

**Subject:** Audit Commission Housing  
Inspection

**Status:** For Publication

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**Report to:** Cabinet

**Date:** 21<sup>st</sup> March 2007

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**Report of:** Head of Economic Regeneration & Strategic Housing

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**Portfolio**

**Holder:** Cabinet Member for Regeneration

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**Key Decision:**

No

Forward Plan

General Exception

Special Urgency

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**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To advise Members of the outcome of the inspection of the Council's Strategic Housing Services undertaken by the Audit Commission in December 2006

**2. CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

2.1 The matters discussed in this report are linked to and support the following corporate priorities:

- *Housing*
- *Environment*
- *Improvement*
- *Delivering Regeneration across the Borough (Economy)*
- *Partnerships*

**3. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 There are no specific risk issues for members to consider arising from this report.

**4. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS**

4.1 The inspection was carried out by the Audit Commission Housing Inspectorate under section 10 of the Local Government Act 1999 and in line with their strategic regulation principles.

- 4.2 The inspection of the Strategic Housing Services assessed the service using published key lines of enquiry. and looked at the following service areas: access and customer care, diversity, strategy and enabling, homelessness and housing need, private sector housing strategy and enabling, value for money and prospects for improvement.
- 4.3 Following the inspection, the Audit Commission rate the service on two criteria.
- How good the service is, on a scale ranging from no stars for a service that is poor to three stars for an excellent service.
  - The improvement prospects for the service on a four point scale – poor, uncertain, promising and excellent.
- 4.4 The Audit Commissions have assessed Rossendale as providing a 'fair', one-star service that has promising prospects for improvement.
- 4.5 This is a good outcome for the service, considering that the Strategic Housing function is relatively new, being established following the Housing Stock Transfer, and the Housing Inspectorate are particularly strict in their assessments.
- 4.6 The report completed by the Audit Commission details a number of strengths and weaknesses for the service and offers practical pointers for improvement through a series of recommendations.
- 4.7 These recommendations will now be included in the Economic Regeneration and Strategic Housing Business Plan and monitored through the business plan process.
- 4.8 The report is in its draft stage at the moment but the final version is a public document and will be posted on the Audit Commission and Council's website during March.

## **5. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF FINANCIAL SERVICES**

- 5.1 The Report does not directly reveal any financial implications though that does not preclude financial implications arising out of the Inspectors recommendations.

## **6. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

- 6.1 There are no immediate legal implications.

## **7. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES**

- 7.1 The Human Resources and Equality implications of the report will be identified and built into the HR Business Plan.

## 8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The Housing Inspection provides both a learning opportunity and the opportunity to continue to improve services for local people. The outcome demonstrates that Rossendale is serious about delivering improvement has made real progress in developing service provision.

## 9. RECOMMENDATION

- 9.1 That this report be noted.

## 10. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

- 10.1 Cabinet Member for Regeneration

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No background papers