

MEETING:	ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND STRATEGIC HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE:	27 JULY 2009
TITLE OF REPORT:	AN INTRODUCTION TO THE HOMES AND COMMUNITIES AGENCY
PORTFOLIO AREA:	ENVIRONMENT & STRATEGIC HOUSING

CLASSIFICATION: Open

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To provide an overview of the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), and receive a presentation.

Recommendation

THAT subject to any comments the Committee wish to make the report and presentation be noted.

Key Points Summary

- The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) is responsible for the delivery of the National Affordable Housing Programme and the allocation of resources associated with its delivery.
- The HCA has developed a business process called the 'Single Conversation'. The process supports engagement with a wide range of stakeholders, including local authorities aimed at supporting the delivery of the range of housing, regeneration, infrastructure and community priorities.

Alternative Options

- 1 This report is for information, therefore, alternative options are not applicable.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2 This report is for information only.

Introduction and Background

- 3 The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) is the national housing and regeneration agency for England, with an annual investment budget of more than £5bn. The HCA was formed on 1 December 2008.
- 4 The HCA is a non-departmental public body and their sponsor government department is Communities and Local Government (CLG).
- 5 The HCA's Board is responsible for ensuring that the HCA carries out its functions effectively. The Chairman and members are appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.
- 6 The Agency was formed in conjunction with the Tenants Services Authority, the new regulator for affordable housing. Also launched on 1 December 2008, the TSA took over the regulatory powers of the Housing Corporation.
- 7 The Memorandum of Understanding between the Homes and Communities Agency and the Tenants Services Authority formally sets out how the two organisations will work together on areas of common interest. Being charged with delivering affordable housing and championing tenants' rights, the HCA and TSA have identified building sustainable communities as being top of their joint agendas.
- 8 By engaging local authorities in a 'single conversation' on all aspects of housing and regeneration, the HCA aims to connect local ambition with national targets. The Single Conversation is the HCA's most important business process – it is the way in which they agree and secure delivery at the local level in support of our national objectives. By working in an open and transparent way with local authorities and others they aim to become local government's best delivery partner, abling to secure more and reach better outcomes for each place.

Key Considerations

- 9 The HCA's priorities for the West Midlands are to:
 - a. Align housing and regeneration resources to support growth, place-making and housing renewal, and to deliver the government's targets for affordable homes.
 - b. Form partnerships and joint ventures to help unlock investment in areas including economic development, transport, education and health, and to create sustainable communities that meet the needs of local people.
 - c. Work with partners and stakeholders to develop new solutions to the challenges we face and to ensure high quality in all developments.
 - d. The National Affordable Housing Programme (NAHP) seeks to increase the supply of affordable homes in England. From 2008-11, the HCA will invest £8.4bn in affordable housing through the NAHP. Lead Partners will deliver 155,000 new homes and each year, a proportion of the homes built will be made available for low cost home ownership and social rent.

Community Impact

- 10 The HCA aims to support sustainable development within local communities by working with a range of partners, including local authorities to address local issues.

Financial Implications

- 11 There are no financial implications in this report. However, the HCA provides funding direct to a range of delivery partners, including Registered Social Landlords, to enable the development of affordable housing

Legal Implications

- 12 There are no legal implications relating to this report.

Risk Management

- 13 There are no risks associated with this report

Consultees

- 14 There are no consultees as the report is for information only.

Appendices

- 15 None.

Background Papers

Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 (Chapter 17)