

Report of	Meeting	Date
Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance) (Introduced by the Executive Member for Business)	Executive Cabinet	3 September 2009

COTSWOLD SUPPORTED HOUSING – SERVICE IMPROVEMENT UPDATE

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To inform members of the progress made following the transfer back of Cotswold Supported Housing, which is a hostel owned and managed by the Council for the purpose of accommodating homeless people.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

- That the report be noted.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION (S)

(If the recommendations are accepted)

- The report is presented to advise Members of the improvements that have been to the provision of the service since the transfer back to the Council of responsibility for the service.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- None.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Put Chorley at the heart of regional economic development in the Central Lancashire sub-region		Develop local solutions to climate change.	
Improving equality of opportunity and life chances	x	Develop the Character and feel of Chorley as a good place to live	x
Involving people in their communities	x	Ensure Chorley Borough Council is a performing organization	x

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

6. The hostel provides the temporary accommodation the Council needs in order to meet its obligations under the Housing law regarding homelessness and in the past, it was managed by Chorley Community Housing, on behalf of the Council.
7. Following the transfer of the homelessness and Housing Advice Service it was agreed that the hostel should be transferred back to the Council, this would enable the delivery of a holistic service. The hostel was transferred on 2nd June 2009 and since then significant improvements have been made both to the service and also to the building and which have impacted on both the safety and the quality of service received by our customers.

BACKGROUND

8. The Management of Cotswold House, the Councils' own homeless hostel, was transferred over to Chorley Community Housing in March 2007 at the same time as the Housing Options Service. The service was contracted to Chorley Community Housing under a management agreement.
9. In October 2008 Executive Cabinet took the decision to transfer the hostel back to the Council in order to make the necessary service and accommodation improvements. The transfer took place on 2nd June 2009 and since then significant improvements have already been made creating a positive and safer environment for both residents and staff.
10. There were a number of issues, which were identified with the service and actions taken to address these, which have included the commission and implementation of a concierge service, which involves waking watch during the night and weekends. This has already had a positive impact on the delivery of the service and ensured any issues of anti social behaviour have been reduced. New policies and procedures have now been implemented which will improve service delivery and customer satisfaction and ensure we meet all the necessary standards and statutory requirements.
11. Phase one of the refurbishment works have now been completed and have immediately eradicated a number of issues of health and safety, security and accessibility of staff by introducing a new reception area, which is both welcoming and secure.
12. The first part of Phase two refurbishment work has now been completed introducing new office accommodation adjacent to the reception area. The second part of Phase two refurbishment work is about to commence and these include the redecoration of the accommodation, disabled facilities, segregating off areas for family accommodation, separate lounge for single homelessness residents, training kitchen and also a more appropriate soundproof interview/meeting room.
13. The Supported Housing Manager is leading a project which will involve looking at the multi agency links to the hostel and exploring ways to deliver better and more wider range of services for our customers, from housing advice surgeries, career and job advice, to life skills and teach basic numeracy and literacy. We have recently been successful in securing £20,000 pa for 3 years from Supporting People to help fund a Life Skills Co-ordinator and we will continue to work with partners to explore what other existing resources are available and any further accessible funding streams. This will all help to achieve our goal to provide good quality temporary accommodation and improve the life chances of our customers.
14. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Corporate Directors' comments are included:

Finance		Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	X
Legal		No significant implications in this area	

COMMENTS OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (POLICY & PERFORMANCE)

15. In line with the Council's Equality Scheme, an Equality Impact Assessment was completed re the transfer of Cotswold House back to the authority. Phase 2 of the refurbishment will address the actions arising from the EIA namely providing disabled facilities and providing a lounge for exclusive use by families with children.

LESLEY-ANN FENTON
ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE POLICY & PERFORMANCE

Report Authors	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Zoe Whiteside	5711	15 th July 2009	***