported Living Initiative programme		13 new	Up to 20 – or as req'd	5	20	0**	→

* 2009-10 target likely to be achieved if supply of newly completed affordable units is viewed as an ongoing rolling programme.

**There were no new unit completions in 2009-10 but 3 new build schemes started onsite and will deliver 15 homes for the. Further scheme of 7 homes secured funding and progressing through planning

Lettings Plan Outturn for 2009/10

		Sheltered	General Needs								
			Studio/ 1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4+ Bed	Total		Guideline Target		stat us
Homeless/Homel ess Prevention	Band A&B	19	84	264	69	22	458	492	514	536	↓
	Special needs move-on	2	28	4	0	0	34		22		
Band A & B		10	10	29	19	8	76		52		↑
Band C & D		49	124	36	37	0	244		57		↑
Learning Disabilities*			1		1		2		20		↓
Care leavers**		0	14	4	0	0	18		23		↓
DAT**		0	0	0	0	0	0		5		↓
Total		80	261	337	126	30	834		713		↑
Broomleigh nomination stock - transfers		53	50	42	73	13	237		256		↓

* LD properties have been provided outside of the plan in line with the number of properties requested as detailed in the new development supply above. The above refers to nominations for 4 households.

** Quota queues are demand led based on the number referred. The total allocations reflect number of customers referred for lettings during 2008/09 and thus meets the quotas required.

The above shows that overall the number of lettings is higher than anticipated and as such the priority band allocations are roughly within the guideline targets. However, a higher proportion of lower band applicants successfully bid for accommodation. In many cases this acts as an early intervention to prevent future homelessness or severe housing difficulties. Work remains ongoing to analyse trend data which includes work to ensure vulnerable clients are able to access and use the system and also to review and encourage higher priority applicants to bid more realistically for available accommodation. In addition, criteria is being set for specific properties to ensure that, for 2010/11 the overall lettings plan is achieved by the end of the financial year. However, it must also be noted that the bidding trends will be considered at the user group as this information can also be used to inform RSLs about the level of demand/desirability of certain stock and areas which in turn can be used to inform future stock refurbishment/disposal/alternative use decisions.

2. Improving the Standards and Quality of Accommodation.

Service/Target (09/10)	Method of Delivery	Outturn	Status
To deal appropriately with all properties where there is a Category 1 or 2 hazard in relation to housing enforcement policy to ensure that the condition of rented accommodation is satisfactory. Target: To make decent 220 homes that previously did not meet the Decent Homes Standard	Statutory and informal action following enquiries and complaints. Assistance also given via advice, grants and loans in appropriate cases	247 (est.)	Green

<p>To investigate and resolve service requests relating to housing disrepair, overcrowding and unsatisfactory conditions in rented housing. To bring houses in disrepair up to a decent standard, prevent deterioration and reduce risk to the occupiers.</p> <p>Target: 1300 complaints and service requests dealt with</p>	<p>Statutory and informal action following enquiries and complaints. Assistance also given via advice, and grants and loans in appropriate cases.</p>	<p>1287 complaints and service requests handled. Some grant work with landlords has secured nomination rights for the Housing Needs Service</p>	<p>Amber</p>
<p>To bring empty properties back in to use – target 20</p> <p>Also: Promote empty property loan scheme</p>	<p>Empty property group and strategy developed. Advice to owners. Implement and assess effectiveness of new Empty Dwelling Management Orders</p>	<p>19 bought back into use by direct action, other cases assisted by provision of advice. Nomination rights secured for the Housing Needs Service</p>	<p>Green</p>
<p>Pursue Empty Dwelling management orders where necessary and build on lessons from existing orders</p>	<p>Service of a final EDMO in respect of a long term vacant property, to serve as a test of the EDMO procedures</p>	<p>First final EDMO served early October. Works completed April 2010. Second EDMO submitted to Residential Property Tribunal April 2010.</p>	<p>Green</p>
<p>To protect the health and safety of tenants.</p> <p>Target: - To identify and inspect high risk houses in multiple occupation, and licence at least 20 under the new licensing regime</p>	<p>Investigation of enquiries and complaints, and use of area surveys & database information. Publicity & training of landlords.</p>	<p>10 HMOs licensed</p>	<p>Green</p>
<p>To improve the energy efficiency of housing in the Borough by advice, grants, promotions and referrals.</p> <p>Target: To increase the energy efficiency of the stock by 2.8%</p> <p>To meet the milestones set in the LAA carbon emissions target</p>	<p>Promotions, discounts and grants. The South East London Cold Busters scheme retendered, using sub regional funding. Working with the Energy Savings Trust, provide free energy advice. Participate in Warm Zones scheme</p>	<p>National target withdrawn. Highest number of energy efficiency jobs completed in London -using EST – 608 jobs 1713 referrals to EST for boiler replacements, heating controls, cavity wall insulation, loft insulation, solar thermal & PV. 241% of final LAA target achieved</p>	<p>Green</p>
<p>Inspect all licensed caravan sites fully and formulate a risk based inspection schedule to ensure the safety of residents. Target: To continue with programme of inspections and licensing visits</p>	<p>Licenses issued and renewed as necessary. Provision of advisory, inspection and enforcement service for site owners, agents and residents. Liaised as appropriate with the Planning Division.</p>	<p>Inspection and licensing protocol produced and in use. Risk based inspections ongoing</p>	<p>Green</p>
<p>To assist Borough residents to remain living in their own homes in comfort & safety, in order to maintain independence & quality of life.</p> <p>Target: 120 home repair assistance grants 15 interest free loans</p>	<p>Discretionary grants, loans and advice to assist commissioning of works of repair, improvement, adaptation and energy efficiency improvement. Service is delivered via Bromley Home improvement Agency (BHIA)</p>	<p>152 grants approved</p> <p>20 loans approved</p>	<p>Green</p>
<p>Support residents with disabilities to remain in their homes Target: - To provide disabled facilities grant assistance to 150 people with disabilities.</p>	<p>Through an effective partnership with clients and the Occupational Therapy service, contractors and the handy person scheme.</p>	<p>162 grants approved</p>	<p>Green</p>
<p>To reduce hospital bed usage by people who are able to be discharged, but require works to their property. To reduce avoidable admissions as a result of falls and other</p>	<p>Working with adjacent boroughs, the PCT, and other departments to ensure referral of vulnerable clients to the scheme.</p>	<p>1554 vulnerable residents assisted. 386 of these were to assist hospital discharge.</p>	<p>Green</p>

accidents prevention. Continue to develop the hospital discharge/handyman scheme using sub regional housing funding. Target: 1000 people assisted			
Pilot 'Hard to Treat Homes' Solid Wall insulation Scheme to reduce carbon emissions.	Ongoing bids for external funding and launch of Cold Busters scheme	Cold Busters scheme launched October 2009, 58 households assisted. Solid wall insulation part of works on 5 empty properties One property used to train local contractors using Energy Saving Trust funding. Bid for Low Carbon Zone funding unsuccessful. Bid being submitted in July 2010 for Renew funding	Green
Work with Utility companies to assist people with low income to address fuel poverty	Promotion of the Government's Warm Front grant scheme. Assisting clients with grant application to pay off fuel debt. Working with London Warm Zones, targeting funding at those in most need.	On going. Achieved the highest conversion rate (37%) of referrals to the Energy Savings Trust with energy efficiency works carried out of all of the London boroughs. 340 households assisted under Warmzones scheme, leveraging in £140k funding from EDF Energy.	Green

Overview of the current housing market supply and need position:

Housing Need

- 1.3 Like all London boroughs, Bromley has continued to experience high levels of housing need, with increased service pressures now being experienced as a result of the current economic climate.
- 1.4 Overall there has been around 40% increase in the number presenting with housing difficulties, the majority of which are experiencing financial difficulties in affording accommodation costs.
- 1.5 Increases have also been seen from increased presentations from those experiencing a wider range of problems associated with the financial difficulties faced, including, for example relationship breakdown, domestic violence and also parental eviction. Staff have been managing this increase and the significantly more complex and time consuming work resulting from the mortgage/rent arrears multi debt cases through imaginative and flexible use of the Homelessness Grant and Repossessions Prevention Fund and a refocusing of the triage work to offer increased access to specialist staff for crisis intervention work to prevent imminent homelessness.
- 1.6 Housing Register applications have also increased significantly, with the number of new applications having tripled consistently over the past year, now totalling on average 400 new applications per month. Whilst the circumstances of applicants vary greatly, it would appear that growing concerns regarding housing affordability and availability due to the current economic situation plays a significant role in the increased volume of new applications (for example current market information shows that the cheapest area to purchase a 2 bed flat in the Borough is still 6.6 times the average household income for such a property). Officers are coping with the increases albeit at the expense of pro-active work to support high priority/vulnerable applicants to bid and to contact non bidders – particularly those in higher bands. Officers have commenced scoping work on Auto Banding to reduce time spent on registration and issuing PIN numbers and commenced a review of the Housing Register Criteria and Allocations Policy (to be reported to the next two meetings of this PDS Committee). One of the key areas of this will be to explore further opportunities to manage expectations and reduce the number of registrations by those applications who, in reality, do not have sufficient priority to successfully bid for let alone receive an offer of accommodation by offering increased levels of advice on other potential housing

solutions for those applications. Automated banding and the revised policy are key priorities within the 2010/11 workplan.

- 1.7 Thus whilst the work of the service during the past year has managed to continue to reduce the number of homelessness acceptances and households residing in temporary accommodation through increased housing advice, homeless prevention and housing options work, current trend analysis suggests that we are likely to see the sustained marked increase in homelessness and housing need approaches during 2010/11 and beyond. In addition in many of these cases are complex requiring more intensive and often longer term casework intervention in order to try and prevent homelessness.

Housing Development & Supply

- 1.8 The impact of the recession on housing development and supply was reported in detail in the H&RS Division 2008-09 Annual Performance Report to the PDS Committee.
- 1.9 The recession has continued to affect the pace of new developments, both in terms of when schemes commence and complete. The number of new planning applications being submitted has fallen and a number of new developments have been put on hold by private developers which, in turn, delays the delivery of affordable units secured on those sites.
- 1.10 The economic downturn will take time to fully impact upon new supply. In 2009-10, the bulk of new build schemes both starting on site and completing were already in the development pipeline before the economic changes started to take effect. It will therefore be over the next few years that the impact is really seen. In addition, even as the economy starts to restabilise, the affects will continue to be felt for some time, given the lead in period for new planning applications and then development to start on site, factors that will also be affected by availability of mortgage lending and deposits to enable people to purchase.
- 1.11 The reduction in planning applications coupled with the marked reduction in new building also significantly increases the difficulty in finding opportunities for the specialist accommodation supply required to meet the range of needs across the ACS Portfolio.

Action Being Taken:

- 1.12 From the above, it is clear that we are currently experiencing a very volatile period with little certainty about the levels of supply against a backdrop of almost certain increased need. Even relatively small fluctuations in supply or need can have significant impact on homelessness and temporary accommodation numbers. For example, should demand remain constant, but supply drop by 5% against predicted levels this would almost certainly result in a 17% increase in temp accom use meaning that we would fail to meet the overall reduction target by 170 households.
- 1.13 Staff continue to address this significant challenge through a whole market approach, which aims to offer advice and support to households to sustain their current accommodation or, where this is not possible, to access accommodation across all sectors of the housing market dependent upon their particular circumstances. Simultaneously work continues to make best use of the supply of affordable housing, improve housing standards and bring empty properties back in to use.
- 1.14 The Housing Development Team is working to mitigate the impact of recession on affordable housing delivery as far as possible, notably through:
- Supporting provision of affordable housing which is not dependent on new build developments. E.g. via the Temporary to Settled scheme, encouraging RSLs to bid for funding to enable deconversions and extensions to existing stock.
 - Negotiation of a service level agreement to enable Hyde HA to use HCA Temporary Social Housing funding to lease private sector accommodation for statutory and high priority need.
 - Investigating the potential for existing sites to be re-designed and funded as housing for particular client groups, e.g. the extra care housing provision,

- Working closely with RSLs to review affordable housing tenure and tenure mix on developments to enable RSLs to obtain the necessary levels of private finance and HCA grant;
- Lobbying the Homes and Communities Agency to relax grant rates to enable developments which are under threat in terms of financial viability to progress.
- Ensuring that RSL partners explore and maximise all new funding opportunities that help meet strategic housing need. E.g. with Affinity Sutton, to secure detailed planning permission and work up a bid for newly announced, in-year HCA Estate Regeneration funding to enable the regeneration and delivery of Phase 3, Ramsden Estate.
- Working with Housing Needs and RSL to try to identify housing solutions for households who have been affected by the recession but are not eligible for Mortgage Rescue Schemes.

1.15 Under the 2008-2011 National Affordable Housing Programme allocation, the Borough received grant allocations of £40,204,419 that will enable the delivery of 382 new units for social rented, shared ownership and supported housing purposes over the next few years.

Key Priorities 2010/11

1.16 Considering the above, the following key priorities have been identified for 2010-11:

Housing Needs:-

- Fulfil the LBB statutory duties in relation to homelessness and provision of advice & assistance to prevent or delay homelessness wherever possible drawing on and effectively using the full range of prevention and option tools.
- Maximise access to and take up of all prevention & options tools for those facing mortgage or rent arrears, including provision of adequate money and debt advice.
- Due to the complexity of some mortgage rescue cases – expand the LB Bromley scheme such that mixed LBB and other funding sources are used where necessary to prevent repossession and where it makes social and/or economic sense to do so.
- Continue to work in partnership with private rented sector landlords and RSLs to assist households to remain in their home or access private rented accommodation.
- Continue to implement the overcrowding/Underoccupation action plan and achieve the targets set to make the best use of existing housing stock
- Ensure accurate & timely housing register assessments, ensuring a backlog does not occur in the lead up to auto banding.
- Complete the review of the Allocations Policy and implement any revisions.
- Achieve the Northgate IT system migration and implementation of automated banding.
- Expand the range of options available for young people and embed the joint working protocol to further reduce homelessness for young people and sustain the zero use of B&B accommodation.
- Support all vulnerable households to achieve the successful move-on pathway targets and continue to reduce repeat homelessness.
- Make best use of stock to meet needs with effective monitoring to achieve the annual lettings plan.
- Continued focus on achieving the temporary accommodation reduction targets and sustained reduction in use of bed and breakfast accommodation

Housing Development & Strategy:-

- Work closely with Housing Needs Service, Strategic Commissioners and Care Services Teams to continue to secure housing that meets specific and strategic housing needs– e.g. Extra Care housing; Learning Disability PCT and Supported Living Initiative; wheelchair housing, supported housing, community rehabilitation homes, shared ownership for the disabled.
- Explore, with RSL partners, the potential for delivering a viable Foyer scheme in the borough.
- Ongoing work with the Planning Department to ensure effective implementation of the affordable housing planning policy to ensure new supply meets needs of the Council.

- Actively contribute to the production of new strategic planning documents and policies being developed ensuring that the strategic housing needs of ACS & CYP Departments are reflected.
- Lead for ACS Department on input into the Bromley Town Centre AAP, ensuring the needs of the Dept are included and opportunities maximised in the outcomes from the regeneration.
- Lead the Council's Single Conversation with the HCA and producing the HCA LB Bromley Borough Investment Plan and submission to/negotiation with HCA. This is critical to ensuring the HCA are continuously aware of future investment requirements in LBB.
- Deliver the Temporary to Settled scheme
- Complete the new Extra Care Housing Scheme on schedule and secure planning permission and funding for 3 further schemes.
- Support Housing Needs to try to identify housing solutions for households who have been affected by the recession but are not eligible for Mortgage Rescue Schemes

Residential Services:-

- Provision of grant aid for the repair, adaptation and improvement of the homes of vulnerable people and review the operation of the home repair assistance grant system, to ensure best use of resources and value for money.
- Help and advice to owners who are carrying out repairs and improvements, including help obtaining finance and interest free loans
- Protection of the health and safety of tenants by requiring necessary repairs and improvements, and by administering the Council's licensing scheme for houses in multiple occupation.
- Working across the SELHP – to work up a feasibility for continuation of a handyperson scheme based on the loss/reduction of the grant from 2011.
- Improvement of domestic energy efficiency through advice, grants, loans and discounts. Continuation of bids for external funding for energy efficiency improvements.
- The improvement and reuse of derelict and vacant properties, building on the experience gained from our first EDMO and securing nomination rights for the Housing Needs Service.

2. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 The Adult & Community Services Portfolio Plan contains statements of Council policies and objectives in relation to housing and associated matters along with progress that members expect to make during the financial year and beyond. These are compliant with the statutory framework, within which the service must operate and incorporates both national targets and priorities identified from the findings of review, audits and stakeholder consultation.
- 2.2 The objectives and work detailed in this report to increase the supply of affordable housing assist in achieving targets in Building a Better Bromley as well as the achievement of other corporate priorities and targets e.g. Residential Home Reprovision, Learning Development Supported Living Initiative, Town Centre Regeneration etc.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The work to achieve the priorities outlined in this report, are contained within the approved budget for 2010/11. As this mainly a needs led service operating within a fixed budget, this clearly needs continued intensive monitoring to ensure that targets are achieved within budget and early attention to pressures arising from recession led increase in demands on the service.
- 3.2 The majority of the homeless prevention and housing options work is grant funded to achieve the target of halving the number of households in temporary accommodation by 2010 along with the Repossessions Prevention Fund. The future of grant funding is unclear and, along with the proposed changes to Housing Benefit subsidy for Temporary Accommodation, will require close scrutiny in forthcoming years, particularly given the current economic uncertainty and likely increases in homelessness and associated costs. This will be reported to the Portfolio Holder as and when the need arises.

- 3.3 The PIL account currently holds £1.7million of capital. These funds must be utilised for the provision of affordable housing and spent by the Council within five years of receipt. The PDS Committee and the Portfolio Holder have received previous reports on this and how its usage is approved.
- 3.4 The SELHP sub region submitted successful bids to support the existing schemes in respect of interest free loans, empty properties, the handy person service and energy efficiency grants. Further bids were submitted in 2009/10 for alternate sources of funding to support innovative insulation project for “hard to treat” homes – those that are not suitable for conventional cavity insulation. SELHP funding was used for an innovative project to improve a number of hard to treat properties that had been vacant for some time. We are currently negotiating with the Energy Savings Trust for further funding to extend this training project.
- 3.5 The Council was awarded funding to implement the overcrowding and Underoccupation action plan. Currently, the grant only runs until the end of 2010/11 and the approved action plan therefore seek to make best use of available resources to tackle the most severe levels of Underoccupation and Overcrowding.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Council has a number of statutory obligations in relation to housing as listed on page 2 of this report.
- 4.2 These include the provision of housing advice and assistance to prevent homelessness or divert from homelessness, assessment of homeless applications, to make temporary and permanent housing provision for those applicants to whom the Council has a statutory rehousing duty, supporting such households to sustain accommodation, having a published allocations criteria and policy producing housing and homelessness strategies.
- 4.3 The priority areas identified in the Portfolio and Work Plans for Housing & Residential Services are based within this framework to ensure the Council fulfils its statutory obligations and complies with good practice.

Non-Applicable Sections:	Personnel
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	Housing & Residential Services IE & E plans 2010/11 – David Gibson Overcrowding Strategy 2008 -2011 – Sara Bowrey Homelessness Strategy – Sara Bowrey Portfolio Plan 2010/11 – Catriona Ellis