

Agenda Item No:

Report No:

Report Title: Housing Benchmarking

Report To: Scrutiny Committee

Date: 25 April 2013

Cabinet Member: Cllr Ron Maskell

Ward(s) Affected: All

Report By: Corporate Head – Housing Services

Contact Officer(s)-

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Purpose of Report:

To report on the current benchmarking activities that have been carried out, or are currently ongoing within Housing Services.

Officers Recommendation(s):

- 1 That Scrutiny Committee examines the current areas of benchmarking and considers any areas for improvement or requiring further analysis.
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Reasons for Recommendations

- 1 Benchmarking and Value for Money Studies can help to identify areas of council activity, or service delivery, that have potential to yield additional income or reduce costs, or improve services to the public.

Information

2 HouseMark Performance Improvement

- 2.1 We are members of HouseMark which assists us with benchmarking in a number of different ways.
- 2.2 As part of HouseMark we subscribe to the HouseMark South East Performance Improvement Club, Stock Retained Councils Club & Complaints Club. Each club holds three meetings per year and are an opportunity to hear presentations from other organisations on best practice and also to hold group discussions on best practice.

- 2.3** Membership also gives us online access to forums which allows discussion about best practice.
- 2.4** We take part in HouseMark's core benchmarking system which enables us to make a value for money assessment of our operations across the broad range of our business activities. This assessment is done across the three key areas of cost of delivery, resources for delivery and performance. The information can be used in two ways:
- Internally: To assess how well we are performing internally and see how resources are being allocated between the different activities and how this is impacting on cost and performance.
- Externally: To compare with other organisations
- 2.5** The information we provide is validated by HouseMark and a report issued annually. At request HouseMark will visit members and present the findings of the report.
- 2.6** We can also create our own reports, benchmarking our services with any selection of the 571 organisations that are members of HouseMark. A selection can be made by organisation type, stock size, area or to individually select organisations of our choice. Please see Appendix 1 for an example of a report that can be produced using HouseMark.
- 2.7** We are not as complete with our core benchmarking work as we would like but it is being prioritised by the newly appointed Housing Policy and Performance Manager and we will have significantly fuller data next year. However the data contained in Appendix 1 should be viewed with caution in light of this.
- 2.8** Our membership to HouseMark also entitles us to take part in specialist benchmarking products at no extra cost for areas such as complaints and anti social behaviour. We are not currently taking part in these activities and our systems are not currently set up to report in a way that would allow us to feed into this.

3 South East Training Uniting People (SETUP)

We are members of SETUP which is a consortium of nine local housing providers. This group enables us to compare our tenant participation costs and also to compare costs against the actual tenant participation work that is carried out. When comparing our Tenant Involvement Service against neighbouring housing providers with a similar number of properties this year, the amount spent on tenant involvement per household is:

- Lewes District Council £21.44
- Wealden District Council £28.52
- Adur District Council £24.42

(Information from Eastbourne Homes is still awaited)

4 Financial Appraisal

There is provision in the base budget each year for a number of detailed benchmarking studies.

5 Legal Implications

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

6 Sustainability Implications

I have not completed the Sustainability Implications Questionnaire as this Report is exempt from the requirement because it is a progress report.

8 Background Papers

None

Appendices

Appendix 1 - 2011/12 Housemark Benchmarking Cost Summaries