

Strategic Housing

Copeland Borough Council

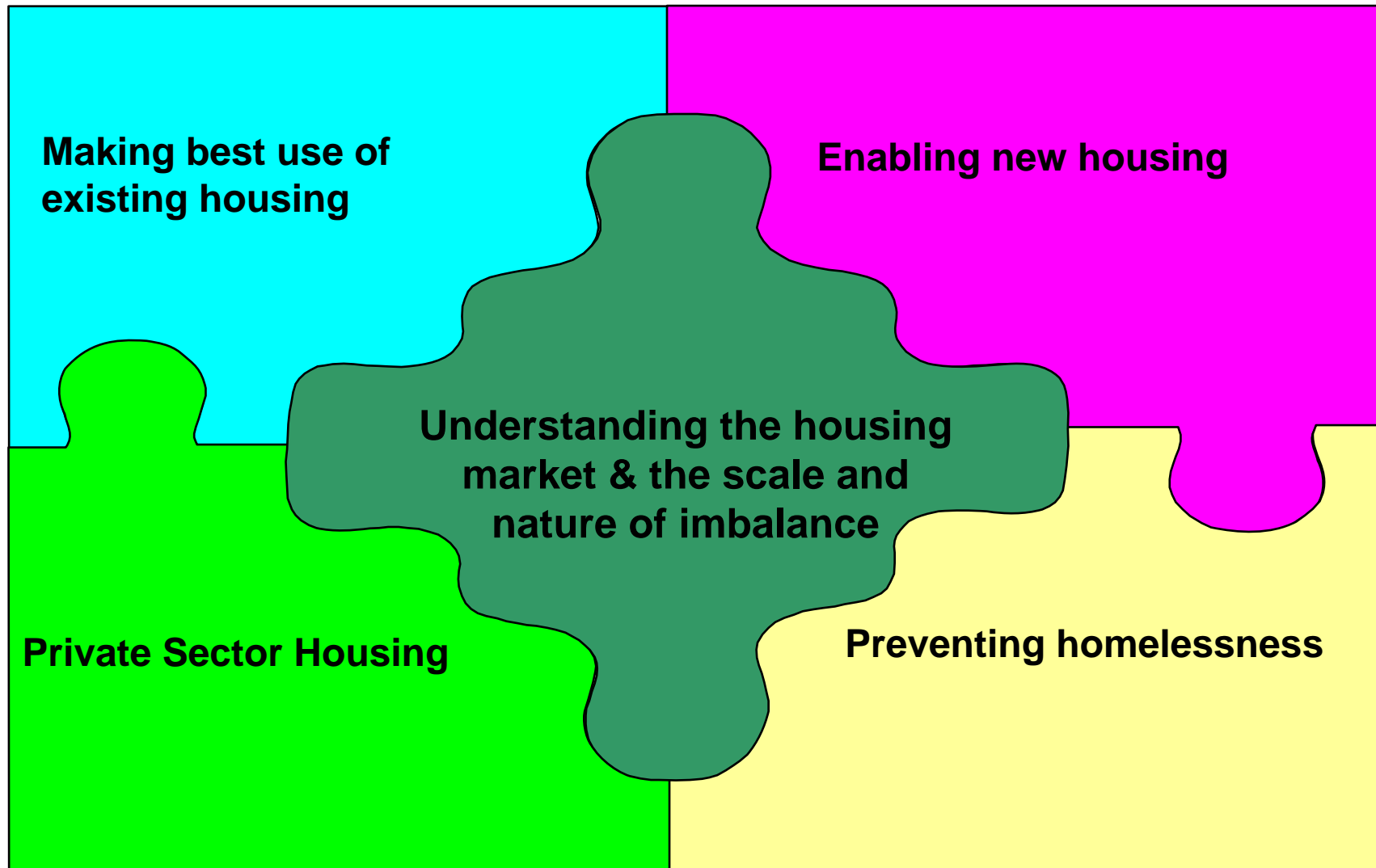


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Housing Inspectorate

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AC report 'Housing After Transfer'



Housing after transfer

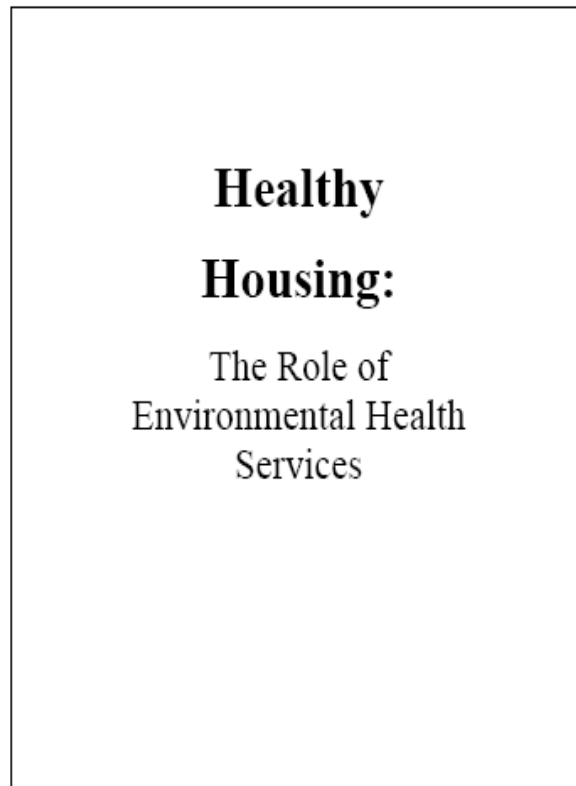
The local authority role

Many Councils face difficulties in:

- Ensuring sufficient capacity in housing to deal with new initiatives & contribute to wider council aims
- Building effective relationships with partners
- Aligning housing with other functions to support Council aims
- Reducing costs following transfer
- Ensuring effective leadership of service - retaining focus & maintaining position as the recognised leader in local housing
- **Issues for LSVTs, ALMOs & new unitaries?**

AC report 'Healthy Housing- the Role of Environmental Health Services'

A•U•D•I•T
COMMISSION



- Need for a strategy with clear priorities based on up-to-date local information.
- Need to set service target times & have efficient property inspection procedures.
- Full use of enforcement powers with follow-up procedures - negligence?
- Huge variations in productivity - 4 times as many notices & 3 times as many grants per officer - need for specialist teams.
- Tenants should be kept informed & provided with advice & assistance.
- Despite years of action still persistent unfitness & disrepair, particularly in HMOs - 15 to 20 years to improve all of these

The self-assessment

- 30 pages covering context (4), quality of service (20), prospects for improvement (4) & a summary action plan
- Self-assessment is used by us to refine the scope and focus of the inspection
- Be honest – identify strengths and weaknesses – don't give us a sales brochure!
- Should demonstrate self-awareness & focus on **outcomes** not process or awards/assurance
- Support judgements with clear, signposted evidence - use footnotes/ hyperlinks, summaries.

How good is the service?

1. What has the service aimed to achieve?
2. Is the service meeting needs of community and/or users?
 - **Strategic Housing performance outcomes using the revised Key Line of Enquiry (KLOE)**
 - **Cross-cutting KLOEs covering Customer Focus, Equality & Diversity & value for money.**
3. Is the service delivering value for money?
 - How do costs compare? How is value for money managed?

Equality & customer-focused services

- All AC methodologies assess services from the point of view of **all** customers and local communities:
 - How well does the organisation understand its customers, their diversity and their needs?
 - How well does the leadership, values and culture of the organisation support being equality & customer-focused?
 - Are equality & customer-focused principles at the heart of service design, delivery and improvement?
 - How effectively does the organisation (with its partners) consult, communicate with and involve all its customers?
 - Is the organisation setting itself challenging diversity & customer-focused targets and standards and is this **making a difference?**

Value for money

- Are costs and how they compare understood?
- Does the Council use high quality information and benchmarking on costs and quality to actively manage performance, improve value for money and target resources?
- Do costs reflect policy decisions?
- Has the service improved value for money and achieved efficiency gains?
- Value for money is integral to the council's performance management arrangements and 'culture'.
- Systematic reviews have covered all major functions and led to improvements in services and value for money.
- External funding has been successfully used to address local priorities resulting in sustained improvements and greater long-term value for money.

Strategic approach to housing KLOE

- Looks at a number of areas including:
 - Strategies - based on an understanding of the housing market
 - Partnerships - internally & externally
 - Involvement of users & stakeholders
 - Corporate approach to delivery

Strategic approach - strategies

- Good information on local housing conditions and housing needs
- Housing Strategy framework comprehensive and up-to-date;
 - Underpinned by sub-strategies to meet government requirements (e.g. Homelessness; Private sector renewal), and
 - Address specific issues & diverse needs (e.g. Affordable housing; BME housing; Older Persons; G&T)
- Robust Local Plan & Local Development Framework with 5-year supply underpinned by LDS/CS and SPG/SPDs on affordable housing, s106 contributions, design etc
- A clear and co-ordinated strategic framework that links services and partners
 - homelessness – housing needs – private sector – planning – enabling – LSP/LAA etc

Strategic approach - partnerships

- Strategic approach means working together in partnership to tackle the problems set out in the housing & other strategies.
- Cannot do it all alone - all sections of the council, neighbouring councils/county council & the council's partner agencies.
- Examples include RSLs, private landlords, developers & statutory agencies such as the RPB, HACCA/housing corporation & GONW

Strategic approach – stakeholders/users

- Extent to which the aims, priorities & approach being taken have been developed with others
 - Wide ranging consultation of diverse communities when strategies prepared
 - Proactive approach to community involvement and front-loading through Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)
 - Specific action to involve service users
 - On-going engagement to check progress – e.g. Forum or Panel
 - User/customer feedback mechanisms

Strategic approach – corporate approach

- Corporate approach:
 - Internal working groups
 - Housing enabling, homelessness, private sector & planning
 - Involvement of housing benefits & legal services
 - Working across ‘silos’
- Clear focus by all on how corporate/strategic housing objectives will be met
 - In housing & other staff appraisals
 - Consistent across service & team plans
 - Not just seen as housing – links to the economy, health, independence, sustainability & educational attainment

Making best use of existing housing

- Good quality advice & prevention work on homelessness/ use of B&B or hostels
- Effectiveness of policies in enabling people to remain in their own homes in suitably & sustainable properties for example, through DFGs & energy efficiency work
- Progress with new private sector powers for example, HMOs, empty homes.
- Work with RSLs – close working on nominations, tailoring stock, quick relets, disabled adaptations?
- Progress in reducing non-decency in the private sector for example, through grants & loans

Enabling new housing

- Enabling all housing – planning performance for example, on the number of new homes developed/density/brownfield development
- Enabling new housing – performance outcomes for example, percentage affordable housing delivered, delivery on rural exceptions sites & number of homes achieved through s106 agreements, quality of development

Judgement 1 KLOE descriptors

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Excellent ★★★ | A service that delivers well above minimum requirements for users, is highly cost-effective & fully contributes to the achievement of wider outcomes for the community. |
| Good ★★ | A service that consistently delivers above minimum requirements for users, is cost-effective & makes contributions to wider outcomes for the community. |
| Fair ★ | A service that delivers only minimum requirements for users & is not especially cost-effective, nor contributes significantly to wider outcomes for the community. |
| Poor (0 stars) | A service that does not deliver minimum requirements for users, is not cost-effective & makes little or no contribution to wider outcomes for the community. |

What are the prospects for improvement?

1. What is the service track record in delivering improvement?
2. How well does the service manage performance?
 - Effective performance management & improvement planning
 - Effective leadership of service - focus on strategic housing function
3. Does the service have the capacity to improve?
 - Sufficient capacity in housing to respond to new initiatives & contribute to wider council aims
 - Building effective relationships with partners
 - Housing aligned with other functions to support the Council's aims

Building blocks' for improvement



- Provide effective & visible **leadership** - clear long-term vision translated into tangible ambitions, aims & objectives
- Be **ambitious** - set stretching aims that are clear & stretching & will make a real difference to all users
- Pull together - maximise **capacity** through effective ICT, HR & procurement, good partnerships & working relationships

Building blocks' for improvement



- **Manage performance** - the right systems in place to measure and manage performance effectively
- Demonstrate self-awareness & look to **learn** from best performers & own experience
- Robust **plans for the future**
AND
- 'Stick at it' - maintain **focus**
AND
- Demonstrate a **track record of improvement**

Judgement 2 descriptors

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Excellent prospects | Improvement arrangements & capacity are well above the minimum requirements needed to deliver improvements in outcomes & value for money. Few if any barriers to improvement exist. |
| Promising prospects | Improvement arrangements & capacity are consistently above the minimum requirements needed to deliver <i>improvements in outcomes & VFM.</i> Enablers of improvement strongly outweigh barriers to improvement. |
| Uncertain prospects | Improvement arrangements & capacity such that delivery of improvements in outcomes & in VFM is uncertain. Enablers & barriers to improvement are finely balanced |
| Poor prospects | Improvement arrangements & capacity do not meet the minimum requirements. Barriers strongly outweigh enablers OR few enablers are in place. |

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Contact Details

Kieran Colgan

Lead Housing Inspector

Units 3 - 6 Blenheim Court

Matford Business Park

Lustleigh Close

Exeter EX2 8PW

k-colgan@audit-commission.gov.uk

