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**REPORT TO: COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE ON 8 DECEMBER 2015**

**SUBJECT: HOUSING AND PROPERTY SERVICE PLAN 2015/16 –  
PROGRESS QUARTERS 1 AND 2**

**BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR (ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,  
PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE)**

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1 This report sets out the progress achieved in the implementation of the actions agreed within the Housing and Property Service Plan 2015/16.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (G) (2) of the Council's Administrative Scheme relating to the functions of the Housing and Property Service.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Communities Committee considers and notes this progress report.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 At its meeting on 26 May 2015, the Communities Committee agreed the Housing and Property Service Plan for 2015/16 (paragraph 8 of the Minute refers).

**4. PROGRESS ACHIEVED**

- 4.1 Actions were presented within the Service Plan under four priorities –
- Increase the supply of affordable housing
  - Tackle homelessness
  - Manage our assets effectively
  - Improve service quality

**APPENDIX I** provides details of progress achieved in Quarters 1 and 2.

- 4.2 The Service Plan for 2015/16 originally identified a total of 40 actions to be completed during the course of the year. Sixteen actions were due for completion by 30 September 2015. Of these, 15 actions have been completed and good progress has been achieved on the one remaining item.

**Review of back office functions** - This review was focussed around the retirement of the Housing Services Manager and identified potential savings to both the Housing Revenue and General Services Accounts. The proposal is intended to streamline the strategy and policy functions as well as enhancing the management arrangements around Landlord Registration. As at 30 September 2015, the review is approx. 80% complete and will be fully implemented no later than 31 January 2016.

- 4.3 An additional item has been added to the Service Plan in 2015/16 to reflect its strategic economic importance to Moray. The Local Plan identified Barmuckity Business Park as the main future business development area for Elgin over the next 10 years. Negotiations with the landowner and a local developer were being supported by HIE to facilitate the development of the business park in 2 phases. These negotiations broke down during 2015 and it was recognised by Officers that without the supply of land, the economic development of Elgin/Moray would be restricted. To support the objective, the Council is undertaking an option appraisal to establish if the Council could take this development forward or act as a catalyst to the private sector. A strategy for undertaking the study has been agreed and timescales for each stage are currently being developed. Progress on this particular action will be reported as part of the Service Plan at year end.
- 4.4 The Service Plan is closely monitored by Service Managers. Of the remaining actions due for completion by 31 March 2015, two will require closer attention for the remainder of this year.

**Private Sector Housing Grants** – The Home Improvements Team has recently managed to recruit a key Officer who will have responsibility for progressing adaptations and repairs to older peoples' homes. The Officer has been tasked to try and recover the current position.

**Improve Health and Safety arrangements within the Service** – This work is now progressing in parallel with a corporate working group led by the Chief Executive. There are already existing health and safety policies/procedures operating within the service but these clearly need to be strengthened if we are to give this the rightful priority that it deserves in the workplace. It is now expected that the service will have revised enhanced arrangements in place by 31 March 2016.

## 5. **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

### **(a) Council/Community Planning Priorities**

The Service Plan reflects the priorities outlined in the Moray 2023 plan and also reflects priorities identified in the preparation of the Council's Local Housing Strategy.

### **(b) Policy and Legal**

There are no policy and legal implications to consider.

### **(c) Financial Implications**

There are no immediate financial implications arising from this report. Any financial implications arising from implementation of specific Service Plan actions will be presented in further detail to the relevant Committee.

**(d) Risk Implications**

A risk assessment has been completed by the Service. Work will be carried out by December 2015 to review sectional risk assessments.

**(e) Staffing Implications**

There are no staffing implications arising from this report.

**(f) Property**

There are no property implications arising from this report.

**(g) Equalities**

There are no equalities issues arising from this report.

**(h) Consultations**

Consultation on this report has been carried out with senior managers in the Housing and Property Service. Any comments have been incorporated in the report.

**6. CONCLUSION**

**6.1 This report provides details of progress during Quarters 1 and 2 in the implementation of the actions agreed as part of the Housing and Property Service Plan 2015/16.**

Author of Report:	Richard Anderson
Background Papers:	Held by author
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