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## HOUSING INSPECTORATE – REPORT ON GENERAL FUND HOUSING SERVICES

### 1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report introduces a “Voluntary Improvement Work” report produced by the Housing Inspectorate following a visit to the Council earlier this year. Voluntary Improvement Work takes the form of a consultancy project and whilst it is not a formal inspection, the conclusions and recommendations are important and need to be considered and used to improve services and performance.
- 1.2 The report is appended and it is anticipated that Mr Mark Elsworth, Lead Housing Inspector for the East of England, will be attending the Committee meeting to present the findings.

### 2 REPORT DETAILS

- 2.1 The report deals with a range of general fund housing functions – housing strategy, enabling, private sector housing, homelessness and housing advice. Housing Revenue Account services were specifically excluded, because the work in connection with the proposed stock transfer has been subject to detailed scrutiny by the former ODPM and GO-East.
- 2.2 The Housing Inspector who undertook the study conducted a desktop review of documents, interviewed the Leader of the Council and staff at all levels, contacted outside organisations and undertook some ‘mystery shopping’ checks, to gain a service user’s perspective.
- 2.3 The recommendations from the report have also been separated and a response provided against each of them (Appendix 2). Subject to Members’ comments, service action plans will be developed to progress these.

### 3 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The Value Improvement Work report is not a formal inspection report, but the issues it raises will undoubtedly form part of future Best Value housing inspections and Corporate Performance Assessment inspections. It is important that the Council responds positively and makes improvements in the areas identified.

### 4 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Many of the recommendations are reliant on staff to develop and implement changes, undertake research etc. The Council’s housing services are facing significant changes over the next year or so, with the housing stock ballot and restructuring of retained services. To some extent, this will influence the capacity to undertake initiatives and thus the timetable for implementation.

- 4.2 Council has approved a revenue budget of £40,000 in this financial year to undertake a private sector house condition survey.

**5 RECOMMENDATION**

- 5.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

That, subject to Members comments, the Inspector's report be received and the recommendations be adopted, as indicated in the appendix to this report.

G Woolhouse

Head of Housing, Health & Community Care

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**Background Papers:-**

None

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