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**Date of Meeting:** 5<sup>th</sup> February 2004

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**Public**

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**Key Decision:** Yes

**Recorded in Forward Plan:** Yes

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**Inside**

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**Title:** COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT (CPA)  
ACTION PLAN – BALANCING HOUSING MARKETS :  
DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT

**Report of:** HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION SERVICES

**Report reference:** EPS/95/2003

**Summary:**

This report provides the Executive with a CPA Draft Action Plan for Balancing Housing Markets, which identifies the areas for improvement contained in the Inspection report. The Action Plan is closely linked with the Housing Strategy, the draft of which is also being submitted to the Executive on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2004.

**Recommendations:**

That the Executive:

- (i) Note the report

**Note:** in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: None

- (ii) Approve the Draft Action Plan and for its progress to be monitored by the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee and for this process to begin at the Committee's meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2004.

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## **1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 1.1 The CPA inspection of Carlisle City Council was carried out by the Audit Commission in July 2003 with the report published in November 2003. As well as concentrating on the performance of the organisation as a whole the inspection focused on two particular diagnostic assessments. One of these was entitled 'Balancing Housing Markets' which looked at how well the council understands its housing markets, the needs of people and whether the right proposals are in place to help balance these markets.
- 1.2 In the report the inspectors concentrated on three 'areas of focus' within the diagnostic assessment. Within these areas they identified 15 strengths and 14 weaknesses. The need to improve on identified priority areas was identified as a high priority for the Council. As such, an Action Plan has been drawn up (Appendix one) detailing a range of actions which are proposed to address the areas for improvement.
- 1.3 As noted in 1.2, 15 strengths were highlighted by the CPA inspectors which cover elements of areas where improvements have also been identified. In drawing up the Action Plan these strengths have been integrated to support the areas for improvement.
- 1.4 In delivering the Action Plan expertise will be sought from Beacon Councils and other models of good practice recognised the Audit Commission, Local Government Association, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Chartered Institutes of Housing and Environmental Health.

## **2 MONITORING ARRANGMENTS**

- 2.1 Progress on the Action Plan will be monitored through quarterly reports to Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee and bimonthly reports to Executive Management Group and Joint Management Team.

## **3. CONSULTATION**

- 3.1 Consultation to Date.

A fundamental part of the Action Plan is the development of, and subsequent approval by the Government Office of the North West (GONW), a comprehensive Housing Strategy. The draft Housing Strategy is being developed through

widespread consultation and forms part of a specific report covered elsewhere on the agenda for this Executive.

#### **4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Executive:

- (i) Note the report
- (ii) Approve the Draft Action Plan and for its progress to be monitored by the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee and for this process to begin at the Committee's meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2004.

#### **6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

The recommendations are put forward as required improvements to develop the service areas identified by the CPA inspectors. Delivery of the improvement plan will depend on taking forward issues surrounding the structure of the Service, approval of the Housing Strategy 2004-09 and the proper resourcing of service.

#### **6. IMPLICATIONS**

- **Staffing/Resources –**

The success of the Action Plan will be reliant upon a review of the capacity of the current staff structure within Environmental Protection Services. The Executive will be kept updated and, when appropriate, appraised of proposed options and how they will be pursued.

- **Financial –**

The Action Plan will require the financial resourcing of the Housing & Health Partnerships Services to be considered including decisions on increasing grant funding provision.

- **Legal –**

The Council has a legal obligation to deliver Balanced Housing Markets through its Housing Strategy and other functions i.e. addressing Homelessness. The importance of this is recognised in the CPA Inspectors Report and must be addressed to improve on the identified areas for improvement.

- **Corporate –**

The Action Plan requires that the role of Housing and Health Partnerships be fully recognised and significantly placed for the future at both a political and organisational level.

- **Risk Management –**

The Action Plan identifies risk factors against actions which could impede the delivery of outcomes.

- **Equality Issues –**

The Action Plan addresses the areas for improvement identified under this area.

- **Environmental –**

N/A

- **Crime and Disorder –**

Housing and Health Partnerships deliver services which impact significantly on people and this area.

- **Impact on Customers –**

As stated above, services are provided for customers who are usually the most vulnerable in society. Non development of the services through the improvement plan could impact significantly on customers.

## Appendix 1 – CPA Action Plan – Housing

### Area of Focus

How well does the Council understand its housing market and from its understanding has the Council developed the right proposals to help balance its housing markets?

Area for Improvement	Action	Milestone Dates	Risk Factors	Outcome
Insufficient information available on needs of rural and BME population and specific needs of younger and older people. (BME = Black and Minority Ethnic groups)	Development of Housing Strategy database containing key primary and secondary data relating to housing needs in rural and urban areas, together with specific client groups including young people, old people and BME population.	Jan 2004	Lack of capacity within section to deliver	Database for information collection to produce up to date details on the housing needs of all groups.
	Development of Housing Strategy and consultation with external groups and agencies including RSL's, builders, parish councils etc.	May 2004	Insufficient feedback from consultation process	A robust Housing Strategy which emphasises a strong awareness of a balanced housing market in rural and urban Carlisle.
	Training for BME diversity and accessibility issues for all staff as part of a corporate wider training programme.	Dec 2004	Low take-up of training programme	Staff awareness increased linked to corporate staff development
	A specific study and BME statement will be produced with a housing strategy to follow across the wider Carlisle and other LA areas.	Jan 2005		BME Housing Statement BME Housing Strategy

Area for Improvement	Action	Milestone Dates	Risk Factors	Outcome
Insufficient information available on needs of rural and BME population and specific needs of younger and older people.	Housing Needs survey of wards undertaken on a rolling basis. 3,000 questionnaires to Morton residents.	Dec 2003	Lack of capacity within section to deliver.	Primary data on housing and other needs in Morton initially and then extended to other areas.
	Residents Welcome Pack and form to core data from new residents to the area concerning their housing and other service needs.	May 2004	Lack of consistency across business units.	Primary information from new residents to the area to inform the City Council on housing and other related service needs.
Priorities and ambitions for housing are not sufficiently explicit and are not understood by all.	Priorities and ambitions for housing are being developed and will be core to the production of the Housing Strategy 2004-09	May 2004	Targets within the Strategy may be hampered by lack of finance & structured section.	Priorities and ambitions for housing are established through a targeted Housing Strategy whereby they are explicit, understandable and up to date.
	Review and restructure of the Housing Services and Health Partnerships section internally and within the organisation to deliver the Housing Strategy Action Plan.	Jun 2004	No action to restructure or review position of Housing within the Council.	Focus, coherent section capable of delivering the Housing Strategy Action Plan. Explicit and visible role for Housing within the Council structure.
	Training, promotion and awareness raising of the priorities, ambitions and role of housing inside and outside the City Council. This will include elected members, staff, customers and other agencies.	Oct 2004	Non participation by recipients internally or externally. Lack of corporate commitment to take forward.	Importance of housing is understood by all and can be measured through increased participation in events and consultation.

Area for Improvement	Action	Milestone Dates	Risk Factors	Outcome
Housing Strategy failed to demonstrate an understanding of the needs of the whole housing market, scored below average by GONW	New Housing Strategy for 2004-09 being developed within time scale agreed with GONW  New system for understanding the needs of the housing market being developed.  Improved communication with Planning Services and focus on all strategic housing issues through an internal working group (involving other units and linking to regeneration).	May 2004  May 2004  May 2004	Lack of capacity within section to deliver.	Production of a Housing Strategy rated as "Fit for Purpose" under new Government criteria
Insufficient Brown Field sites available to reach PPG3 target.	Issue recognised jointly with Planning Services and need to fully review and utilise all sites  Inclusion of Housing Services in all stages of Planning review and negotiation.	Dec 2004  Apr 2004	Lack of consistency across business units. Insufficient sites. Non co-operation between service units.	Sufficient Brown Field sites available in order to reach PPG3 target.  Housing input into the process for balancing the housing market.
Relationships with other RSL's need improving and social housing agreement is out of date.	One to one meetings held with RSL's in the district.  Development of Housing Strategy Forum and other consultation methods.  Inclusion of RSL's in the production of the Housing Strategy 2004-09.	Apr 2004	Non co-operation from RSL's.	Better understanding and relationships with RSL's, improved opportunities for joint working and housing developments.



Measure for improvement	Action	Milestone Dates	Risk Factors	Outcome
No history of LASHG to fund affordable housing schemes.	Review of options through planning system to maximise funding through sec.106 agreements.	Oct 2004	Lack of consistency across business units.	Use of planning system to access finance through sec.106 agreements.
	Review of LASHG provision	Oct 2004	No corporate commitment to fund affordable housing.	Grant provided by authority to fund provision of affordable housing.
Spending on grants has not increased despite evidence that private sector stock needs substantial investment.	Private sector stock survey carried out and evidence presented to Members.	Apr 2003	Non committal by Members on finance.	Increased Council allocation for provision of grant funding to improve unfit and substandard private sector housing stock.
	Draft proposals within the Housing Strategy.	May 2003	" " "	" " "
	Report to Members requesting additional funding as part of long term finance package for housing.	June 2004	" " "	" " "
Potential deficit on DFG budget could lead to the introduction of a waiting list.	Review of finance options to be undertaken including full use of Right To Buy receipts from LSVT agreement with CHA.	June 2004	Inadequate financial provision to fully fund DFG's. Collaborative working with CHA. Non provision of all the RTB receipts for DFG's. RTB receipts used to substitute core grants budget.	Increased funding for private sector improvements using all RTB receipts additional to the core funding to deliver on all DFG applications as prescribed in law.

Area for Improvement	Action	Milestone Dates	Risk Factors	Outcome
Council will not achieve 300 affordable homes.	Define affordability and refine this target to an achievable level.	May 2004		Realistic targets set for delivery of affordable housing.
	Collaborative work with Planning Services to maximise units through sec.106 agreements.	Oct 2004	Lack of consistency across business units.	Delivery of affordable housing units through the planning system.
	Review options relating to LASHG provision for affordable housing.	Oct 2004	No corporate commitment for grant funding of affordable housing.	Provision of LASHG funding for affordable housing.
Performance on reducing the numbers of empty private sector property is declining as is performance on meeting statutory planning targets.	Performance improved for BV62 (unfit dwellings) in 2002/03. CPA inspector's comments based on 2001/02 performance.	2002/03 onwards	Performance could slow if capacity & resources are restricted.	Performance has increased and outcome is being delivered. For BV62 (unfit dwellings) the 2001/02 figure was 70% which improved to 40% in 2002/03.
	Performance improved for BV64 (vacant dwellings) in 2002/03. CPA inspector's comments based on 2001/02 performance.	2002/03 onwards	Performance could slow if capacity & resources are restricted.	For BV64 (vacant dwellings) the 2001/02 figure was 0.84% which improved to 1.535 in 2002/03.
Unclear how the Council is using collected information to influence future housing strategies and plans.	Strategic information collection system adopted for use in developing and delivering the targets within the new Housing Strategy.	Apr 2004	Lack of structured capacity within section to deliver.	Clarity in how strategic information is collected and used to develop strategies and plans which will be approved by GONW through consultation.

Area for Improvement	Action	Milestone Dates	Risk Factors	Outcome
Progress on sec. 106 agreements is not routinely monitored.	Review to establish monitoring system for sec. 106 agreements.	Oct 2004		Established system developed and operated to monitor sec. 106 agreements.
Housing and Homelessness Strategies do not contain SMART action plans.	Homelessness Strategy Action Plan revisited to contain SMART targets.	Sept 2003	Inability to identify comparator local authorities.	Homelessness Strategy Action Plan rewritten as SMART.
Council is not monitoring performance of Carlisle Housing Association (CHA).	New Housing Strategy to contain SMART action plan using Beacon Council's good practice examples.	May 2004		SMART Action Plan in Housing Strategy 2004-09.
	Quarterly monitoring meetings held with CHA. Performance indicators established and monitored through Community O&S Committee.	Apr 2004	Collaborative working with CHA.	Regular meetings taking place between senior staff and CHA attending O&S Committee meetings.
	Current indicators to be reviewed in light of performance and monitored internally by the Housing Working Group.	Apr 2004	Indicators not being achieved.	Performance indicators in place and monitored.

