

Inspection report

September 2004



# Regular Performance Assessment

Herefordshire Council

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## Introduction to Regular Performance Assessment

- 1 As part of its commitment to strategic regulation, the Commission has developed a risk-based approach to ensure that inspection and improvement work is targeted where it will have most value. This approach will use ‘regular performance assessment’ (RPAs) of those council services for which the Commission has responsibility, primarily housing, environment and cultural services (previously ‘libraries and leisure’) as part of this process.
- 2 The Commission’s view is that inspection scores should ‘time out’ after three years following their publication. This means that inspection scores which have not been replaced ‘naturally’ by further inspection activity in the same service or sub-service block, eg generated through improvement planning, will begin to fall out of the CPA numerical model in 2004 (other than for ‘excellent’ councils). This could lead to score changes without these necessarily reflecting real changes in service quality, up or down.
- 3 Regular performance assessments will enable the better use of resources by:
  - ◆ providing an opportunity to confirm existing CPA service scores (in housing, environment and culture) without the need for a full inspection; and
  - ◆ providing relationship managers with detailed, service-level information to inform the annual audit and inspection plan negotiations and so better target any improvement/inspection activity.
- 4 The detailed information collected through the RPA process, along with other available data, will help with complex decisions on inspection and improvement activity, leading to better risk-based planning and targeted and proportionate inspection and improvement activity. This approach will help to make the best use of councils’ and the Commission’s resources.
- 5 The approach to RPAs, based on a self-assessment against existing (and public) service criteria and key lines of enquiry, can of itself promote improvement and learning as councils identify their strengths and weaknesses at a service level. This will equip both councils and the Commission with evidence to undertake informed discussions in respect of which services and sub-services are working well and which are working less well.
- 6 RPAs have been designed in such a way as to also provide some insight, albeit at a high level, of the quality of service across the whole of the service area, including areas which have not been previously inspected.
- 7 This RPA covers the service block for Housing. This service block has three elements - Strategy and Enabling, Community Housing Services and Housing Management Services. All three elements will be covered for Councils with a housing stock, whereas for councils that have transferred their stock only the first two are relevant.
- 8 To ensure that the service score remains eligible to be included in the CPA improvement reporting in December 2004, the outcome of this RPA will either be:
  - ◆ to ratify that the score should stand; or
  - ◆ to recommend that an inspection should be carried out and reported on by 31 October 2004.

## Background and Context for Herefordshire

- 9 The last housing service inspection – ‘Homelessness and Housing Advice’, dated August 2001 will time out during 2004. In that report the inspectors judged that the service was excellent and would probably improve further. There has been no further substantive service inspection in the last three years and there is no regular inspection due to take place and report by 31 October 2004.
- 10 In November 2002 the Council transferred its housing stock to a newly created registered social landlord – Herefordshire Housing. At the same time the Council contracted out Homelessness and Housing Advice services to the same housing company under an agency agreement.
- 11 In addition to Homelessness and Housing Advice covered by the previous inspection, this RPA will cover other areas of strategic and community housing in order to provide a more holistic view, albeit at a high level.

## Executive Summary

- 12 We agree with the council’s self assessed scores of four<sup>1</sup> against Quality of Service, Demonstrated Improvement and Strategic Capacity to improve.
- 13 There is clear political and managerial support for a strong strategic housing function within the County. This role has become distinct since the stock transfer as a result of profile raising activities undertaken by the authority which have been designed to ensure a common purpose and understanding amongst officers, members and stakeholders. Since transfer, it is clear that the strategic housing section has established its own identity and it now has a full complement of staff in post.
- 14 The changing environment, future priorities and challenges facing the strategic housing section as they relate to Herefordshire are well understood by senior managers and members. Councillors are also very clear about their housing responsibilities since the stock transfer.
- 15 There is evidence of a joined up approach to the agendas of housing, health and social care, for example the Department of Health will be helping to fund a large planned extra care scheme in the County.
- 16 The Council demonstrates focus on local priorities, for example significant additional resources are being allocated to the older person’s client group. This is a demographically significant and growing sector of the population in Herefordshire.
- 17 Work is well under way for the new housing strategy with extensive, high quality housing needs data collected and priorities agreed. Negotiations are taking place with strategic partners to achieve equitable contributions for funding shared ambitions.

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<sup>1</sup> As part of their self assessment, councils are asked to score each key element on a scale of 1 - 4, where 1 = mainly weaknesses, 2 = weaknesses outweigh strengths, 3 = strengths outweigh weaknesses and 4 = mainly strengths.

- 18 One of the greatest challenges is the increasing demand for homeless accommodation and services. This manifests itself currently in an over-reliance on bed and breakfast accommodation especially for single people, which is recognised as undesirable. There is a shortage of temporary accommodation for the homeless. The Council is responding positively to this challenge in a number of ways including the development of an innovative partnership with Shelter to provide support and independent legal advice to the homeless throughout the process from the decision on their homelessness to the provision of settled accommodation. A proactive private sector leasing initiative is also showing positive results.
- 19 Choice based lettings are proving to give greater choice and empowerment to customers and the Council were one of the original 27 pilots for this initiative. Positive and negative feedback and experience gained by the Council and it's partners since the start of the scheme gathered from users, staff and stakeholders is now being used to enhance the service and to deploy resources to best effect.
- 20 The Supporting People Inspection in September 2003 gave uncertain prospects for improvement. The Council have responded positively to this with a robust implementation plan to take forward the recommendations, many of which are now in place.
- 21 There is clear understanding of the challenging issues facing the private sector renewal section and activities are targeted and prioritised accordingly. For example the two lowest scoring wards in the county under the indices of deprivation, are proactively targeted for resources. The Housing Renewal policy published in 2003 actively promotes the maintenance, improvement and energy efficiency of all residential property. The Council is aware that its private sector stock condition survey is out of date and has plans to address this in the current financial year.
- 22 A number of activities are designed to achieve value for money in strategic housing services, for example best value reviews, robust assessment of costs against service, maximisation of access to alternative sources of funding and cost benefit justification of decisions such as recruitment.
- 23 Performance management improvements have been made in the last eighteen months, with a head of performance appointment made and service managers trained and fully engaged. As a result of this the Council can now readily identify good and poor performance quickly and respond appropriately.
- 24 The strategic housing section clearly has a challenging agenda but, based on Herefordshire's current plans, is well placed to improve the way it works and the services it provides to local people.

## Judgement

- 25 Based on the evidence obtained during the performance assessment we have concluded that in respect of the service block for housing, the service score given to Hereford Council for their last housing service inspection – 'Homelessness and Housing Advice' in August 2001 should remain effective for the purposes of CPA improvement reporting.

**Mandy Day – Housing Inspector**

**Date of inspection: 18 May 2004**

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# Report

Quality of Service		
Strategy and Enabling	Strengths	Areas of improvement
<p><b>1. Create a well-informed and viable housing strategy</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ ‘Herefordshire Plan’ in place, revised 2003, – overarching community strategy. Plan contains ten Ambitions – one of which is ‘Meet Herefordshire’s accommodation needs’. All Housing related plans and strategies contribute to this ambition.</li> <li>◆ Partnership based ‘Housing Ambition group’ (linked to ambition in Herefordshire Plan) responsible for producing Housing Strategy.</li> <li>◆ Housing Strategy in place since 2002/03 deemed ‘very good’ by GOWM.</li> <li>◆ Full time Housing Market Research Officer employed</li> <li>◆ Extensive, high quality, housing needs data collected (26 local surveys since 2001, recent partnership rough sleepers count).</li> <li>◆ Currently recruiting additional resource to help deliver homelessness action plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Current housing strategy document is out of date - pre-dates stock transfer - but - New Housing Strategy being written to be Fit for Purpose. GO-WM confirm date for submission of new draft strategy late May/Early June 2004.</li> </ul>

<b>Strategy and Enabling</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Areas of improvement</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Priority given in housing strategy to supplement mainstream funding with other sources.</li> <li>◆ Active working with strategic partners to achieve equitable contributions for funding shared ambitions.</li> <li>◆ Plethora of consultative and informative meetings, surveys and fora in a variety of forms to involve users and stakeholders in determining priorities.</li> </ul>	
<b>2. Deliver the housing strategy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Following options appraisal – stock transfer - set out in Housing Investment Strategy.</li> <li>◆ Achieved transfer of stock to Herefordshire Housing in November 2002.</li> <li>◆ Ongoing performance management arrangements in place to ensure that tenant promises are met.</li> <li>◆ Many multi agency partnerships in place, both delivering services and initiatives such as energy efficiency.</li> <li>◆ Structures exist to monitor progress against targets and KPIs, including Scrutiny Committee, Herefordshire Partnership Management Board, Directorate Mgt teams, Staff Review and Development meetings and 1-2-1s.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ SMART action plans exist within old housing strategy but now out of date – latest 2002/03. New action plans being developed in conjunction with new strategy.</li> </ul>

Strategy and Enabling	Strengths	Areas of improvement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Council driving diversity agenda, researching needs of significant groups, especially travellers and E European temp agricultural workers.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>3. As part of the housing strategy, seek to match the supply of appropriate housing with local need</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Corporate ‘Development Impact Group’ in place consisting of planners, legal, strategic housing and others, to maximise opportunities for planning gain.</li> <li>◆ Strategic housing and Ambition group contributed to production of UDP.</li> <li>◆ SPG produced 2001 to enhance delivery of affordable housing, to be updated 2004.</li> <li>◆ Positive use of S106 agreements has provided additional affordable housing in the county.</li> <li>◆ Good relationships exist with RSL partners.</li> <li>◆ Council are developing a 5 year Capital expenditure programme to link with development programme and provide steer for RSLs on priorities. This should help to achieve a needs led rather than site led environment.</li> <li>◆ Award winning empty property strategy.</li> <li>◆ Proactively seeking to meet needs of different client groups eg LCHO for people with LD.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Overall shortage of affordable housing in the county.</li> <li>◆ Some key members of staff in the enabling team were lost and some new members have only limited development experience.</li> </ul>



Strategy and Enabling	Strengths	Areas of improvement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Reviewing sheltered accommodation with a view to remodelling/extra care.</li> <li>◆ Researching CBL data to assess whether best use of stock being made.</li> <li>◆ Learning from experience, the Council is regrouping areas of choice in CBL to better facilitate development of areas highlighted in UDP.</li> <li>◆ DOH funding has been successfully sought and obtained to help deliver a large extra care scheme in the county.</li> <li>◆ The enabling team has been restructured to ensure the delivery of this high profile project.</li> </ul>	
<b>4. Establish effective strategic planning arrangements for housing-related support services funded through Supporting People</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Supporting People Inspection in September 2003 gave 'Good' rating for services.</li> <li>◆ Supporting People Shadow Strategy rated Good by ODPM with clear links to other plans.</li> <li>◆ Services developed and review process under way.</li> <li>◆ Positive partnerships with providers.</li> <li>◆ Good progress in drafting the 5 year strategy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Supporting People Inspection in September 2003 gave 'uncertain' prospects for improvement but the Council has responded positively to this.</li> </ul>

<b>Strategy and Enabling</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Areas of improvement</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ A robust implementation plan has taken forward the recommendations of the SP inspection last September and has either addressed or is in the process of addressing the perceived weaknesses.</li><li>◆ Innovative partnership being developed with Shelter to support the homeless throughout the process, leveraging in independent legal advice and assistance.</li></ul>	

<b>Community Housing Services</b>  HOUSING NEEDS	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Areas of Improvement</b>
<b>1. Develop and publish the homelessness strategy and update it regularly</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Extensive review of homelessness informed the strategy.</li> <li>◆ Homelessness Strategy produced through consultative process with stakeholders, partners and homeless people.</li> <li>◆ Local PSA entered into to bring faster improvement in priority area to reduce repeat homelessness.</li> </ul>	
<b>2. Provide appropriate support to homeless people and those at risk of homelessness (across all tenures) to help them sustain tenancies or home ownership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Previous AC inspection complimented customer focus.</li> <li>◆ Homelessness and Housing Advice contracted out to Herefordshire Housing at stock transfer. Existing staff transferred with service.</li> <li>◆ Homepoint established to be central info source.</li> <li>◆ Offices located in main towns, surgeries in others.</li> <li>◆ New service standards being developed.</li> <li>◆ PIs for advice services under review.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Service standards developed and on display but out of date.</li> <li>◆ Statistics reflect increasing use of B&amp;B in first three quarters of 2003/04.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Community Housing Services</b></p> <p><b>HOUSING NEEDS</b></p>	<p><b>Strengths</b></p>	<p><b>Areas of Improvement</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Range of written information, available in different formats including access to info in different languages.</li> <li>◆ Plans to develop Housing Advice Strategy for the County.</li> <li>◆ Council undertaking review of B&amp;B, hostel accommodation.</li> <li>◆ Plans to locate options officer in each Homepoint office.</li> <li>◆ SMART actions/targets in homelessness action plan to reduce/prevent homelessness.</li> <li>◆ Council hold quarterly review meetings with Agency to ensure that quality of service is maintained following the transfer of a historically good service to their contractor.</li> </ul>	

<b>Community Housing Services</b>  HOUSING NEEDS	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Areas of Improvement</b>
<b>3. Administer homelessness applications in an efficient, effective and sensitive manner and in line with the relevant legislation, Codes of Guidance on homelessness and Allocations and the Priority Needs Orders</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Protocols in place with relevant agencies including RSL forum, Herefordshire Housing, MAPPP.</li> <li>◆ Homeless decisions audited and appeals/review process in place.</li> <li>◆ Hostels subject to inspection against a standard.</li> <li>◆ Homeless applicants receive priority cards for CBL.</li> </ul>	
<b>4. Ensure the availability of temporary accommodation of a suitable nature and location and support the needs of those placed in such accommodation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Development in progress to provide additional temporary accommodation, with SP funding for tenancy support.</li> <li>◆ Hostel standards inspected by Private Sector Housing Enforcement team.</li> <li>◆ Plans to decommission accommodation with shared facilities.</li> <li>◆ Length of stay in B&amp;B reducing (BVPI183a and b).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Despite improving BVPIs, recognised over-reliance on B&amp;B for temporary accommodation especially for singles.</li> <li>◆ Shortage of temporary accommodation and some accommodation still in use with shared facilities.</li> </ul>

<b>Community Housing Services</b>  HOUSING NEEDS	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Areas of Improvement</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Floating support services provided for homeless.</li> <li>◆ Private sector leasing scheme proactively targets owners of empty homes as identified by Council tax records. This has resulted in additional units of accommodation being made available to the homeless.</li> </ul>	
<b>5. Effectively administer the local registration scheme for housing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Consultants engaged January 2004 to review Allocations policy (following stock transfer and CBL) - new policy scheduled for consideration by members in June.</li> <li>◆ Agreement in place for common CBL based housing register between the Council and five HAs.</li> <li>◆ Information for applicants readily accessible to those with English as first language, including Braille.</li> <li>◆ Quarterly monitoring reports produced.</li> <li>◆ Appeals process in place.</li> <li>◆ Applicants use Homepoint to keep themselves informed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ No indication on Homepoint literature 'How to apply for a home in Herefordshire' or 'Complaints and Appeals' of how to obtain the information in other languages.</li> <li>◆ Some partner HA's housing a greater percentage of homeless (priority cards) than others.</li> </ul>

<b>Community Housing Services</b>  HOUSING NEEDS	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Areas of Improvement</b>
<b>6. Secure settled accommodation according to local allocation policies which, as a minimum, comply with the relevant Housing Acts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ All five partner landlords have committed their whole stock to CBL.</li> <li>◆ Applicants can access housing in the whole county from one point – no need for nominations.</li> <li>◆ Little or no matching required as bidding process negates need.</li> <li>◆ A project board with all partners represented oversees the effectiveness of CBL, receives performance reports and develops policy/enhancements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Growing understanding of support needs through CBL but still requiring further work.</li> </ul>
<b>7. Increase choice to housing applicants in accordance with the target set by ODPM of all authorities having a Choice- Based Letting scheme in place by 2010</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ CBL in place since 2002.</li> <li>◆ Appropriate mix and balance of housing sought through SPG.</li> <li>◆ Homebuy, DIYSO and mortgage rescue schemes in place and in development.</li> <li>◆ Homepoint used to promote S/O vacancies.</li> </ul>	

<b>Community Housing Services</b>  HOUSING NEEDS	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Areas of Improvement</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ 'You@home'scheme developed to promote cross tenure grant aided repairs and adaptations.</li> </ul>	
<b>PRIVATE SECTOR FUNCTIONS</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Areas of improvement</b>
<b>1. Set a long term strategic approach to improve living conditions in the private sector.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Private Sector Stock Condition Survey produced 2001.</li> <li>◆ Housing Renewal Policy published March 2003 for 03-06, supports Housing Strategy and Herefordshire Plan in promoting maintenance improvement and energy efficiency of all residential property.</li> <li>◆ Targets set for BVPI 62 and 64 and also for local PIs.</li> <li>◆ Two lowest scoring wards in indices of deprivation targeted for resources.</li> <li>◆ Home Improvement Agency in Place (Anchor).</li> <li>◆ Empty Property Strategy identifies lower than average percentage (1.9) of empty properties.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Private sector stock condition survey is out of date and has not been updated on an annual basis, although there are plans to address this during 2004/05.</li> </ul>



<b>Community Housing Services</b>  PRIVATE SECTOR FUNCTIONS	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Areas of Improvement</b>
<b>2. Engage effectively with residents and landlords about the management and maintenance of their properties</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Active Private landlords' forum in place, meeting every two to three months.</li> <li>◆ Systematic customer satisfaction surveys from HMO landlords and tenants used to gauge effectiveness of financial assistance and enforcement processes.</li> <li>◆ Feedback from users receiving financial assistance and in relation to contractor quality.</li> <li>◆ Complaints used to drive improvements to services</li> <li>◆ HMO registration scheme.</li> <li>◆ Inspection of HMO's and privately rented accommodation planned/carried out on risk basis.</li> <li>◆ Landlords code of standards for private rented housing.</li> <li>◆ Tenants consulted and informed when enforcement action taken against their landlords.</li> <li>◆ Efforts made by private sector renewal section to engage with hard to reach groups appropriate to local context eg travellers, East European migrant workers.</li> </ul>	

<b>Community Housing Services</b>  <b>PRIVATE SECTOR FUNCTIONS</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Areas of Improvement</b>
<b>3. Provide and manage financial and other forms of assistance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Housing Renewal policy sets priorities.</li> <li>◆ County wide HIA with SP funding and strategic housing budget funding.</li> <li>◆ BVR under way - private sector housing - will explore VFM and cost effectiveness.</li> <li>◆ Local PI Targets set and met for grant administration process.</li> <li>◆ Grant procedures have appropriate audit and authorisation channels.</li> <li>◆ Annual audit checks on grant awards.</li> <li>◆ Prince 2 awareness training corporately.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Too early to see results from the best value review of private sector housing.</li> </ul>
<b>4. Deliver an effective enforcement approach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Policy framework in place for private sector enforcement.</li> <li>◆ HMOs and other private rented accommodation proactively inspected on a risk basis.</li> <li>◆ Income generated from eg HMO registration scheme used to supplement services (£28k during Year 1).</li> </ul>	

<b>Community Housing Services</b>  PRIVATE SECTOR FUNCTIONS	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Areas of Improvement</b>
<b>5. Secure effective partnership working</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Multiple partnerships in place.</li> <li>◆ Ward based renewal initiative includes Anchor, You@Home, Energy Advice Centre, OTs and others.</li> </ul>	
<b>Demonstrated Improvement</b>		
<b>Strategy and Enabling</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Restructured and augmented Housing Policy and Strategy Team following stock transfer, including Information and Performance Officer to improve performance management.</li> <li>◆ Ensures influence on regional agenda by representation on key groups of key housing and planning officers.</li> <li>◆ Forward capital investment planning and prioritisation shared with key partners to encourage response to Councils strategic priorities.</li> <li>◆ Strategic housing managers now sit on housing ambition group to develop further understanding of roles and opportunities.</li> </ul>	

<p><b>Community Housing Services</b></p> <p><b>PRIVATE SECTOR FUNCTIONS</b></p>	<p><b>Strengths</b></p>	<p><b>Areas of Improvement</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ As a result of a recommendation in AC Housing and Homelessness Report to have better representation from elected members and external stakeholders on BVRs, all BVRs since included broader representation.</li> <li>◆ Electronic service delivery achieved in SPLS.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Community Housing Services</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Comprehensive improvement plan implemented by Supporting People Team following inspection last September results include more focussed priorities, new provider forum, process maps.</li> <li>◆ New Services commissioned for homeless families including 34 units of furnished temporary accommodation.</li> <li>◆ Recycled SP funding has enabled support for six additional units of transitional housing for women fleeing domestic violence.</li> <li>◆ Client specific housing plans developed eg LD housing Strategy, others in progress eg mental health. Offenders.</li> <li>◆ Choice based lettings one of 27 pilot authorities.</li> </ul>	

<b>Strategic Capacity to Improve</b>		
<b>Ambition</b>	Specific long term ambitions for housing clearly expressed and supported by a robust corporate planning framework.	
<b>Priorities</b>	Directorate Service and Improvement Plan reflects priorities derived from formation of housing and other related strategies. These in turn show how stakeholders were involved and consulted.	
<b>Focus</b>	Improvements in Strategic Housing shaped around customer needs. Focus maintained by inclusion of strategic housing as a standard agenda item on directorate management team, by member briefings and housing newsletters.	
<b>Capacity</b>	Consultants and secondments used to augment capacity in Strategic housing. Advantage taken of joint funding opportunities to increase capacity eg Homepoint. Capital receipt from stock transfer will assist strategic housing to meet capital investment priorities.	
<b>Performance Management</b>	Corporately new Performance Management Framework launched May 2003 in response to CPA, and new post Head of Performance Management appointed September 2003. Reporting structures and systems in place to manage organisations and individuals. Consistent approach to PM now embedded and all managers trained. Performance information routinely provided to members and service users. Staff appraisal system in place with team and individual targets linked to national and local PI's for the service.	

<b>Strategic Capacity to Improve</b>		
	<p>Risk Management Strategy in place, linked to service planning. BVR for Enabling complete, BVR for Strategic housing in progress.</p>	
<b>Learning</b>	<p>Yearly staff opinion survey conducted, results collated, shared and improvement suggestions made Training needs analyses conducted and factored into personal development plans. Themed Directorate Managers conferences held. In January Strategic housing presented half day session for members on their roles post transfer. Feedback and consultation process in place plus directorate employs a complaints officer.</p>	
<b>Future Plans</b>	<p>To become 'excellent' in CPA terms at next assessment Influence on Regional Housing Strategy via engagement Ability to adapt plans to changing circumstances eg 5 Year capital investment plan, reviewed in light of loss of LASHG.</p>	

## Appendices

### Documents reviewed

Before going on site we reviewed various documents that the council provided for us. These included:

- ◆ their self assessment;
- ◆ a variety of strategy documents including housing investment strategy, homeless strategy and action plan, and the Herefordshire Plan;
- ◆ Supporting People Inspection Improvement Plan;
- ◆ service documents including policies, protocols, information leaflets and newsletters;
- ◆ choice based lettings partnering agreement;
- ◆ relevant committee reports and extracts;
- ◆ performance reports; and
- ◆ minutes of key meetings.

### Reality checks undertaken

When we went on site we carried out a number of different checks, building on the work described above, in order to get a full picture of how good the service is. Our reality checks included:

- ◆ interviews with staff members;
- ◆ visit to Homepoint offices;
- ◆ tour of schemes and developments including Pomona Place;
- ◆ telephone calls to stakeholders; and
- ◆ a review of performance information available through other agencies, eg BVPIs.

### List of people interviewed

Sue Fiennes	Service Director
Richard Gabb	Head of Strategic Housing
Adam Russell	Housing Strategy Manager
Jane Thomas	Enabling Manager
Denise Bradley Lloyd	Private Sector Housing Manager