

Appendices: 1



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT

Report Title	Housing Finance Improvement Plan Report
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AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

Audit Committee Meeting Date:	12 November 2014
Policy Document:	No
Directorate:	Finance Directorate LGSS
Accountable Cabinet Member:	Cllr Alan Bottwood

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To present Committee with the Housing Finance Improvement Plan as requested showing what has been achieved and what is ongoing.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the Housing Finance Improvement Plan status.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 Audit Committee of 9th September requested a report on the work that has been ongoing to improve the arrangements around Housing Finance. This was on the back of some high risk finding Internal Audit reports on Empty Homes areas and general performance around 2013/14 outturn..
- 3.1.2 The Housing Finance Improvement Plan has been in existence since before December 2013 and is continuously being reviewed and maintained to ensure financial awareness is maintained and developed with the Housing Service.

3.2 Issues

3.2.1 The Housing Finance Improvement Plan at Appendix 1 was drawn up in conjunction with Housing Services officers using current Internal Audit reports and officer knowledge. It has evolved over the last year taking into account delivery in certain areas, new management and Internal Audit reports.

3.2.2 The key areas that the HFIP looked to address are:

- Basic Financial understanding – budget monitoring
- Local Authority Finances and how they work
- NBC Financial principles and practices
- Financial Management – roles and responsibilities
- Procurement principles
- Procurement procedures and performance
- Asset Strategy and Asset Management
- Property Repairs and maintenance
- Tenancy and Estate Management
- Rent Income, Accounting and arrears recovery
- Performance improvement and business development

3.2.3 Whilst a lot of the actions in areas are implemented in terms of the delivery there is now a drive to embed the necessary practices rather than establishing. This is partly being carried out by provision of certain types of training which will be ongoing and regular to ensure that all staff are kept aware of changes and that new employees receive the appropriate inductions.

3.2.4 The HFIP has essentially delivered most of phase 1 and has been continually developed to include more system type changes identified to deliver further efficiency changes and more effective internal controls.

3.3 Choices (Options)

3.3.1 None

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

4.1.1 There are no specific policy implications arising from this report.

4.2 Resources and Risk

4.2.1 Ongoing monitoring and developing of the Housing Services Finance Improvement Plan continues to enable the service to improve as far as possible ahead of being transferred in the Council's ALMO

4.3 Legal

4.3.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

4.4 Equality

4.4.1 There are no specific equalities implications arising from this report.

4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)

4.5.1 None at this stage.

4.6 How the Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes

4.6.1 The delivery of the Housing Finance Improvement plan will help to ensure the proper stewardship of the Council's resources. Active financial management contributes to the delivery of value for money services, enabling public money to be used to maximum benefit.

4.7 Other Implications

4.7.1 Not applicable

5. Background Papers

None

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