

### 3 STAR PLUS ACTION PLAN

#### Recommendations and comments from the Audit Commission Inspection Report

ACTION	OFFICER RESPONSIBLE	Update	Deadline For action
1. The level of emergency repairs and post inspections are too high	GD	BHP closely monitors the types of works that are raised in an effort to reduce the overall number of high priority orders. However we believe that such is the backlog of repair in the stock is due to key component failure as a result of previous under investment.	
2. Customer satisfaction with the overall service is low, particularly among black and minority ethnic (BME) residents.	MD	Further local surveys are being carried out in advance of the next annual survey to assess satisfaction with various aspects of the service and to ask customers to state the specific areas they are dissatisfied with and their suggestions for future improvements.	
3. The number of tenancy verification and vulnerable residents visits have not kept up with their targets	SR	The target for vulnerable visits (100%) is based on a rolling programme and the total visits due for completion varies from quarter to quarter. Performance for Vulnerable visits for the first quarter (April – June 03 = 76% and July – September = 72%). Additional resources via our Supporting People programme and improved monitoring arrangements should ensure an improved performance figure for the third quarter. For Verifications the performance stood at 56% and 47% respectively. An action plan is in place to address the Verification performance. In addition we have decided to fundamentally review the efficiency of the methodology in both the vulnerable and verification visits.	
4. More work needs to be done to identify the reasons for the apparent under reporting of domestic violence and racial harassment cases at the area offices	MD/SR	BHP will be commencing 3 <sup>rd</sup> party reporting and promoting racial harassment reporting by way of a publicity campaign to raise awareness of racial harassment. Following this campaign, BHP will then assess the situation to see whether there has been a rise in reporting. Further approaches has been made to the police to look at supplying us figures, according to tenure, on cases they have picked up	

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5. More work is needed to increase the number of BME tenant representatives and the coverage of estates by TRAs	SR	The number of BME tenant representatives has increased from 26% in May 2003 to 47.22% as at end October 2003. Further less traditional methods of participation (i.e. Focus Groups, Young Peoples Group & Community Groups) has increased with some 77% BME membership within the Focus Groups, 100% Young Peoples' Group and 64.28% Community Groups.	
6. The fall in the number of TRAs has been high over a short period of time	SR	We believe this has been partly due to the number of TRA Chairs having relinquished responsibility due to ill health which resulted in some long standing Associations folding. Alternative methods of participation are being promoted and to date 8 Community Groups and 1 Young People Group have been formed	
7. The monitoring arrangements for service level agreements (SLA's) between BHP and the council need to be fully implemented	LF	Meetings have taken place with the heads of the service units to discuss the service review and monitoring process. SLA monitoring meetings are now taking place with the majority of service unit providers.	<b>Ongoing for the duration of the SLAs</b>
8. Service plans for all the service areas have not been produced	GD	A Technical Division Operational plan has been produced which contains a plan for each service area within the division.	
9. Performance management information needs to be more effectively collated	MD	A new post of Best Value and Performance Officer has been in post since 13/11/2003. They will be the focal point in BHP for all performance information, and will ensure that accurate and up to date performance information is available for the BHP board, managers and staff for regular monitoring and analysis. Their role will also include assessment of BHP performance against other organisations, benchmarking and the promotion of best practice.	
10. Consider all options (including external help) to continue the work to encourage BME tenants and leaseholders to become members of the board	HE	BHP has an open election process for the recruitment of tenant members to the main board involving a ballot of all tenants and leaseholders. Vacant positions are advertised in the ethnic minority press and other ethnic minority media including radio which stresses the need for more BME members on the board. Much work has also been undertaken and is continuing to encourage residents who are not part of formal tenant association groups to take an active part in the decision making processes within BHP.	<b>Ongoing</b>

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<p>11. Review all services provided under SLAs with the council in accordance with the existing timetable agreed between the parties. The reviews must have regard to the principles of best value. In the meantime, the proposed monitoring arrangements for the SLAs should be implemented and reported to the operations sub-committee by December 2003. This will allow for early warning of unsatisfactory performance</p>	<p><b>ALL</b></p>	<p>The service review process commenced in September 2003. Senior managers within BHP received training in the principals of best value and were all given a service review toolkit to assist them with the review process. A report is being prepared for the Operations sub committee on 9 December 2003 providing an update on the monitoring arrangements and any non compliance issues with the service level agreements. Updates on the progress of SLA reviews will also be reported to the Operations Sub Committee and the outcome of each review will be reported to the main board. The HR Review Terms of reference has been agreed and two review meetings held to date. An action plan and timetable is in place for completion by end February 2004.</p>	<p><b>9<sup>th</sup> December 03 for first update to Operations Sub.</b></p>
<p>12. BHP need to put in place measures that will ensure service plans are produced consistently across the organisation and are synchronised to be in place by the beginning of each financial year</p>	<p><b>HE</b></p>	<p>Divisional plans have been produced for each division within BHP i.e. Technical, Housing Management, Finance and Standards &amp; Procurement which are being distributed as an insert in BHP's 2003-2008 business plan and will be available on the internet by mid December 2003. These plans will be updated annually and will be distributed as an attachment to the business plan. Housing Management Division Plan completed, likewise the Service Units Plans.</p>	<p><b>15<sup>th</sup> December 2003 and annually thereafter.</b></p>
<p>13. BHP needs to identity ways of reducing the level of emergency repairs, with the aim of bringing them into line with Audit Commission guidelines</p>	<p><b>GD</b></p>	<p>BHP closely monitors the types of works that are raised in an effort to reduce the overall number of high priority orders. However we believe that such is the backlog of repair in the stock is due to key component failure as a result of previous under investment.</p>	
<p>14. Ensure that the best value performance indicator for non-urgent repairs is correctly calculated</p>	<p><b>GD</b></p>	<p>The Best Value KPI has been recalculated to take into account time taken for carrying out inspections. The performance in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> quarters of this year is 16 and 13 days respectively.</p>	

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15. Ensure as part of the partnering negotiations with contractors, that provision is made for the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. development of local employment and training schemes to address local needs</li> <li>b. use of local BME businesses as part of any sub-contracting arrangements</li> </ul>	GD	Partnering contracts for years 2 and 3 of the programme are currently out to tender. The qualification process has been designed to establish which would be the most appropriate contractors so that BHP achieves its aims in this area. The preferred partnering contractors are due to be selected by the end of December 2003.	
16. Ensure there are provisions in the draft rent strategy 2003-05 that addresses the need to write off former tenants arrears that cannot be realistically recovered	SR	Housing Management Division Plan completed, likewise the Service Units Plans	
17. Ensure medium and long term targets are set for the collection of outstanding debt for leaseholder services and major works are charged by April 2004	TG/GC/PH	<p>New monitoring systems have been established to track the progress for collecting major works charges. Performance issues relating to a former Building Surveying consultancy have been resolved and a backlog of final accounts have now been submitted.</p> <p>Medium and Long term Targets for the collection of long term Debt have been set.</p> <p>Target for collection of service charges is 105%. This includes the collection of any outstanding debt. All major works done before 31<sup>st</sup> March 2003 will be billed by April 2004.</p>	30 November 2003
18. Review the articles and memorandum of association to include reference to scheme of delegation and procedures for the appointment of sub-committees by March 2004	LF	A report is being prepared for the BHP Board which meets on 29 <sup>th</sup> January 2004 which will seek approval for amendments to the Memorandum and Articles of Association to include reference to the scheme of delegation	29 <sup>th</sup> January 2004

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<p>19. Review the code of conduct for the board by December 2003 with particular reference to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. what actions the board can take where there are complaints or allegations made against board members</li> <li>b. the codes relationship with the councils code of conduct for councillors and the role of the councils standards committee</li> <li>c. developing a code of conduct between board member and officers</li> </ul>	LF	<p>A number of improvements have already been made to the Code of Conduct and approved by the BHP Board since the Audit Commission inspection but further changes are currently being worked on and a report will be going to the Board on 29<sup>th</sup> January incorporating the issues highlighted in the Inspection report.</p>	29 <sup>th</sup> January 2004
<p>20. Ensure that board meetings are open to the public, taking account of the government's modernisation agenda and the interests of openness and accountability. A solution must be agreed and implemented by the board by October 2003</p>	LF	<p>Board meetings became open to the public in October 2003. The meetings are published on BHP's website and notification of the meetings are sent to AHB chairs and copies distributed to all One Stop Shops.</p>	Completed
<p>21. Ensure that its risk management strategy includes the assessment of any risks involved with the management of private sector leased properties</p>	SR/MD	In progress	
<p>22. Submits this report to the ALMO board and ensure a summary of its contents (including areas for improvement) is circulated to tenants</p>	LF	<p>All board members &amp; Area Housing Boards have received a copy of the inspection report and a summary of the Inspection report will be published in BHP's December newsletter which will be circulated to all tenants.</p>	31 <sup>st</sup> December 2003

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23. Council works with BHP to improve external directional signage to its one stop shops and housing offices by March 2004	<b>MB</b>	In progress	
24. Council conducts a risk assessment with regard to the possibility that a number of SLAs currently in place with BHP may be terminated following review	<b>M. Cheeseman</b>		
25. Council ensures that properties that it retains in South Kilburn New Deal for Communities (NDC) area meet the DHS by the governments target date of 2010	<b>ALL</b>	Discussions in progress with ODPM for an extension of the ALMO bid covering 700 properties in South Kilburn which would be incorporated into the 3 year Decent Homes Programme. Formal submission to be made by 31 <sup>st</sup> December as part of the Round 4 bidding process. Steering group with local residents in SK now set up to be involved in content of submission and series of consultation meetings the residents to take place by 31 <sup>st</sup> December.	<b>31<sup>st</sup> December 2003</b>

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<p>26. The service areas have not all produced individual service plans, and instead rely on the service objectives contained within BHP's business plan, which gives insufficient detail on how they will be achieved. BHP should review this approach to provide more detailed clarity for each service area, as well as to inform the performance appraisals for staff. It would also allow for the identification of available resources (or lack of them), the development of more local targets and the easier identification of strengths and weaknesses</p>	<p><b>HE</b></p>	<p>Divisional plans have been produced for each division within BHP i.e. Technical, Housing Management, Finance and Standards &amp; Procurement which are being distributed as an insert in BHP's 2003-2008 business plan and will be available on the internet by mid December 2003. These plans will be updated annually and will be distributed as an attachment to the business plan. Housing Management Division Plan completed, likewise the Service Units Plans.</p>	<p>Mid December 2003</p>
<p>27. BHP has produced a publication called 'customer care policy – statement and standards' The targets are capable of being monitored, but not all the service areas were monitoring their performance against the corporate targets, for example, the leasehold management service.</p>	<p><b>MD</b></p>	<p>Improved monitoring of customer care practices will be achieved with the establishment of a "Customer Services Manager" post with responsibility for all customer care practices, training, complaint management and the BHP quality management system. A review of customer care practices is being implemented to ensure consistency of approach across all BHP units.</p>	<p>31/03/2004</p>

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<p>28. We found that only one reception area that had any facilities for children and the interview desks lacked privacy. Since we came off site BHP have agreed to install a TV/Video with range of children's entertainment and educational programmes, in each area office, shown on request throughout reception opening hours</p>	<p><b>CD</b></p>	<p>In progress</p>	
<p>29. BHP also provides a leaseholder handbook and tenants information pack. The former will be reviewed in July 2003 in conjunction with leaseholders</p>	<p><b>TG</b></p>	<p>The leaseholder handbook was only published in 2002 and was not planned to be reviewed in 2003. The handbook was due to last for three years so a review or publishing of a new handbook would not be due until 2005.</p>	
<p>30. South Kilburn is an issue we are concerned about, as are residents. We would be keen to see in any plan, that intends to retain any properties, proposals to meet the DHS by 2010. An effective planned approach to maintaining properties is not solely reflected in the level of revenue funded expenditure on planned maintenance</p>	<p><b>HE</b></p>	<p>Discussions in progress with ODPM for an extension of the ALMO bid covering 700 properties in South Kilburn which would be incorporated into the 3 year Decent Homes Programme. Formal submission to be made by 31<sup>st</sup> December as part of the Round 4 bidding process. Steering group with local residents in SK now set up to be involved in content of submission and series of consultation meetings the residents to take place by 31<sup>st</sup> December.</p>	<p><b>31<sup>st</sup> December 2003</b></p>



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<p>31. Slippage on the decent homes programme has also been identified as a key risk for BHP as part of their draft risk management strategy. They have also identified methods of mitigating the risk. The BHP board and management team still need to identify what the early warning reporting arrangements will be so that remedial action can be taken in the event of any problems. This is scheduled to be completed by September 2003</p>	<p>LF</p>	<p>Board Members and Senior Management team discussed Strategic Risk Management at AwayDay on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2003. Further work planned to look at early warning mechanisms on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2003</p>	<p><b>27<sup>th</sup> November 2003</b></p>
<p>32. From our focus groups with tenants and our small survey, two areas of concern were highlighted. These were to do with quality of the repairs that tenants received and the number that are not completed first time. Feedback from staff focus groups indicated that the repairs service needed improving because of the number of complaints received by customers about the quality of the responsive repairs work</p>	<p>GD</p>	<p>A target of 80% has been set for completing minor repairs during the first visit. Performance during the first quarter was 78% and performance during second quarter is 82.5 %. A survey of 3177 tenants in the first two quarters revealed that 95% were satisfied with the repair carried out.</p>	

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<p>33. Non-urgent repairs in top 25 per cent of London councils for this indicator. However we found that the method of calculating this indicator was wrong. Just under 30 per cent (6,882 out of 23,000) of the non-urgent repairs are pre-inspected. These can take between five and ten days to pre inspected. It is our view that this is not being included in the calculation of this indicator, This needs to be reviewed and corrected</p>	<p><b>GD</b></p>	<p>Comments as per point 14.</p>	
<p>34. BHP is looking for ways to speed up the void process. It has engaged a consultant to repackage the SOR codes to address the issue of tackling more complicated works more quickly (the V5 category), because contractors are taking operatives off other void work in order to deal with them. This slows down the overall void process. The aim is to establish back-up contractors to supplement existing ones. However, there will not be a bar on existing contractors placing bids for this work if they are deemed to have capacity and are performing. Also this is an opportunity to encourage local contractors, particularly in relation to taking positive action with BME contractors</p>	<p><b>GD</b></p>	<p>Consultant has produced a specification which is now ready to go out to tender. BHP is also arranging for contractors who are undertaking the decent homes programme to undertake void works for properties within their contracts area. BHP has advertised in several minority publications to attract local BME contractors.</p>	

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<p>35. BHP secure its properties while they are void, however, they are not currently using alarms or timer lights</p>	<p><b>GD</b></p>	<p>There is currently no need to use an alternative void protection system as properties in Brent do not suffer from high rates of squatting or vandalism.</p>	
<p>36. Customer satisfaction surveys were introduced three months ago to new tenants to determine how BHP has performed. The data is yet to be analysed</p>	<p><b>SR</b></p>	<p>Analysis has found the following:</p> <p><u>satisfied/very satisfied</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• viewing process - 97%</li> <li>• with property - 89%</li> <li>• information given – 89%</li> <li>• polite &amp; helpful staff – 92%</li> <li>• informed of who Housing Officer is – 81%</li> </ul> <p>However 83% were not given information as to their Tenants' Association and how to contact the representative and this is now being addressed</p>	
<p>37. The new rent strategy 2003-05 does not contain any information on write offs, and we recommend that it should</p>	<p><b>SR</b></p>	<p>Completed and launched in September 2003</p>	

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<p>38. Some of the recommendations from the BV review stated that the LMU was to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. continue with its work to compile a database of leaseholders by age and ethnicity</li> <li>b. develop a comprehensive suite of smart indicators to measure whether aims and objectives are being achieved</li> <li>c. review its service against best performers</li> <li>d. carry out regular customer satisfaction surveys targeting diversity and vulnerability</li> <li>e. consider developing a wider range of payment options and schemes to assist leaseholders to pay major repairs bills</li> </ul>	<p>TG</p>	<p>The Leasehold Management Unit is continuing its work to update Prelude and increase its database of leaseholders by age and ethnicity.</p> <p>A set of smart indicators has been developed by the LMU.</p> <p>Benchmarking has been done against a number of London Boroughs.</p> <p>A customer survey has been carried out and it did target diversity and vulnerability.</p> <p>BHP are considering a wider range of payment options. Peter Holmes and Thomas Griffin to consider schemes by December 2003</p>	

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39. The areas for improvement have been identified and an action plan has been put in place. The RTB section has some good procedures in place and making an impact on income collection, however, performance needs improve against the statutory RTB statutory timescales	PH	The action plan is being implemented and monitored (and revised as necessary). An improvement against the statutory timescales has already been achieved and will continue to be monitored.	ongoing
40. BHP has no comprehensive information on BME elders living in their properties. BHP's equalities sub committee agreed at its meeting in April that data for all their residents should be collected over the next 12 months through a more focused verification exercise. This data then be analysed to identify BME elders. The objective is to access and develop services to meet the needs of ageing BME communities and provide a separate BME strategy	MD	The strategy agreed with the equalities & diversity sub-committee is being implemented and the data provided from the verification exercise will provide more comprehensive information on the needs of elderly and vulnerable tenants.	31/05/2004
41. The TP Strategy does not address the need to address succession planning for other associations who may find themselves in this predicament.	SR	Completed and launched in September 2003	February 2004
42. The proportion of TRA representatives from BME communities also needs to be improved	SR	At the time of the Inspection only 25.58% of reps were from the BME community. There has been a marked increase in this area which currently stands at 47..22% end October 2003	

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43. Non existence of BME contractors. Suggestion that BHP is failing in its equalities requirements by not ensuring that this is addressed as part of the contract management and procurement process.	GD	BHP is bound by EU Procurement regulations and advertises all qualifying contracts in European journals via OJEC notices. BHP fully examines equalities issues with contractors during its procurement process. BHP has placed adverts in several minority publications in an effort to attract local BME contractors. Part of the selection criteria for the partnering contracts specifically covers these aims.	
44. Individual managers were quite proficient at accessing and interpreting performance data, however it was limited to their area of work and there appears to be an embedded performance culture in the organisation.	MD	See 9 Above	
45. Some 1-2-1 meetings did not take place in some teams because some managers have not been formalising these as they should.	ALL	A draft 1-2-1 report form has been produced and is currently in the consultation stage on following the implementation of which is due December 2003  One to one meetings are taking place	December 2003
46. The repairs commissioning costs are relatively high; this is unlikely to be reduced in the medium because of the additional costs incurred in strengthening the commissioning team. This is also contributing to the weekly repair costs being the 5 <sup>th</sup> highest in London.	GD	Staffing structures within the Technical Division are currently being reviewed for implementation in February / March 2004	
47. There are areas which require further attention to ensure that value for money is obtained.	ALL	This aspect is being taken into account in all Service reviews being carried out	

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48. Tenants stated that they found the methods of TP welcoming; some stated that they were sometimes held at inconvenient times.	SR	Choice of meeting times is now offered, however there is very low take up for day meetings	
49. Some tenants commented that the amount of information that they receive has been excessive and prone to using jargon. They suggested that information could be presented in a simpler style, highlighting the key issues.	ALL	Documents are now checked for plain English and information condensed. An example of this is the revised Residents' Participation Compact to be presented to the Area Housing Boards in December.	
50. All service plans should include their service specific targets, timescales and allocated resources and responsibilities. They need to be consistently produced keeping both in with BHP objectives, changes in legislation and staff & residents ideas and aspirations.	ALL	In progress	
51. There are 5 key tasks in the LMU action plan that do not have target completion times or milestones against them. This needs to be rectified.	TG	The action plan has been updated and all key tasks have completion times against them.	
52. There is a capacity issue that needs to be addressed. There seems to be fewer staff in some areas as compared to other similar sized organisations.	HE	This has been taken into consideration as part of the restructuring within BHP and will also be reviewed in discretion with the council for the 2004/05 budget.	

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53. The board does not totally reflect the makeup of the community.	LF	BHP has an open election process for the recruitment of tenant members to the main board involving a ballot of all tenants and leaseholders. Vacant positions are advertised in the ethnic minority press and other ethnic minority media including radio which stresses the need for more BME members on the board. Much work has also been undertaken and is continuing to encourage residents who are not part of formal tenant association groups to take an active part in the decision making processes within BHP.	
54. There is a potential conflict of interest with regard to the current tenant members of the board as they are still members of the AHBs.	LF	All Tenant Members on the Board are resigning from their positions as chairs of the Area Housing Boards at the next round of AHBs in December 2003.	<b>16<sup>th</sup> December 2003</b>