

**NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES STRATEGIC PLAN AND INTEGRATED SERVICE
PLAN FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES 1999/2000 TO 2000/01**

Accountable Officer: David Jones (Strategic Director Neighbourhood Services)

Author: Jane Reed (Strategy and Performance Manager) - MK253553

1. Purpose

1.1 To update the Committee on progress towards the objectives outlined in the current Neighbourhood Services Strategic Plan and highlight any areas of interest or concern.

2. Summary

2.1 Generally, progress is on target for the various objectives in the current Neighbourhood Services Strategic Plan. Notable successes, revised targets and timescales, significant issues or new areas of work are all detailed under each Strategic Aim.

3. Recommendations

3.1 The Committee is asked to note the progress made on implementing the plan and comment on the report.

4. Background

- 4.1 The original Neighbourhood Services Strategic Plan and Integrated Service Plan was first approved by Neighbourhood Services Committee in December 1998. It was subsequently updated and agreed by Committee on 7 July 1999.

5. Issues and Choices

Strategic Aim 1 - Working in Partnership

- 5.1 Generally, progress is on target for the various objectives contributing to the achievement of Strategic Aim 1. Progress towards most milestones is satisfactory and there are only a few exceptions to report.

(a) Notable Successes

There have been a number of notable successes as follows:

(i) Objective 1.1: Carers - (*High Priority*)

The quality of support for Carers is improving all the time. Developing the Carers Special Grant Action Plan has been particularly useful.

(ii) Objective 1.2: Mental Health - (*High Priority*)

£300,000 capital funding has been secured for the proposed Club House project for Adult Mental Health.

(iii) Objective 1.10: Travellers - (*High Priority*)

The inaugural meeting of a new strategic multi-agency Joint Planning Forum for all Traveller issues in Milton Keynes is to take place on 8 November. The Council and Thames Valley Police are jointly funding a new Central Office to co-ordinate action on all Traveller issues in Milton Keynes, particularly the operational and service delivery aspects of unauthorised encampments.

(iv) Objective 1.11: Misuse of Drugs and Alcohol - (*High Priority*)

The new resources for community based care have been used to open a new drop-in facility at Conniburrow, run by MK DASS.

(b) Revised Targets

There have been a number of target revisions, including:

(i) Objective 1.3: Vulnerable Adults - (*Medium Priority*)

The joint inter-agency policy on Abuse of Vulnerable Adults was not distributed as planned. Partner contributors did not sign off the final draft as quickly as anticipated and the government White Paper on proposals for Vulnerable Adults was received. Staff are fully committed with high priority tasks but a part-time Training Officer has now been appointed and this will enable further progress.

(ii) **Objective 1.9: Multi-Disciplinary Panels** - (*Medium Priority*)

Targets for improving the effectiveness of Multi-Disciplinary Panels will need to be revised to take account of significant changes to our own assessment procedures. Because of delays in the implementation of the Continuing Care Criteria, the new target for the multi-disciplinary assessment review is now March 2000. However, new staff to review and promote best assessment practice have now been appointed.

(iii) **Objective 1.10: Travellers** - (*High Priority*)

Progress towards setting up the new Central Office for Travellers was delayed for a couple of months because partners felt unable to resource the initial proposals. However, a revised proposal was agreed at a meeting of the Travellers Steering Group on 20 October. The new target date for opening the Central Office is Jan 2000 (*30% complete*).

(c) **Significant Issues or New Areas of Work**

Members should be aware of the following:

(i) **Objective 1.2: Mental Health - New Milestones** (*High Priority*)

A local strategy for Adult Mental Health is to be developed - target date March 2000. Mental Health Grant Bid monies will be used to create a Joint Intensive Support Team for people living in the community; this is a joint project with Health, target date January 2000. The countywide Joint Adult Mental Health Strategy is being updated to take account of the new National Service Framework and is currently out for consultation.

(ii) **Modernisation Fund** - (*High Priority*)

Substantial additional resources (£3m over three years) have been made available through the Partnership Grant and special grants for Prevention and Carers Projects. In partnership with Health, Action Plans have been created to focus on Vulnerable Adults and the provision of services to enable Independent Living. These projects are major pieces of work, requiring significant management input and evaluation of the outcomes.

Strategic Aim 2 - Open, Accessible and Consultative

5.2 Work in support of Strategic Aim 2 is progressing satisfactorily.

(a) **Notable Successes**

There have been a number of notable successes as follows:

(i) **Objective 2.1: Local Services - (High Priority)**

The West Bletchley Pilot Project has been successfully launched. There has been an enthusiastic response from staff and we were praised by the Chief Inspector of Social Services Inspectorate following a visit. A Project Manager funded by the Partnership Grant has been appointed to further develop the pilot and extend the range of work.

(b) **Revised Targets**

There have been a number of target revisions, including:

(i) **Objective 2.2: Public Information Strategy - (High Priority)**

Because of current workloads and competing priorities, deadlines will have to be revised for completing the following:

- the Public Information Strategy
- policy and procedures on use of the Translation Service
- policy and procedures on Duty, Reception and Accessibility

(ii) **Objective 2.6: Inspection and Regulation - (Medium Priority)**

Work on recruiting Lay Assessors was delayed due to the long-term vacancy of the Unit Manager. The post of Principal Manager Regulation and Commissioning has now been filled and the framework for the scheme has recently been agreed with the Advisory Panel (Adults). The revised target for appointing Lay Assessors is April 2000 (*20% complete*). The training of Lay Assessors and their involvement in inspections is now targeted for August 2000.

(c) **Significant Issues or New Areas of Work**

Members should be aware of the following:

(i) **Objective 2.5: Involving Tenants - New Milestones (High Priority)**

A Tenant Resource Centre is to be established in Bletchley (*see 5.4 [c] New Areas of Work: Objective 4.5 below*). Three separate time-limited Housing Improvement Teams comprising Tenant Representatives, Officers and Members have been set up to look at the following service areas:

- Neighbourhood Nuisance and Tenancy Agreements.
- Disabled Adaptations.

- Voids and Repairs: progress to be reported to the next Housing Committee.

(ii) **Objective 2.7: Charter Standards - New Milestone** (*Medium Priority*)

A joint charter needs to be prepared as per 'You and Your Services' guidelines - target April 2000 (*0% complete*)

Strategic Aim 3 - Tackling Disadvantage and Promoting Equality

5.3 Progress on Strategic Aim 3 has been good, with significant achievements made as a result of considerable staff dedication. One or two objectives (*e.g. Objective 3.8*) have been overtaken by events, in the sense that wider service reviews are being conducted.

5.4 As the Government agenda drives us further towards partnership arrangements, it is encouraging to note joint protocols and working relationships with Health colleagues are particularly robust.

(a) **Notable Successes**

There have been a number of notable successes as follows:

(i) **Objective 3.1: Home Care Service** - (*High Priority*)

Except for those still on their 6 months probation, all Home Carers have now successfully completed Level 1 of the new NVQ-based Milton Keynes Award in Home Care Service Delivery. This completes the first phase of a new and ongoing aspect of Home Care training. The Voice of Older People seminars provided some useful service user feedback on a whole range of issues, including Home Care.

(ii) **Objective 3.13: Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion** - (*High Priority*)

A multi-agency Education, Health and Social Inclusion group has been set up to work with Traveller families and multi-agency Borough Bus sessions have restarted at the Calverton site as a result.

(b) **Revised Targets**

There have been a number of target revisions, including:

(i) **Objective 3.1: Home Care Service** - (*High Priority*)

The budget for Home Care has been adjusted to take account of staffing levels and current recruitment difficulties. Accordingly, the weekly target of 8,000 hours has been reduced to 7,500 hours.

(ii) **Objective 3.3: Inspection and Regulation** - (*Medium Priority*)

Although some progress on joint working and protocols has been achieved, the long-term vacancy of the Unit Manager and the recent resignation of a key Health Inspection colleague have caused some unavoidable delays. However, current standards and guidance are now under review by the new Principal Manager (Regulation and Commissioning) and revised documents will be issued for consultation before the end of the year.

(iii) **Objective 3.5: Commission for Racial Equality Audit - (Medium Priority)**

A draft Travellers Enforcement Policy was achieved on target, but other sections of the integrated Travellers Policy have been delayed due to protracted partnership negotiations on the new Central Office; revised target January 2000 (30% complete)

(iv) **Objective 3.7: Parents with Mental Health Problems - (Medium Priority)**

A Children's Services/Mental Health Services Joint Forum has been established and a draft protocol completed. However, further consultation and refinement is necessary - revised target date March 2000 (65% complete).

(v) **Objective 3.8: Review of Emergency Provision - (Medium Priority)**

A review of all emergency provision needs to be undertaken, but linked to the wider service reviews that are being conducted. This requires further consideration by senior managers and an agreed Action Plan with timescales. Specific provisions for young people will be included as part of this.

(vi) **Objective 3.13: Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion - (High Priority)**

The Joint Finance Bid for the employment project worker was not successful. This milestone has been delayed but is still being pursued - a new target date to be added in due course.

(vii) **Objective 3.14: Sensory Impairment - (Medium Priority)**

Long-term staff illness has caused some delays. However, the report on Hearing Impairment is an agenda item for this meeting.

(c) **Significant Issues or New Areas of Work**

Members should be aware of the following:

(i) **Objective 3.1: Home Care Service - New Milestones (High Priority)**

Develop and implement a training programme for Senior Home Care staff as the first stage of providing more individual and specialised care for particular service users - target April 2000. Develop and implement a training

programme for individual Home Carers to give them the necessary skills for providing more specialised care - starting April 2000.

(ii) **Objective 3.4: Adaptations for Disability - (Medium Priority)**

Discussions between partner agencies have been delayed by long-term staff sickness and this may affect the April 2000 target timescale. In the meantime, this work will be progressed by the new Housing Improvement Team on Disabled Adaptations, which meets for the first time in November.

(iii) **Objective 3.5: Commission for Racial Equality Audit - New Milestone (Medium Priority)**

A Directorate Equalities Action Plan will be developed and combined / cross-referenced with the Neighbourhood Services Strategic Plan - target January 2000 (20% complete).

(iv) **Objective 3.6: Vulnerable People Ineligible for Support - New Milestone (Medium Priority)**

Systems to provide the new DoH Performance Indicators on Referrals, Assessments and Packages of Care (RAP) will be implemented to meet the statutory requirement which starts April 2000

Strategic Aim 4 - Promoting a Healthy and Sustainable Environment

5.5 Progress towards Strategic Aim 4 is generally on target, with most milestones having been achieved.

(a) **Notable Successes**

There have been a number of notable successes as follows:

(i) **Objective 4.1: Improvement and Repairs Backlog - (High Priority)**

Significant improvement to the performance of the Term Contractors has been secured. The Housing Stock Condition Survey is now underway.

(ii) **Objective 4.5: Under-Used Buildings - (Medium Priority)**

Cripps Lodge is now fully utilised and the former West Bletchley Housing office is currently being used as temporary accommodation for the Netherfield Housing Office staff whilst the fire damage at Netherfield is repaired.

(iii) **Objective 4.6: Partnerships with Health Services - (High Priority)**

Although the timetable has now over-run its original completion date, 90% of the target was achieved on time. The Joint Planning Structures with Health are now ready to be approved by the MK Health Forum in November and

the new Primary Care Group (PCG) has been fully involved at all levels. Similarly, 90% of the officers for the Joint Commissioning Team have now been appointed.

(iv) **Objective 4.7: Health and Safety - (High Priority)**

The Gas servicing backlog has been significantly reduced. Accident levels are being regularly monitored by DMT.

(b) **Revised Targets**

There have been a number of target revisions, including:

(i) **Objective 4.3: Improve Feeling of Security for Older People - (Low Priority)**

A meeting to consider work between Neighbourhood Services and the Corporate Policy Team, with particular focus on sheltered accommodation, the Community Alarm Service and Council tenants, is to be convened. Although some work has been done, the appointment of new senior managers and the resulting redistribution of responsibilities is causing a temporary delay.

(ii) **Objective 4.4: Alternatives to Residential Care - (High Priority)**

Production of an Action Plan to support vulnerable people moving into new accommodation, the establishment of an urgent intervention specialist team for older people with mental health problems and the Community Rehabilitation Project are all revised to December 1999. The opening of the Extra Care scheme for older people at Langland House has been delayed until October 2000 due to delays in the building work.

(iii) **Objective 4.5: Under-Used Buildings - (Medium Priority)**

Planning permission was granted on 20 October for a change of use to C3 Housing for the former staff accommodation at Heathercroft. Building work starts on 1 November 1999 and is due for completion at the end of February 2000.

(c) **Significant Issues or New Areas of Work**

Members should be aware of the following:

(i) **Objective 4.2: Private Sector Housing - (Medium Priority)**

Proposals for an Empty Homes strategy are dependent on budget decisions.

(ii) **Objective 4.4: Alternatives to Residential Care - (High Priority).**

The tenders for the Post Hospital Rehabilitation scheme at the Coppice came in over budget and so the scheme is currently under review.

(iii) **Objective 4.5: Under-used Buildings - New Milestone (Medium Priority)**

It has been agreed that 62 Queensway Bletchley will be used as a Tenant Resource Centre, target date January 2000 (20% complete).

Strategic Aim 5 - Developing Excellence, Efficiency and Effectiveness

5.6 Overall, progress towards Strategic Aim 5 is on target. Major changes to some aspects of service delivery (*for example, Benefits*), have caused temporary but significant disruptions. However, there have been some welcome improvements in performance (*for example, Term Contracts for Housing Repairs*).

(a) **Notable Successes**

There have been a number of notable successes as follows:

(i) **Objective 5.8: Housing Management CCT - (High Priority)**

The Council's in-house Housing Management Team was awarded the CCT contract.

(ii) **Objective 5.9: Benefits Service - (Medium Priority)**

Unforeseen problems with the implementation of the Verification Framework had created a total workload of 10,000 cases by the end of July. However, by mid October this had been reduced to a backlog of less than 1,000 cases over and above the usual caseload.

(iii) **Objective 5.10: Information Technology - (High Priority)**

The main Housing IT modules are now operational.

(b) **Revised Targets**

There have been a number of target revisions, including:

(i) **Objective 5.6: Cross Directorate Integration with Learning and Development - (High Priority)**

Joint Planning is moving ahead but will not be achieved by October 1999 as planned. In view of current workloads and conflicting priorities, a more realistic target would be April 2000.

(ii) **Objective 5.9: Benefits Service - (*Medium Priority*)**

The timetable for the introduction of new benefit software has been revised by one month to January 2000.

(c) **Significant Issues or New Areas of Work**

Members should be aware of the following:

(i) **Objective 5.2: Strategic and Financial Planning - *New Milestone (High Priority)***

The next revision of the Neighbourhood Services Strategic Plan will need to include a more comprehensive range of performance monitoring information, plus milestones to progress the various issues raised by the recent equalities audit.

(ii) **Objective 5.5: Income Generation - *New Milestone (Medium Priority)***

A revised charging policy is scheduled for April 2000. Following a period of consultation, proposals will be presented to members for final decisions.

(iii) **Objective 5.8: Housing Management - (*High Priority*)**

The new Housing Improvement Team (Voids and Repairs) has recommended setting up a Call Centre to improve the efficiency of the Housing Repairs Service. A proposal will be submitted to Housing Committee on 30 November.

(iv) **Objective 5.10: Information Technology - *New Milestones (Medium Priority)***

Further modules of the Housing IT are due to go live in December 1999. The basic operating module for the new Social Care IT system will be operational by mid December 1999.

6. **Implications**

6.1 Environmental

These are included in the plan.

6.2 Equalities

A comprehensive range of action to address equalities issues (including the Human Rights Act 1998 and the latest phase of the Disability Discrimination Act) has been incorporated into the Strategic Plan by the addition of the new Equalities Action Plan referred to in Objective 3.5.

A further series of more detailed equalities issues related to Travellers are being addressed as part of Objective 1.10.

6.3 Financial

The details are included in the Directorate's Budget Book.

6.4 Legal

The plan is consistent with the Council's statutory responsibilities. Officers are currently considering the likely impact of the Human Rights Act 1998 (*comes into force October 2000*) on all service areas.

6.5 Staff and Accommodation

The former West Bletchley Housing office is currently being used as temporary accommodation for the Netherfield Housing Office staff whilst the fire damage at Netherfield is repaired.

A number of Neighbourhood Services Staff are being relocated within Saxon Court as part of a larger rationalisation of office accommodation. Progress on accommodation for the single work-focused gateway (ONE) project is being progressed as part of Objective 5.9.

The setting up of a new Central Office to co-ordinate all aspects of Traveller issues in line with the recommendations of the MK Citizens' Advisory Group on Travellers is being progressed as part of Objective 1.10.

The Future Direction of Neighbourhood Services item on this agenda has potential implications for staff and accommodation.

7. Conclusion

7.1 The report summarises progress to date and the significant issues that Members should be aware of. It also highlights the impact of constant change, heavy workloads and the range of priorities facing staff in Neighbourhood Services.

Background Papers: Neighbourhood Services Committee Strategic Plan and Integrated Service Plan 1998/99 – 2000/01 (*Updated June 1999*)