

## Select Committee Agenda



### **Housing Select Committee Tuesday, 12th January, 2016**

You are invited to attend the next meeting of **Housing Select Committee**, which will be held at:

**Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping  
on Tuesday, 12th January, 2016  
at 5.30 pm .**

**Glen Chipp  
Chief Executive**

**Democratic Services  
Officer**

M Jenkins, Directorate of Governance  
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#### **Members:**

Councillors S Murray (Chairman), A Mitchell (Vice-Chairman), K Chana, R Gadsby, L Girling, S Kane, J Lea, C Roberts, B Rolfe, G Shiell and J H Whitehouse

**SUBSTITUTE NOMINATION DEADLINE:**

**16:30**

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**2. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (MINUTE ITEM 39 - 23.7.02)**

(Director of Governance) To report the appointment of any substitute members for the meeting.

**3. NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING (Pages 3 - 12)**

To agree the notes of the last select committee meeting held on 10 November 2015 (attached).

**4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

(Director of Governance) To declare interests on any items on the agenda.

In considering whether to declare a pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest under the Code of Conduct, Overview and Scrutiny members are asked to pay particular

attention to paragraph 11 of the Code in addition to the more familiar requirements.

This requires the declaration of a pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest in any matter before an Overview and Scrutiny Committee which relates to a decision of or action by another Committee or Sub-Committee of the Council, a Joint Committee or Joint Sub-Committee in which the Council is involved and of which the Councillor is also a member.

Paragraph 11 does not refer to Cabinet decisions or attendance at an OS meeting purely for the purpose of answering questions or providing information on such a matter.

**5. TERMS OF REFERENCE/WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 13 - 22)**

(Chairman/Lead Officer) Attached is the draft proposed Terms of Reference and Work Programme for the Select Committee. The Select Committee will receive a brief presentation from the Lead Officer for the Select Committee on identifying the relevant priorities and work areas for 2015/16. These drafts will be recommended to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for approval.

**6. HOUSING SERVICE STRATEGIES (Pages 23 - 30)**

(Director of Communities) To consider the attached report.

**7. HOUSING STRATEGY KEY ACTION PLAN 2015 - 2016 (Pages 31 - 54)**

(Director of Communities) To consider the attached report.

**8. PROPOSED COUNCIL RENT INCREASE 2016/17 (Pages 55 - 56)**

(Director of Communities) To consider the attached report.

**9. FUTURE MEETINGS**

The next scheduled meeting of the Select Committee will be held on Tuesday 8 March 2016 at 5.30p.m. in Committee Room 1.

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL  
NOTES OF A MEETING OF HOUSING SELECT COMMITTEE  
HELD ON TUESDAY, 10 NOVEMBER 2015  
IN COMMITTEE ROOM 1, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING  
AT 5.35 - 8.15 PM**

**Members Present:** S Murray (Chairman), A Mitchell (Vice-Chairman), R Gadsby, L Girling, S Kane, J Lea, G Shiell, J H Whitehouse and W Marshall (Tenants and Leaseholders Federation)

**Other members present:** D Stallan

**Apologies for Absence:** K Chana and B Rolfe

**Officers Present** A Hall (Director of Communities), L Swan (Assistant Director (Private Sector Housing & Communities Support)), R Wilson (Assistant Director (Housing Operations)), S Devine (Private Sector Housing Manager), Pradun (Senior Communities Officer (Quality and Performance)) and M Jenkins (Democratic Services Officer)

**13. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (MINUTE ITEM 39 - 23.7.02)**

There were no substitutions made at the meeting.

**14. NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

**RESOLVED:**

That the notes of the last meeting of the Select Committee held on 16 June 2015 be agreed.

**15. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

There were no substitutions made at the meeting.

**16. TERMS OF REFERENCE/WORK PROGRAMME**

The Select Committee's Terms of Reference and Work Programme were noted.

**17. PRESENTATION ON THE CURRENT AND FUTURE APPROACH TO DEALING WITH PRIVATE EMPTY PROPERTIES**

The Select Committee received a presentation from the Private Housing Manager (Technical) regarding the Current and Future Approach to Dealing with Private Empty Properties.

The Select Committee were advised that nationally, there had been a reduction in the number of empty homes:

- (a) From 783,119 in 2008 to 610,123 in 2014;

(b) Within Epping Forest District Council the reduction had been from 1,837 in 2005 to 1,391 in 2014; and

(c) From the £548,829 received by the District Council through the New Homes Bonus, £57,946 was due to the reduction in empty homes.

However, it was noted that it was also likely that there was now an under reporting of empties to the Council because there had been a removal of incentives for people to inform their local authority that their home was empty. This had been due to previous exemptions being removed and local authorities having flexibility on discounts. Whilst the numbers for long term empties was steadily decreasing in the District (by 57 in the last year), the number of properties that had been empty more than 2 years had hardly changed (124 down to 122). The main reasons that these properties were empty was because they were being left for investment purposes, the owner had run out of money, properties were under major renovation or they were being marketed for sale possibly at an inflated price.

Officers proposed that in the future they would:

- (i) Continue to offer advice, information and financial incentives to owners of properties which have been at least 6 months empty;
- (ii) Consider recommending a reduction in the time limit for eligibility for the Empty Homes Repayable Assistant to 6 months (from 1 year);
- (iii) Risk assess all properties that have been empty for at least 2 years against criteria based on length of time empty;
- (iv) Risk assess probate properties that have been empty for more than 2 years;
- (v) Actively pursue those properties with the highest risk score using enforcement if appropriate;
- (vi) Pursue all empties causing issues to local residents or the environment;
- (vii) Seek member approval for Compulsory Purchase or Empty Dwelling Management Orders; and
- (viii) Consider the possibility of the Council purchasing empty properties to replace homes sold under Right to Buy.

**RESOLVED:**

That the presentation regarding the current and future approach to dealing with private empty properties be noted and that the Private Housing Manager (Technical) be thanked.

**18. RESULTS OF THE STAR TRIENNIAL TENANT SATISFACTION SURVEY**

The Select Committee received a report regarding the Tenant Satisfaction Survey for 2015 from the Assistant Director – (Private Housing and Communities Support) and the Senior Communities Officer – (Quality and Performance).

The Council's Communities' Directorate had been a member of Housemark, a national housing benchmarking club, for many years. They had a standard Tenant

Satisfaction Survey called STAR (Survey of Tenants and Residents) for its members to use.

The Council commissioned an independent research company to carry out the STAR survey which took place between July and August 2015. An anonymous postal self completion questionnaire was sent to a random sample of a third of the District Council's tenants, followed by a reminder questionnaire sent to every non-respondent. In total, 798 tenants took part in the survey, representing a 36% response rate. This was well in excess of the STAR target. There were 26 questions in total.

Overall the resident satisfaction survey results in 2015 were broadly similar in comparison to the last STAR survey with satisfaction scores varying by one or two percentage points, up or down, on the majority of core questions compared to 2012. Where benchmark information was available, the vast majority of results were generally at or above average when compared with other landlords. The most notable result from the survey concerned the quality of homes which showed an 84% satisfaction level.

**RECOMMENDED:**

- (1) That the findings of the Tenant Satisfaction Survey Report 2015 be noted; and
- (2) That the Tenant Satisfaction Survey Report 2015 be recommended to the Housing Portfolio Holder for approval.

**19. RESPONSE TO DCLG CONSULTATION ON MANDATORY "PAY TO STAY" SCHEME**

The Select Committee received a report from the Assistant Director (Housing Operations) regarding the District Council's proposed response to the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Consultation on Pay to Stay: Fairer Rents in Social Housing.

In June 2013, the DCLG issued a consultation paper entitled "High Income Social Tenants Pay to Stay." At that time, the Government set out its intention that local authorities should be given the flexibility to charge those with high income proposed at that time, as more than (£60,000 per year) a higher level of rent to stay in their own homes. The proposal at that time was based on the higher rent being set at 80% of market rents. The Housing Scrutiny Panel, which preceded this Select Committee, supported the proposal at that time but had concerns particularly around administration costs, the creation of "ghettos" which would inhibit mixed communities and felt that different thresholds should be applied to different parts of the country.

At its meeting in July 2014, the Panel considered the matter again. This time, the Government did not expect local authorities to adhere to its Social Rent Policy for properties let to households with an income of £60,000 per year, instead they could choose to charge up to full market rent. The Panel agreed at that time that as there were no powers to compel tenants to tell their landlords how much they earned, a further report should be submitted when such powers were in place.

In October 2015, the Government issued a further Consultation Paper – Pay to Stay: Fairer Rents in Social Housing. Particular attention was drawn to the two questions on which views were invited by the DCLG, these were:

**Question 1: How income thresholds should operate beyond the minimum threshold set at budget, for example through the use of a simple taper/multiple thresholds that increases the amount of rent as income increases and whether the starting threshold should be set in relation to eligibility for Housing Benefit?**

Members felt that the introduction of a simple taper could be a sensible approach on the basis that a tenant's taxable income increased the level of rent increase. However, this change would make the administrative arrangements difficult.

The Select Committee were advised that the Assistant Director (Benefits) had informed officers that there would be difficulties in setting a general threshold due to many variables, bearing in mind that each housing benefit claim was decided based on individual circumstances including rent, household composition and income. Varying rent levels throughout the year would cause increased administrative difficulties with the calculation of benefits.

The Housing Portfolio Holder was concerned that the consultation document, stated that the two highest incomes within a household would be included and therefore did not say as in previous guidance that it would be based on the incomes of those named on the tenancy agreement (including spouses and civil partners). Officers confirmed that they would query this point with the DCLG in the Council's response.

**Question 2: Based on the current system and powers that local authorities had, what was your estimate of the administrative costs and what were the factors that drive these costs?**

Officers considered that to administer the scheme an additional 2 (FTE) members of staff would be required to deal with matters such as tenants changing incomes and rent levels, backdating increased payments and refunds, altering a tenant's rent in accordance with their tenancy conditions and undertaking regular reviews.

Alongside this, it would be necessary to undertake data matching exercises with the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP). It was further considered that an additional 1 (FTE) Fraud Officer would be needed as the scheme would clearly be open to fraud. The overall administrative costs were estimated to be around £75,000 per annum.

The Housing Portfolio Holder advised that the legislative power to require tenants to declare their income would be needed to make these proposals workable.

The Assistant Director (Housing Operations) advised that due to changes in income and benefit, officers would need to review cases several times a year.

A letter to the DCLG would be drafted and signed by the Select Committee Chairman.

**RECOMMENDED:**

That the Epping Forest District Council response to the DCLG Consultation regarding the Mandatory "Pay to Stay" Scheme be returned with a covering letter from the Housing Select Committee Chairman advising of the following:

- (1) That the introduction of a simple taper would be a sensible approach but will lead to a significant administrative burden, particularly with the calculation of benefits and it should be considered if the taper ought to be income or time related or perhaps both;
- (2) That the Government be asked to clarify if taxable income will be based on the two highest earners in each household or those named on the tenancy agreement;
- (3) That the Council has assessed the administrative costs of the scheme at around £75,000 per annum;
- (4) That legislative power to require tenants to declare their incomes will be required to make these proposals workable;
- (5) That it will be difficult to set a threshold in relation to housing benefit due to there being too many variables; and
- (6) That the Select Committee ask officers to include further general commentary in the consultation response.

## **20. HOUSING SERVICE STRATEGY ON HARASSMENT (3 YEAR REVIEW)**

The Select Committee received a report regarding the Communities Directorate's Housing Service Strategy on Harassment from the Assistant Director – (Private Housing and Communities Support).

The Communities Directorate's Housing Service Strategies were originally produced more than 15 years ago in accordance with an agreed standard framework and had since been updated. In total 17 Housing Service Strategies had been produced detailing the various housing services provided.

The Select Committee considered and endorsed the updated strategy on Harassment.

### **RECOMMENDED:**

That the Housing Service Strategy on harassment be recommended to the Housing Portfolio Holder for approval.

## **21. FUTURE APPROACH TO HOUSING SERVICE STRATEGIES**

The Select Committee received a report from the Director of Communities regarding the future use of Housing Service Strategies.

He explained that over many years, the Housing Service had formulated a suite of Housing Service Strategies that individually set out the detailed approach taken by the Council and its officers to various housing activities. All the service strategies were produced in a common format and were then reviewed and updated by officers every three years and reported to the Housing Select Committee for consideration. Around the same time, service strategies relating to landlord services were also reported to the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation for their views as well.

Following consideration of updated Service Strategies by the Select Committee and Tenants and Leaseholders Federation, the final version was then formally reported to the Housing Portfolio Holder for adoption.

The strategies were originally introduced at the time of the former Housing Inspectorate being set up and in anticipation of a formal Housing Inspection being undertaken. However, the inspectorate had closed down a number of years ago, yet the production, review and updating of the service strategies had continued.

The process from first setting out to update Service Strategies to the Housing Portfolio Holder adopting them usually took around 2-3 months and each Service Strategy took around 10 hours of officer time to review, update, report to and attend the Select Committee and Tenants and Leaseholders Federation and make the final report to the Portfolio Holder. There were currently 16 separate Housing Service Strategies.

The Communities Management Team (CMT) had recently considered the cost-benefits of spending the significant amount of time to update these Housing Service Strategies. They identified that although the general principles set out in the Service Strategies were followed, the Service Strategies were hardly ever referred to by officers between the three yearly reviews. Moreover, most of the actions included within the Action Plans had usually already been identified and planned prior to the relevant Service Strategy being updated and were included and monitored through the Communities Directorate's Continuous Improvement Regime in any event.

The CMT was also aware that this approach to strategic service planning was not adopted by any of the other Directorates, Select Committees or Portfolio Holders. There was therefore an inconsistent approach both across the Council and the Communities Directorate. However, the CMT was also aware that the Select Committee appeared to find it useful to understand and review the Council's approach to the various housing functions.

The CMT did believe that there would be real benefit in continuing to review, update and maintain some of the service strategies in some form, due to their particular strategic importance or a legal requirement.

It was advised that the views of the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation had not been sought on this issue. However, the Chairman of the Federation advised the Select Committee that his members preferred discussing tenant orientated matters rather than strategies. He felt that perhaps two strategies per annum for discussion would suffice. The Select Committee had mixed feelings about reducing the service strategies as they found them useful and informative. Officers suggested that a further report be submitted to the Select Committee recommending that the number of strategies should be reduced, with some of them being combined, significantly reduced in content and reviewed every 5 years, instead of every 3 years.

**RESOLVED:**

That a report be submitted to the Select Committee recommending a reduction in the number of service strategies, with significantly reduced content and that they be reviewed every 5 years instead of every 3 years.

**22. SIX MONTH REVIEW OF THE HRA FINANCIAL PLAN**



The Select Committee received a report regarding the HRA Financial Plan – Half Yearly Update (Future Options Resulting from required Rent Reductions) from the Director of Communities.

As part of the Chancellor's Summer Budget in July 2015, it was announced that all social landlords must reduce their rents by 1% per annum for four years. The District Council's consultants had assessed that the estimated loss in rental income to the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) would be around £14 million over the next four years and around £228 million over the next 30 years. In view of this significant reduction in rental income, the consultants were commissioned to provide a report on the options available to the Council to ensure that its HRA did not fall into deficit, which had been considered by the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee.

The Select Committee were advised that the consultant's report identified a number of options available to the Council to re-cost its HRA Financial Plan for the future, including:

- (a) Ceasing all or some of the funding currently available within the Financial Plan for future housing improvements and service enhancements for HRA services;
- (b) Reducing investment in improvements to the Council's housing stock;
- (c) Reducing/ceasing the Council's own Housebuilding Programme;
- (d) Further borrowing for the HRA, repaid by the end of the Financial Plan; or
- (e) Combinations of the above.

It was advised that the Housing Portfolio Holder had recommended to the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee in September 2015 that most of the £702,000 uncommitted funding within the HRA's Housing Improvements and Service Enhancements Fund for 2016/17 should not be allocated or spent at present.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the commissioning of a report by CIH Consultancy on the options available to the Council to ensure that its HRA does not fall into deficit – following the inclusion of a requirement within the Welfare Reform and Work Bill that all social landlords must reduce their rents by 1% per annum for four years (instead of increasing their rents by CPI + 1% in accordance with previous Government guidance) – instead of the usual six month review of the HRA Financial Plan be noted;
- (2) That the report from CIH Consultancy on the options available for the Council's HRA Financial Plan and the decisions of the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee following its consideration of the report be noted; and
- (3) That the consideration of the planned further review of the options for the HRA Financial Plan be added to the Select Committee Work Programme for 2016/17, prior to further consideration by the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee in 2016.

**23. SIX MONTHLY PROGRESS REPORT ON HOUSING BUSINESS PLAN ACTION PLAN**

The Select Committee received a report regarding the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan Key Action Plan (2015/16) – 6 Month Progress from the Director of Communities.

In March 2015, the Council's latest Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan (2015/16) was produced incorporating the Repairs and Maintenance Business Plan. This document set out the Council's objectives, strategies and plans as landlord in relation to the management and maintenance of its own housing stock.

An important section of the HRA Business Plan was the Key Action Plan which set out the proposed actions the Council would be taking over the year. It was good practice that progress made with the stated actions was monitored during the year.

**RECOMMENDED:**

That the Six Monthly Progress Report on the Housing Business Plan Action Plan be recommended to the Housing Portfolio Holder for approval.

**24. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2015/16 - QUARTER 1 AND 2 (Q1 AND Q2) PROGRESS**

The Select Committee received a report from the Director of Communities regarding Key Performance Indicators 2015/16 – Progress at Quarter 2.

The Local Government Act 1999 required that the Council made arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions and services were exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

As part of the duty to secure continuous improvement, a range of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) relevant to the Council's services and key objectives were adopted each year by the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee. Performance against the KPIs was monitored on a quarterly basis by Management Board and overview and scrutiny to drive improvement in performance and ensure corrective action was taken where necessary.

A range of 36 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for 2015/16 were adopted by the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee in March 2015.

Members of the Select Committee were aware that the September committee meeting was cancelled and the Quarter 1 report which was due for consideration there had been overtaken by the Quarter 2 report.

The overall position for all KPIs at the end of Quarter 2 was as follows:

- (a) 26 (72%) indicators achieved target at the end of Q2.
- (b) 10 (28%) indicators did not achieve the Q2 target.
- (c) 1 (10%) of these KPIs performed within their tolerated amber margin.
- (d) 26 (72%) indicators were currently anticipated to achieve their cumulative year end target.

Housing Select Committee indicators – 10 of the Key Performance Indicators fell within the Committee’s areas of responsibility. The overall position with regard to the achievement of target performance at the end of Q2 for these indicators, was as follows:

- (i) 9 (80%) indicators achieved the Q2 target.
- (ii) 1 (20%) indicators did not achieve their Q2 target.
- (iii) 0 (0%) indicators performed within their tolerated amber margin.
- (iv) 9 (80%) indicators were currently anticipated to achieve their cumulative year end target.

**RESOLVED:**

That the progress made on the Key Performance Indicators 2015/16 in respect of Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 be noted.

**25. FUTURE MEETINGS**

The next scheduled meeting of the Select Committee would be held on Tuesday 12 January 2016.

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## SELECT COMMITTEES

### TERMS OF REFERENCE 2015/16

**Title:** Housing Select Committee

**Status:** Select Committee

1. To undertake the overview and scrutiny, utilising appropriate methods and techniques, of the housing related services and functions of the Communities Directorate;
2. To develop a programme of work each year, informed by relevant service aims and member priorities, to ensure that the housing related services and functions of the Communities Directorate are appropriate and responsive to the needs of residents, service users and others;
3. To consider any matter referred to the Select Committee by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Cabinet or a relevant Portfolio Holder, and to report and make recommendations directly to the Committee, the Cabinet or relevant Portfolio Holder when appropriate;
4. To consider the effect of Government actions or initiatives on the housing related services and functions of the Communities Directorate and any implications for the Council's residents, service users and others, and to respond to consultation activities as appropriate;
5. To establish working groups as necessary to undertake any activity within these terms of reference;
6. To undertake pre-scrutiny through the review of specific proposals of the Council and its partner organisations or other local service providers, insofar as they relate to the housing related services and functions of the Communities Directorate, to help develop appropriate policy;
7. To undertake performance monitoring in relation to the housing related services and functions of the Communities Directorate, against adopted key performance indicators and identified areas of concern;
8. To identify any matters within the housing related services and functions of the Communities Directorate that require in-depth scrutiny, for referral to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
9. Where requested by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to examine and review call-in requests and the implementation of executive decisions;
10. To recommend the establishment of task and finish panels to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as necessary, in order to undertake any activity within these terms of reference;

11. To monitor progress with the Housing Strategy and HRA Business Plan Key Action Plans on a six-monthly basis; and
12. To consider matters relating to the performance of the Council's Repairs Management Contract.

**Chairman:** Cllr Murray

## Housing Select Committee (Chairman – Cllr Stephen Murray)

### Work Programme 2015/16

Item	Report Deadline/Priority	Progress/Comments	Programme of Meetings
<b>Standard (Periodic) Items</b>			
(1) Performance against Housing Service Standards and Review (Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)	June 2015 (Medium)	<b>Completed</b> – June 2015	<del>16 June 2015</del> <del>8 September 2015</del> <del>10 November 2015</del> 12 January 2016 8 March 2016
(2) 6-Month Progress Report on Housing Strategy Action Plan 2015/16	June 2015 (Medium)	<b>Completed</b> – June 2015	
(3) Housing Key Performance Indicators (KPI) – 2014/15 Out-Turn	June 2015 (Low)	<b>Completed</b> – June 2015	
(4) Housing Key Performance Indicators (KPI) – Quarter 1	November 2015 (Low)	<b>Completed</b> – November 2015	
(5) Six-monthly Progress Report on Housing Business Plan Action Plan	November 2015 (Medium)	<b>Completed</b> – November 2015	
(6) Six-Month Review of the HRA Financial Plan	November 2015 (High)	<b>Completed</b> – November 2015	
(7) Housing Key Performance Indicators (KPI) – Quarter 2	<del>January 2016</del> November 2015 (Low)	<b>Completed</b> – November 2015	

(8) Housing Strategy Key Action Plan 2015 – 12 Month Progress Report	January 2016 (Medium)	<b>Scheduled</b> – for January 2016 meeting
(9) Housing Strategy Key Action Plan 2016 <i>(Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)</i>	January 2016 (Medium)	<b>Scheduled</b> – for January 2016 meeting
(10) Briefing on the proposed Council rent increase for 2016/17	January 2016 (Low)	<b>Scheduled</b> – for January 2016 meeting
(11) Proposed housing service improvements and service enhancements – 2016/17 <i>(Recommendations to Cabinet)</i>	<del>January 2016</del> N/A (High)	<b>No longer required</b> – Due to the requirement to reduce rents by 1% p/a for 4 years and to sell “high value” void properties to fund the Voluntary Right to Buy for housing association tenants, the Finance and Performance Cabinet Committee has placed a moratorium on the use of the Housing Improvements and Service Enhancements Fund until a further review of options to ensure the HRA remains in surplus for 30 years is undertaken in 2016
(12) Housing Key Performance Indicators (KPI) – Quarter 3	March 2016 (Low)	
(13) Housing Key Performance Indicators (KPI) – Targets for 2016/17	March 2016 (High)	
(14) 12-monthly Progress report on Housing Business Plan Action Plan 2015/16	March 2016 (Medium)	
(15) HRA Business Plan 2016/17 <i>(Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)</i>	March 2016 (High)	



(16) Private Sector Housing Strategy Action Plan – Annual Progress Report	<del>November 2015</del> N/A (Medium)	<b>No longer required</b> – A presentation is being given at this meeting of the Select Committee on the approach to dealing with private empty properties, and the Housing Portfolio Holder will be receiving a report shortly on a proposal to extend the existing Private Sector Housing Strategy (pending the formulation of a new Housing Strategy) – and this report will provide a progress report on the Action Plan
<b>Special (Planned) Items</b>		
(17) Homelessness Strategy 2015-2018	June 2015 (High)	<b>Completed</b> – June 2015
(18) Housing Service Strategy on Housing and Estate Management (3-Year Review) <i>(Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)</i>	June 2015 (Medium)	<b>Completed</b> – June 2015
(19) Housing Service Strategy on Energy Efficiency (3-Year Review) <i>(Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)</i>	June 2015 (Medium)	<b>Completed</b> – June 2015
(20) Housing Service Strategy on Older Peoples Housing (3-Year Review) <i>(Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)</i>	June 2015 (Medium)	<b>Completed</b> – June 2015
(21) Housing Service Strategy on Harassment (3-Year Review) <i>(Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)</i>	<del>September 2015</del> November 2015 (Medium)	<b>Completed</b> – November 2015

(22) Results of the STAR Triennial Tenant Satisfaction Survey	November 2015 (High)	<b>Completed</b> – November 2015
(23) Housing Service Strategy on Empty Properties (3-Year Review) ( <i>Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder</i> )	<del>September 2015</del> March 2016 (Medium)	<b>Deferred to March 2016 meeting</b> – pending the outcome of the review of the future coverage and scope of housing service strategies.
(24) Review of the approach to the Scheme Management Service to sheltered housing and properties designated for older people ( <i>Recommendations to Cabinet / Housing Portfolio Holder</i> )	<del>November 2015</del> June 2016 (High)	<b>Deferred to June 2016 meeting</b> – Officers are currently formulating the proposals, which need detailed consideration before they can be brought forward.
(25) Report of the Tenant Scrutiny Panel on its Service Review of Tenant Involvement	<del>November 2015</del> June 2016 (Medium)	<b>Deferred to June 2016 meeting</b> – Very little progress has been made by the Tenant Scrutiny Panel, which has been exacerbated by the recent departure of the Tenant Participation Officer. However, recruitment to the post is underway and the new officer will be assisting the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation to review its approach to tenant scrutiny.
(26) Review of the future use of sheltered/grouped housing scheme sites ( <i>Recommendations to Cabinet / Housing Portfolio Holder</i> )	<del>March 2016</del> June 2016 (High)	
(27) Housing Service Strategy on Home Ownership and Leaseholder Services ( <i>Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder</i> )	<del>September 2015</del> November 2016 (Medium)	<b>Deferred to January 2018 meeting</b> – in line with the recommendation of the report on the outcome of the review of the future coverage and scope of housing service strategies.

(28) Policy on HMO Licensing	<del>September 2015</del> N/A (High)	<b>No longer required</b> – The Policy has now been considered and approved by the Cabinet direct, at its meeting in December 2015.	
(29) Housing Service Strategy on Housing Advice (3-Year Review) <i>(Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)</i>	<del>March 2016</del> N/A (Medium)	<b>No longer required</b> – in line with the recommendation of the report on the outcome of the review of the future coverage and scope of housing service strategies	
(30) Housing Service Strategy on Under-Occupation (3-Year Review) <i>(Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)</i>	<del>March 2016</del> N/A (Medium)	<b>No longer required</b> – to be incorporated within the Housing and Estate Management Service Strategy when next reviewed, in line with the recommendation of the report on the outcome of the review of the future coverage and scope of housing service strategies.	
(31) Housing Service Strategy on Rent Collection and Administration (3-Year Review) <i>(Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)</i>	<del>September 2015</del> N/A (Medium)	<b>No longer required</b> – to be incorporated within the Housing and Neighbourhood Management Service Strategy when next reviewed, in line with the recommendation of the report on the outcome of the review of the future coverage and scope of housing service strategies	
<b>Items added to Work Programme during the year</b>			
(32) Discussion on Future approach to Housing Service Strategies	November 2015	<b>Completed</b> – November 2015	
(33) Presentation on the current and future approach to dealing with private empty properties	November 2015	<b>Completed</b> – November 2015	

(34) Response to DCLG consultation on mandatory "Pay to Stay" Scheme	November 2015	<b>Completed</b> – November 2015
(35) Revised approach to Housing Service Strategies (reduced no. and content – with updates every 5 years)	January 2016	<b>Scheduled</b> – For January 2016
<b>Planned Items for Future Years</b>		
Interim (soft) review of the success of the pilot scheme to extend the opening hours of the Limes Centre, following 6 months' operation	September 2016 (Low)	
Review of Housing Management Staffing Levels following the introduction of Universal Credit	June 2016 (Medium)	
Housing Strategy 2016 – 2020	September 2016 (High)	
Annual Diversity Report of Housing Applicants <i>(Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)</i>	September 2016 (Medium)	
Presentation on Disabled Facilities Grants	September 2016 (Medium)	
Review of the success of the pilot scheme to extend the opening hours of the Limes Centre, following 12 months' operation	January 2017 (Medium)	

Review of Housing Allocations Scheme and Tenancy Policy after 2 years operation (with any changes effective from April 2018)	October 2017 (High)		
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## **Report to Housing Select Committee**

**Date of meeting: 12<sup>th</sup> January 2016**

**Portfolio: Housing – Cllr D. Stallan**

**Subject: Housing Service Strategies**

**Officer contact for further information:**

**Alan Hall – Director of Communities (01992 564004)**

**Committee Secretary: Mark Jenkins**



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### **Recommendation:**

- 1) That, in future, the coverage of Housing Service Strategies be reduced to the following headings, for the reasons set out in Appendix 1:
  - (a) Introduction;
  - (b) Aims and Objectives;
  - (c) Approach to Service Delivery; and
  - (d) Review of the Strategy;
- 2) That the proposed retention, discontinuation and amalgamation of existing Housing Service Strategies, set out at Appendix 2, be noted and that the future suite of Housing Service Strategies comprises 7 Service Strategies, as listed in Recommendation (4) below;
- 3) That the new Service Strategies be reviewed every five years from the date of their last review (with the exception of the Anti-social Behaviour and Harassment Service Strategy which, in accordance with legislation, must be reviewed every three years);
- 4) That, as a result of Recommendations (2) and (3) above, the new suite of Service Strategies next be reviewed at the Housing Select Committee meetings in the months shown below:

(a) Empty Properties	- March 2016
(b) Home Ownership and Leasehold Services	- January 2018
(c) Anti-social Behaviour and Harassment	- April 2018
(d) Tenant Participation	- March 2019
(e) Rent Arrears and Administration	- November 2019
(f) Older People's Housing	- September 2020
(g) Housing and Neighbourhood Management	- September 2020
- 5) That the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation be invited to consider whether or not they would like to be consulted on all, some or none of the draft revised Housing Service Strategies prior to consideration by the Housing Select Committee; and
- 6) That, following consideration by the Housing Select Committee, Housing Service Strategies be no longer reported to the Housing Portfolio Holder for approval through formal Portfolio Holder Decisions.

## **Background:**

1. At its meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2015, the Select Committee considered a report from the Director of Communities for discussion regarding the future use of Housing Service Strategies. It was noted that, over many years, the Housing Service has formulated a suite of 16 separate Housing Service Strategies that, individually, set out the detailed approach taken by the Council and its officers to various housing activities.

2. All Housing Service Strategies are produced to a common format and are currently reviewed and updated by officers every three years and then reported, in the first instance, to the Housing Select Committee for consideration. Around the same time, Housing Service Strategies relating to landlord services are also reported to the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation for their views as well. Final versions are then formally reported to the Housing Portfolio Holder for adoption.

3. The Select Committee, at its last meeting, noted that the suite of Housing Service Strategies were originally introduced at the time of the former Housing Inspectorate being set up and in anticipation of a formal Housing Inspection being undertaken. Although the Housing Inspectorate closed down a number of years ago, the production, review and updating of the Service Strategies has continued. It was noted that each Service Strategy takes some time to update, with further officer time required to report to and attend the Select Committee and Tenants and Leaseholders Federation meetings, and to produce the final report to the Housing Portfolio Holder.

4. It was explained at the last meeting that the Communities Management Team (CMT) had considered the cost/benefits of spending the significant amount of time required to update Service Strategies. As a result, it had been identified that, although the general principles set out in the Service Strategies are generally followed, they were hardly ever referred to by officers between the three-yearly reviews. Moreover, most of the actions included within the Action Plans had usually already been identified and planned prior to the relevant Service Strategy being updated and, in any event, are included and monitored at an officer level through the Communities Directorate's Continuous Improvement Regime.

5. The CMT also drew attention to the fact that this approach to strategic service planning was not adopted by any of the other Directorates, Select Committees or Portfolio Holders – therefore, it resulted in an inconsistent approach both across the Council and the Communities Directorate itself. However, the CMT recognised that the Select Committee found it useful to understand and review the Council's approach to the various housing functions, which was confirmed by members of the Select Committee at the meeting.

6. The report to the last meeting suggested five options, which the Select Committee considered, which can be summarised as follows:

- Maintain the status quo;
- Cease the production and review of Service Strategies;
- Extend the validity of Service Strategies from 3 to 5 years – with a transitional period to spread out the required updates;
- Continue with the review and updating of Service Strategies but without the Select Committee and Tenants and Leaseholders considering them, and formally be signed-off by the Housing Portfolio Holder; and
- Maintain the status quo - and recommend to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that consideration be given to all Directorates and Select Committees taking the same approach to strategic service planning.

7. When considering the options, the Select Committee had mixed feelings about reducing the number and scope of the Service Strategies but, on balance, agreed that the approach



needed to be reviewed and asked that a report be submitted to this next meeting proposing:

- How a reduction in the number of Service Strategies could be achieved;
- How the content of Service Strategies could be significantly reduced; and
- A process for reviewing Service Strategies every 5 years, instead of every 3 years.

### **Proposed Future Approach**

8. Members of the CMT found the open and frank discussion at the last meeting very useful and, in response, propose the following way forward to meet the Select Committee's desired outcomes.

9. Appendix 1 lists the coverage of the current suite of Service Strategies, through reference to the headings used for each Strategy, and then proposes which headings/content should be retained for future Strategies, and which should be either discontinued or incorporated within other headings. As a result, it is proposed that the existing 10 headings are reduced to the 4 headings set out in Recommendation (1) above.

10. Appendix 2 provides a list of all the current Housing Service Strategies, together with the date that their next updates are due (based on a three-yearly revision cycle), and proposes which should be retained, discontinued or incorporated within other retained Service Strategies. These proposals result in the number of Service Strategies being reduced from 16 to the 7 Strategies listed in Recommendation (4) above.

11. Having regard to the Select Committee's views expressed at the last meeting on the frequency of reviews, it is suggested that, in future, Housing Service Strategies are reviewed every five years instead of every three years. However, the Anti-social Behaviour and Harassment Service Strategy must be reviewed every three years, to comply with the legislative that the Council produces such a strategy every three years. Recommendation (4) sets out the months that each Service Strategy should next be reviewed by the Housing Select Committee.

12. The Tenants and Leaseholders Federation has not yet been consulted on whether or not they would want to be consulted on all, some or none of the draft revised Housing Service Strategies prior to consideration by the Housing Select Committee. It is therefore suggested that they be consulted on this at their next meeting.

13. Finally, since, to a large degree, Housing Service Strategies are "operational" documents, and in order to maximise the amount of officer time that can be freed-up, it is suggested that, following consideration by the Housing Select Committee, they are no longer reported to the Housing Portfolio Holder for approval through formal Portfolio Holder Decisions.

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## Review of Housing Service Strategies

### List of Current Section Headings for Housing Services Strategies and Proposal for the Future Approach

<u>Section</u>		<u>Officers' Suggestions for Future Approach</u>
1) Introduction	<b><u>Keep</u></b>	- Provide a logical start to the Service Strategy
2) Background to the Service	Delete	- This will be covered in more detail in the proposed revised section on "Approach to Delivery"
3) Relationship with other documents	Delete	- This is now considered to be superfluous, in the pursuit of reducing content
4) Aims and Objectives	<b><u>Keep</u></b>	- This is an important part of any strategy
5) Statutory Requirements	Delete	- These will be covered where necessary within the proposed revised section on "Approach to Delivery"
6) Client consultation, information and Involvement (statutory requirement)	Delete	- This is now considered to be superfluous, in the pursuit of reducing content, and where this is important, will be included within the proposed new section on "Approach to Delivery" Section
7) General Principles	<b><u>Keep</u></b>	- Change title to "Approach to Delivery"
8) Action Plan	Delete	- Actions are already covered in separate annual Business Plans, and therefore results in duplication
9) Key targets and performance monitoring	Delete	- These are covered within both the Communities Directorate's Continuous Improvement arrangements, as well as (where appropriate) the Council's suite of Key Performance Indicators
10) Reviewing the Strategy	<b><u>Keep</u></b>	- An appropriate end to the document

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## Review of Housing Service Strategies

## Proposed Amalgamations and Deletions of Existing Housing Service Strategies

Existing Service Strategy	Current Review Date	Proposal
Empty Properties	April 2015	Retain – But only cover private sector empty properties (since public sector empty properties are covered by the existing HRA Business Plan and Housing Allocations Scheme)
Rent Administration and Collection	Jan 2016	Delete - Incorporate within the Rent Arrears Service Strategy
Home Ownership and Leasehold Services	Jan 2016	Retain
Housing Advice	April 2016	Delete – The most important provisions are already included within the Housing Allocations Scheme and the Homelessness Strategy
Under-occupation	April 2016	Incorporate within the Housing Management and Estate Management Service Strategy
Equality & Diversity	June 2016	Delete – Equality and diversity issues are now covered within the corporate Equality and Diversity Action Plan, as well as individual service business plans and within Due Regard sections of all reports
Housing Information	March 2017	Delete – The key information requirements are now already covered within individual service business plans and will be referred to within the remaining Housing Service Strategies
Tenant Participation	March 2017	Retain
Social Housing Fraud	May 2017	Delete – Social Housing Fraud issues are soon to be incorporated within a new Corporate Fraud Strategy
Private Rented Housing	Aug 2017	Delete – The most important provisions are covered within the Housing Strategy, Private Sector Housing Strategy and Private Sector Housing Business Plan
Rent Arrears	Nov 2017	Retain – and incorporate issues relating to rent administration and collection
Anti-social Behaviour	April 2018	Retain – and incorporate issues relating to harassment
Energy Efficiency	July 2018	Delete – The most important issues are covered within the Repairs and Maintenance Business Plan, which forms part of the HRA Business Plan
Older People's Housing	Sept 2018	Retain
Housing and Neighbourhood Management	Sept 2018	Retain – and incorporate issues relating to under-occupation
Harassment	Nov 2018	Delete - Incorporate within the Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy

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## **Report to Housing Select Committee**

**Date of meeting: 12<sup>th</sup> January 2016**

**Portfolio: Housing – Cllr D. Stallan**

**Subject: (1) Housing Strategy Key Action Plan 2015  
– 12 Month's Progress Report  
(2) New Housing Strategy Key Action Plan 2016**



**Officer contact for further information:**

**Alan Hall – Director of Communities (01992 564004)**

**Committee Secretary: Mark Jenkins**

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### **Recommendations:**

- (1) That the 12-Month Progress Report on the Housing Strategy Key Action Plan 2015, attached as Appendix 1, be considered, with any comments passed to the Housing Portfolio Holder and Director of Communities accordingly; and**
- (2) That a recommendation be made to the Housing Portfolio Holder that the proposed Housing Strategy Key Action Plan for 2016, attached as Appendix 2, be adopted and that progress with the Key Action Plan be monitored on a six-monthly basis by the Select Committee in the normal way.**

### **Reason for Recommendations:**

The current Housing Strategy was due to be updated in 2012 to cover the following three years. However, much of the Housing Strategy relates to the provisions within the Local Plan, and a new Local Plan is currently under consideration by the Council.

Therefore, the Housing Portfolio Holder has previously agreed that the Housing Strategy should not be updated until the Local Plan Preferred Options (Draft Local Plan) has been published but that, in the meantime, an Annual Housing Strategy Key Action Plan should continue to be produced, with progress monitored by the Housing Scrutiny Panel, until the new Housing Strategy is formulated and adopted.

### **Options considered and rejected:**

- (a) Not to produce an updated Key Action Plan
- (b) To include different actions within the Action Plan.

### **Report:**

1. At its meeting in September 2009, the Council's Cabinet adopted its current Housing Strategy. The Housing Strategy assesses the District's current and future housing needs and sets out the Council's approach to meeting those needs.

2. The Strategy also included a Key Action Plan, which set out the proposed actions that would be taken by the Council to contribute towards the achievement of the housing objectives over the first year of the Housing Strategy. When adopting the Housing Strategy, the Cabinet also agreed that Key Action Plans for the Housing Strategy should be produced and updated on an annual basis for approval by the Cabinet. To date, six annual Key Action Plans have been produced.

3. The Cabinet also agreed that progress with the Key Action Plans should be monitored on a 6-monthly basis by the Housing Select Committee and, previously, the Housing Scrutiny Panel, in accordance with their Terms of Reference, which they have done.

4. Although there is no legal or policy requirement, it was originally anticipated that the Housing Strategy would cover a three-year period, and would therefore be updated during 2012 to cover the following three years. However, much of the Housing Strategy relates to the provisions within the Local Plan, and a new Local Plan is currently under consideration by the Council.

5. Therefore, the Housing Portfolio Holder has previously agreed that the Housing Strategy should not be updated until the Draft Local Plan (Preferred Approach) has been published but that, in the meantime, an Annual Housing Strategy Key Action Plan should continue to be produced, with progress monitored by the Housing Scrutiny Panel, until the new Housing Strategy is formulated and adopted.

6. The last Key Action Plan was adopted in February 2015, and the last 6-Month Progress Report for the current Key Action Plan was considered by the Housing Select Committee in June 2015 and the 12-Month Progress Report is attached as Appendix 1, which the Select Committee is asked to consider and to provide any comments to the Housing Portfolio Holder and Director of Communities.

7. A proposed Housing Strategy Key Action Plan for the forthcoming year is also attached as Appendix 2, which the Select Committee is also asked to consider and recommend its adoption (subject to any views of the Select Committee) to the Housing Portfolio Holder.

8. Progress with the Key Action Plan will continue to be monitored on a six-monthly basis by the Housing Scrutiny Panel (or its successor body) in the normal way, commencing July 2016.

**Resource Implications:**

All of the actions can be delivered within existing budgetary provisions.

**Legal and Governance Implications:**

The actions are covered by a number of statutes.

**Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:**

A number of the actions will result in a safer and cleaner environment, particularly those actions relating to development, many of which include environmental and energy efficiency measures to the new properties

**Consultation Undertaken:**

None.



**Background Papers:**

None.

**Risk Management:**

The risks of individual actions will be managed in accordance with the Council's Risk Management Framework

**Key Decision Reference (Y/N):** No

## Due Regard Record

This page shows **which groups of people are affected** by the subject of this report. It sets out **how they are affected** and how any **discrimination** they experience can be eliminated. It also includes information about how **access to the service(s)** subject to this report can be improved for the different groups of people; and how they can be assisted to **understand each other better** as a result of the subject of this report.

S149 Equality Act 2010 requires that due regard must be paid to this information when considering the subject of this report.

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The adoption of the Key Action Plan does not involve the introduction of any new policies in itself.

Any actions to be undertaken requiring policy or member decisions will be assessed for equality implications.

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### Housing Strategy Key Action Plan 2015-16

No	Category	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Progress Report (as at 1 <sup>st</sup> December 2015)
1	General	Review the Housing Strategy 2009-2012 and produce an updated Housing Strategy for 2014-2017, following a consultation exercise on a Draft Housing Strategy	Director of Communities	<del>Mar 2016</del> July 2016	<b>Delayed</b> – The Housing Portfolio Holder has previously determined that the next Housing Strategy should not be drafted until the Council's new Draft Local Plan has been published. Since production of the Council's Draft Local Plan (Preferred Approach) is not now likely to be published until around July 2016, the timescale for producing the new Housing Strategy has also had to slip.
2	Local Plan	Complete the gathering of information, including the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), to form the evidence on which key decisions will be taken as part of the Local Plan.	Planning Policy Manager	<del>Under Review</del> Oct 2015	<b>Achieved</b> - An updated joint SHMA, covering 4 local authority districts, has been produced. This may need to be updated in light of the proposals within the Housing and Planning Bill to introduce a requirement to make provision for starter homes and to no longer assess gypsies' and travellers' housing needs as a separate category to the settled community.
3	Local Plan	Agree on objectively assessed Housing and Employment Need for the Local Plan Period.	Planning Policy Manager	<del>Under Review</del> Oct 2015	<b>Achieved</b> – Following-on from the completion of the SHMA (see (2) above), Cabinet has agreed that the Objectively Assessed Housing Need for the District is 11,300 homes.
4	Local Plan	Complete a District-Wide Viability Assessment on viable levels of affordable housing provision within developments	Planning Policy Manager	<del>Under Review</del> July 2016	<b>In Progress</b> – The Council's consultants have produced their Stage 1 Report. A presentation on the findings was given to all members on 19 <sup>th</sup> May 2015. Stage 2 of the Viability Assessment will be undertaken once the Council's proposals for its new Local Plan are more advanced.

5	Local Plan	Agree a Draft Local Plan (Preferred Approach) and undertake the appropriate Sustainability Appraisal	Planning Policy Manager	<del>Under Review</del> Summer 2016	<b>Not yet required</b> – The Draft Plan will be formulated (accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal) once all the required evidence has been gathered.
6	Local Plan	Undertake a Consultation Exercise on the Draft Local Plan (Preferred Approach)	Planning Policy Manager	<del>Under Review</del> Summer 2016	<b>Not yet required</b> – This will be undertaken once the Draft Plan has been published.
7	Local Plan	Submit the Final Local Plan to the Planning Inspectorate for an Examination in Public	Planning Policy Manager	<del>Under Review</del> Sept 2017	<b>Not yet required</b> – This will be undertaken once the consultation on the Draft Plan has been completed and the Council has agreed its Pre-Submission Local Plan.
8	Housing Market	Consider subscribing to the Hometrack Service to provide ongoing housing market intelligence for planning and housing purposes	Director of Communities / Planning Policy Manager	<del>March 2015</del> Mar 2016	<b>In Progress</b> – Housing and Planning Officers have received a presentation from Hometrack, and their service appears to meet the Council's needs. Planning Officers are currently in discussions with officers from neighbouring councils to consider a possible joint/bulk subscription, which would reduce the costs to the Council.
9	Regeneration	Work in partnership with Essex County Council, Epping Town Council and other partners to commence a sustainable regeneration scheme for the St Johns Area of Epping, in accordance with the adopted Design and Development Brief, which includes an appropriate amount of market and affordable housing	Director of Neighbourhoods	<del>Dec 2015</del> June 2017	<b>In Progress</b> – The Council has selected a preferred developer following a competitive process and has agreed key terms. Discussions are currently in progress with regard to the legal documentation and it is hoped that exchange of contracts will take place in early 2016. The developer will then prepare the detailed planning permission, which will take some time, including a public consultation exercise.
10	Affordable Housing Provision	Work with Moat Housing to commence the development of the Council-owned difficult-to-let garage site at Vere Road, Loughton to	Director of Communities	Dec 2015	<b>Delayed</b> – The Cabinet has previously agreed to work in partnership with Moat, through the provision of a 125 year lease, for a premium to the Council of £425,000. However, due to the requirements of the

		provide 15 new affordable rented flats and an additional 14 parking spaces for private development on the adjacent site of the former Sir Winston Churchill PH.			<p>Welfare Reform and Work Bill, all social landlords (including Moat) must reduce their rents by 1% per annum for 4 years, which affects the development appraisal, and Moat have advised that, now, no premium will be payable.</p> <p>Consideration is therefore currently being given to the possibility of the development being undertaken as part of the Council Housebuilding Programme, and it is planned that the Cabinet will consider a report on this issue early in 2016.</p>
11	Affordable Housing Provision	<p>Work with housing associations and developers to complete the development of 107 new affordable homes for rent and shared ownership by September 2015 at the following non-Council owned sites:</p> <p>(a) Jennikings Nursery, Chigwell – 52 new homes</p> <p>(b) Manor Road Garden Centre, Chigwell – 17 new homes</p> <p>(c) St. Johns School – 38 new homes</p>	Director of Communities	Sept 2015	<b>Achieved</b> – All of the 107 new affordable homes have now been completed.
12	Affordable Housing Provision	Seek planning permission for residential development at the Council's Pyrles Lane Nursery site, Loughton, including the provision of at least 40% affordable housing, by addressing the issues resulting in the previous planning permission refusal	Director of Neighbourhoods	<del>April 2015</del> Feb 2016	<p><b>In Progress</b> – The design for the scheme has now been revised and a revised outline planning application was submitted in November 2015.</p> <p>At its meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2015, the Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee agreed that, if outline planning application is granted and the Cabinet subsequently decides to sell the site on the open market, the sale be subject to a requirement that the required affordable housing element (expected to be between 40-50% of the total number of properties) be sold to the Council on practical completion, on agreed terms (to be set out in a separate Development Agreement) to be approved by the Cabinet when considering the sale of the site.</p>

13	Affordable Housing Provision	Consider whether to undertake a Phase 3 of the Open Market Home Ownership Scheme with B3Living - to enable first-time buyers in the District to purchase a property of their choice from the open market through shared ownership, funded jointly by the Council, B3Living and the applicants	Director of Communities	<del>April 2015</del> Nov 2015	<b>Achieved</b> – Phase 2 has been completed. As part of the Capital Programme Review in November 2015, whilst noting the success of the scheme, the Cabinet agreed not to proceed with a Phase 3, due to the Council's other Capital Programme commitments, which will soon require the Council undertaking borrowing for itself.
14	Affordable Housing Provision	Appoint an affordable housing viability consultant, through a competitive exercise, for a 3-year period in order to provide specialist advice and undertake the validation of viability appraisals submitted by developers who assert that the Council's expected level of affordable housing provision on their site unviable and propose a financial contribution in lieu of the provision of on-site affordable housing	Director of Communities	April 2015	<b>Achieved</b> – Following a competitive exercise, Kift Consulting Ltd has been appointed as the Council's affordable housing viability consultant, for an initial period of 1 year, with the option to extend by two further one year periods.
15	Affordable Housing Provision	Consider the introduction of Supplementary Planning Guidance on the required approach by developers to the undertaking of viability assessments for developments involving affordable housing	Principal Planning Officer / Director of Communities	<del>July 2015</del> Apr 2016	<b>In Progress</b> – Now agreed that the approach should be to provide guidance to planning applicants. The Director of Communities will shortly be drafting the proposed Guidance, for formal adoption by the Governance and Development Management Portfolio Holder.
16	Council Housebuilding Programme	Complete the development of 23 new affordable homes for rent at Waltham Abbey, under Phase 1 of the Council's Housebuilding Programme	Asst. Director (Housing Property & Devt.)	<del>Dec 2015</del> Apr 2016	<b>In Progress, but delayed</b> – Works are currently behind schedule. The Contract Completion Date in November has passed and the Council is now deducting Liquidated and Ascertained Damages. In December 2015, a claim for an Extension of Time was received, with costs, which the Council's consultants have 12 weeks to consider and respond to.

17	Council Housebuilding Programme	Complete a major conversion scheme to convert 20 unpopular bedsits at Marden Close and a community hall at Faversham Hall, Marden Close, to provide 12 self-contained one-bedroomed rented flats for Housing Register applicants	Asst. Director (Property & Devt.)	<del>Sept 2015</del> Nov 2015	<b>Achieved</b> – Works were completed in November 2015.
18	Council Housebuilding Programme	Obtain planning permission for the development of new affordable homes for rent at Burton Road, Loughton, under Phase 2 of the Council's Housebuilding Programme	Asst. Director (Housing Property & Devt.)	Sept 2015	<b>Achieved</b> – Following refusal of the original application for planning permission, a revised planning application was submitted for a development with slightly less homes and a lower building height. Planning permission was granted at the Full Council meeting in September 2015.
19	Council Housebuilding Programme	Seek Development Partner status for the Council with the HCA, to enable the Council to secure the £0.5 million funding obtained from the HCA for Phase 2 of the Council Housebuilding Programme	Asst. Director (Housing Property & Devt.)	<del>June 2015</del> May 2015	<b>Achieved</b> – Notification was received in May 2015 that the Council's application for Development Partner Status has been approved, which will enable the Council to access the £0.5million grant, provided that planning permission is granted for Phase 2 of the Housebuilding Programme.
20	Council Housebuilding Programme	Complete the remaining development and financial appraisals for the identified potential development sites and formulate a Pipeline Programme of developments for Phases Years 3-6 of the Programme	Asst. Director (Housing Property & Devt.)	<del>Mar 2016</del> Feb 2016	<b>In Progress</b> – The final 12 development appraisals are due to be considered by the Council Housebuilding Committee over two meetings in January and February 2016.
21	Council and Housing Association Accommodation	Implement the Council's revised Housing Allocations Scheme, including a revised Local Eligibility Criteria increasing the requirement for applicants to have lived within the District from 3 – 5 years and lowering the maximum combined income / assets threshold to £76,000.	Asst. Director (Housing Operations)	July 2015	<b>Achieved</b> – Following the adoption of the revised Housing Allocations Scheme by the Cabinet, the changes to the new Scheme were implemented on 27 <sup>th</sup> July 2015.

22	Council and Housing Association Accommodation	Update the existing District-wide Nominations Agreements with each of the Council's Preferred Housing Association Partners for new rented housing developments - to take account of the new Affordable Rents Framework - and formulate new District-wide Nominations Agreements for shared ownership properties with the same partners.	Director of Communities	<del>June 2015</del> Jan 2016	<b>In Progress</b> – A new District-wide Nominations Agreement has been agreed with all of the Council's Preferred Housing Association Partners, following a consultation exercise with them. Most of the Agreements have now been signed, with the remainder expected to complete in January 2016.
23	Council and Housing Association Accommodation	Procure a provider for an updated Housing Register Hosting and Choice Based Lettings Agency Service, in partnership with five neighbouring local authorities	Asst. Director (Housing Operations)	Sept 2015	<b>Achieved</b> – Following a procurement through the competitive dialogue procedure under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, Locata Housing Services, (the previous provider) were selected for the new contract.
24	Council and Housing Association Accommodation	Subscribe and contribute information to the new proposed Essex Veterans' Portal, in partnership with other Essex local authorities and Essex agencies, in support of the Community Covenant to assist former members of the Armed Forces.	Policy & Grants Officer	June 2015	<b>Achieved</b> – The Council now supports the Essex Veterans' Portal, which was officially launched at the end of May 2015, and information from the Council will be updated on a regular basis.
25	Council Housing	Implement the Council's revised Tenancy Policy, to extend the provision of flexible (fixed term) tenancies for 10 year periods (including an introductory tenancy period) to all Council properties (excluding sheltered properties).	Asst. Director (Housing Operations)	July 2015	<b>Achieved</b> – Following the adoption of the revised Tenancy Policy by the Cabinet, the changes to the new Policy were implemented on 27 <sup>th</sup> July 2015. The policy excludes existing Council tenants downsizing to smaller Council accommodation.
26	Council Housing	Bring together all the Council's fraud functions, including social housing fraud into one corporate team, to provide synergy, consistent working practices and shared intelligence	Chief Internal Auditor	April 2015	<b>Achieved</b> – The Corporate Fraud Team was formed in April 2015. All fraud officers now come under the responsibility of the Chief Internal Auditor.



27	Homelessness	Update the Council's Homelessness Strategy, to ensure that it is up to date and sets out the most appropriate approach to responding to homelessness over the next 3 years	Asst. Director (Housing Operations)	June 2015	<b>Achieved</b> – The Homelessness Strategy was considered by the Housing Select Committee in June 2015, and then adopted by the Housing Portfolio Holder.
28	Homelessness	Consider the feasibility of replacing the mobile homes in the grounds of the Council's Homeless Persons' Hostel at Norway House, North Weald with new temporary accommodation for homeless families, that will be fit for purpose for the future	Asst. Director (Housing Property & Devt.)	<del>Dec 2015</del> Mar 2016	<b>In Progress</b> – An initial Feasibility Report has been received from the Council's consultants, which is currently under consideration.
29	Homelessness	Undertake improvements to the rooms at Norway House, North Weald, to improve the facilities and decor	Asst. Director (Housing Property & Devt.)	<del>Mar 2016</del> Nov 2016	<b>Limited Progress</b> – Due to other priorities.
30	Supported Housing – Older and Other Vulnerable People	Work in partnership with Essex County Council to provide a supported housing scheme at Lindsay House, Epping.	Director of Communities	Mar 2017	<b>In Progress</b> – The Chief Executive is leading on negotiations with the County Council over the disposal of Lindsay House to Essex County Council, as part of the arrangements for the development of the site at St Johns Road, Epping.
31	Supported Housing – Older and Other Vulnerable People	Include a requirement in the Draft Local Plan (Preferred Approach) that an increased number of homes within new housing developments in the District should meet the Lifetime Homes Standard than presently required	Planning Policy Manager	<del>Under Review</del> Spring 2016	<b>Not yet required</b> – This will be considered as part of the Draft Local Plan (Preferred Approach). However, this was considered as part of a District and Local Council Workshop in November 2015.
32	Empty Homes	Bring at least 30 long-term empty properties back into use by Council intervention within any 12-month period, including the continued use of the PLACE Scheme	Private Housing Manager (Technical)	Mar 2016	<b>Achieved</b> – 60 long term empty properties were brought back into use in 2014/15. However, only 6 were brought back into use between April and September 2015. The numbers for the remainder of the year are expected to be higher - but the target of 30 is not expected to be achieved.

					The positive news is that the upturn in the market is such that fewer properties are being left empty beyond the 6 month period, so less intervention by the Empty Property Officer is required. Problematical properties that have stood empty for many years are being addressed through formal action, but this can be a slow process. In addition, there are a number of long term empties that are not problematical, where enforcement action is not justified. In these cases, an informal approach is adopted which, again, can be time consuming and slow.
33	Rural Housing	Continue to work with Hastoe Housing Association and Parish Councils to investigate the development potential for rural housing schemes in villages, through the Council's Rural Planning Exceptions Policy	Director of Communities	Mar 2016	<b>In Progress</b> – As part of the promotion of rural exception schemes, the Director of Communities and Hastoe Housing Association gave a presentation to the Local Councils Liaison Committee in November 2015 to explain how they work and the success of schemes undertaken in rural areas to date.
34	Decent Homes – Private Sector	Introduce new licence conditions for existing holiday park homes sites in the District, following consultation with site owners and statutory agencies	Private Housing Manager (Technical)	Sept 2015	<b>Achieved</b> – Following a consultation process, the Cabinet agreed the adoption of new licence conditions for holiday park home sites at its meeting in June 2015.
35	Decent Homes – Private Sector	Consider and adopt a corporate protocol for dealing with unsuitable living conditions within agricultural and nursery accommodation, from a housing, planning, legal and economic development perspective	Private Housing Manager (Technical)	Mar 2016	<b>In Progress</b> – A Working Party has been established to consider all the issues, with Terms of Reference and membership agreed by the Management Board. It has met a number of times and agreed an Action Plan which is currently being implemented.
36	CARE Agency	Prepare for the retendering of the County Council funding for home improvement agencies within Essex, to ensure the continued viability of the Council's in-house Caring and Repairing in Epping Forest (CARE) Agency	Private Housing Manager (Grants and CARE)	July 2015	<b>No Longer Required</b> – The latest information received from Essex County Council is that they appear to intend, once again, not to tender HIA services for Epping Forest, since they are happy with the performance and quality of the service provided by the Council's CARE Service – which is currently the only in-house HIA in Essex.



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### Housing Strategy Key Action Plan 2016-17

No	Category	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Progress Report <i>(to be completed after 6 and 12 months)</i>
1	General	Review the Housing Strategy 2009-2012 and produce an updated Housing Strategy for 2016-2019, following a consultation exercise on a Draft Housing Strategy	Director of Communities	July 2016	
2	Local Plan	Agree with the Council's Strategic Housing Market Area (SHMA) partners how much of the Council's Objectively Assessed Housing Need will be provided in neighbouring districts.	Planning Policy Manager	Spring 2016	
3	Local Plan	Complete Stage 2 of the District-Wide Viability Assessment to determine viable levels of affordable housing provision within future developments	Planning Policy Manager	Spring 2016	
4	Local Plan	Agree a Draft Local Plan (Preferred Approach) and undertake the appropriate Sustainability Appraisal	Planning Policy Manager	Spring 2016	
5	Local Plan	Undertake a Consultation Exercise on the Draft Local Plan (Preferred Approach)	Planning Policy Manager	July 2016	
6	Local Plan	Submit the Final Local Plan to the Planning Inspectorate for an Examination in Public	Planning Policy Manager	Sept 2017	

7	Local Plan	Include appropriate provision within the Local Plan to meet the Government's requirements to ensure the provision of a set percentage, or number, of starter homes on all development sites over a certain threshold, to meet the proposed requirements of the Housing and Planning Act 2016.	Planning Policy Manager	Spring 2016	
8	Local Plan	Include appropriate provision within the Local Plan to meet the Government's requirements to meet the expressed needs for local people wanting to build their own homes registered on the Self-build and Custom-build Register, to meet the proposed requirements of the Housing and Planning Act 2016.	Planning Policy Manager	Spring 2016	
9	Regeneration	Work in partnership with Essex County Council, Epping Town Council and a development partner to exchange legal contracts for a regeneration scheme for the St Johns Area of Epping, in accordance with the Design and Development Brief, which includes an appropriate amount of market and affordable housing	Director of Neighbourhoods	Feb 2016	
10	Affordable Housing Provision	Consider the possibility of the proposed development of new affordable rented flats at the Council-owned difficult-to-let garage site at Vere Road, Loughton being undertaken by the Council, through the Council Housebuilding Programme, instead of by a housing association	Director of Communities	Mar 2016	

11	Affordable Housing Provision	Work with housing associations and developers to complete the development of 118 new affordable homes, with planning permission, for rent and shared ownership at the following non-Council owned sites: (a) Knollys Nursery, Waltham Abbey – 63 new homes (b) Fyfield Research Park, Ongar – 44 new homes (c) Netherhouse Farm, Sewardstone – 8 new homes (d) Barnfield, Roydon – 3 new homes (e) Esperanza Nursery, Stapleford Abbots – 1 new home	Director of Communities	Dec 2017	
12	Affordable Housing Provision	Enter into a development agreement with the developer for the development at Barnfield, Roydon for the Council to purchase the 8 affordable rented homes required to be provided as part of the scheme	Asst. Director (Housing Property & Devt.)	Feb 2016	
13	Affordable Housing Provision	Obtain planning permission for residential development at the Council's Pyrles Lane Nursery site, Loughton, including the provision of at least 40% affordable housing	Director of Neighbourhoods	Feb 2016	
14	Affordable Housing Provision	Subject to the receipt of planning permission for the proposed development at the Pyrles Lane, Loughton, if the Cabinet decides to sell the site on the open market, sell the land subject to a requirement that the required affordable housing element to be sold to the Council on practical completion, on agreed terms.	Asst. Director (Housing Property & Devt.)	Oct 2016	

15	Affordable Housing Provision	Consider the provision of guidance to planning applicants on the required approach by developers to the undertaking of viability assessments for developments involving affordable housing	Principal Planning Officer / Director of Communities	Apr 2016	
16	Affordable Housing Provision	Revise the Council's Shared Ownership Policy, to take account of current requirements and the potential effect of the provision of starter homes as affordable homes on the supply of affordable rented housing	Director of Communities	Feb 2016	
17	Council Housebuilding Programme	Complete the development of 23 new affordable homes for rent at Waltham Abbey, under Phase 1 of the Council's Housebuilding Programme	Asst. Director (Housing Property & Devt.)	Apr 2016	
18	Council Housebuilding Programme	Start on site with the development of 51 new affordable homes for rent at Burton Road, Loughton, under Phase 2 of the Council's Housebuilding Programme	Asst. Director (Housing Property & Devt.)	April 2016	
19	Council Housebuilding Programme	Start on site with the development of 34 new affordable homes for rent at North Weald, Ongar, Epping and Coopersale, under Phase 3 of the Council's Housebuilding Programme	Asst. Director (Housing Property & Devt.)	Sept 2016	
20	Council Housebuilding Programme	Seek planning permission for the development of new affordable homes for rent in Loughton, under Phase 4 of the Council's Housebuilding Programme	Asst. Director (Housing Property & Devt.)	March 2016	



21	Council Housebuilding Programme	Seek planning permission for the development of new affordable homes for rent in Ongar and Buckhurst Hill, under Phase 5 of the Council's Housebuilding Programme	Asst. Director (Housing Property & Devt.)	July 2016	
22	Council Housebuilding Programme	Consider the creation of a new post of Housing Development Manager, to support the Asst. Director (Housing Property & Devt.) and provide additional capacity in order to deliver the Council Housebuilding Programme	Director of Communities	Feb 2016	
23	Council Housebuilding Programme	Complete the 12 remaining development and financial appraisals for the identified potential development sites and formulate a Pipeline Programme of developments for Phases 6 onwards of the Housebuilding Programme	Asst. Director (Housing Property & Devt.)	Feb 2016	
24	Council and Housing Association Accommodation	Complete the new District-wide Nominations Agreements with each of the Council's Preferred Housing Association Partners for new rented housing developments - to take account of the new Affordable Rents Framework and to update the provisions for nominations of shared ownership properties.	Director of Communities	Jan 2016	

25	Council Housing Accommodation	Revise the Council's Tenancy Policy to implement the introduction of 5-year fixed term tenancies for all new tenants (including transferring, downsizing and sheltered tenants), to meet the proposed requirements of the Housing and Planning Act 2016.	Asst. Director (Housing Operations)	Nov 2016	
26	Council Housing Accommodation	Provide up to 1 x 1 bedroom and 1 x 2 bedroom flats each year for 4 years to Syrian refugees, on non-secure tenancies, to assist the Government's commitment to accommodate 20,000 Syrian refugees in the UK over a 4-year period.	Asst. Director (Housing Operations)	Dec 2015	
27	Council Housing Accommodation	Prepare for the introduction of the Government's "Pay to Stay" scheme, to charge higher rents for Council tenants with household incomes above £30,000 p/a, to meet the proposed requirements of the Housing and Planning Act 2016.	Asst. Director (Housing Operations)	Apr 2017	
28	Council Housing Accommodation	Prepare for the sale of "high value" Council properties to fund the expected required levy to the Government, to meet the proposed requirements of the Housing and Planning Act 2016.	Asst. Director (Housing Property & Devt.)	Apr 2017	
29	Homelessness	Consider the feasibility of replacing the mobile homes in the grounds of the Council's Homeless Persons' Hostel at Norway House, North Weald with new temporary accommodation for homeless families, that will be fit for the future	Asst. Director (Housing Property & Devt.)	Mar 2016	

30	Homelessness	Introduce a new scheme to fund the provision of returnable tenancy deposits, through tenancy deposit agents, to assist potentially homeless applicants to be accommodated in the private rented sector	Asst. Director (Housing Operations)	Apr 2016	
31	Homelessness	Consider the provision of rental loans, in addition to the provision of returnable tenancy deposits, to assist potentially homeless families to be accommodated in the private rented sector	Asst. Director (Housing Operations)	Feb 2016	
32	Homelessness	Seek to obtain the Government's Gold Standard Award for the provision of homelessness services, following the peer review by other Essex local authorities and the delivery of the resultant Action Plan	Housing Options Manager	April 2017	
33	Supported Housing – Older and Other Vulnerable People	Review the Council's sheltered housing assets, and formulate a strategy for the determining the future use of each sheltered housing site (including retention, remodelling, refurbishment, redevelopment and sale), to ensure that the Council's sheltered housing provision is fit for the future.	Director of Communities	July 2016	
34	Supported Housing – Older and Other Vulnerable People	Work in partnership with Essex County Council to provide a supported housing scheme at Lindsay House, Epping.	Director of Communities	Mar 2017	

35	Supported Housing – Older and Other Vulnerable People	Include a requirement in the Draft Local Plan that an increased number of homes within new housing developments in the District should meet the Lifetime Homes Standard than presently required	Planning Policy Manager	Spring 2016	
36	Affordable Housing Provision	Work with Essex County Council to consider the feasibility and viability of providing a new Independent Living (extra care) scheme for older people, as part of the proposed Leisure and Community Hub at Hillhouse, Waltham Abbey, as part of the Masterplanning Exercise for the area	Director of Communities	June 2016	
37	Empty Homes	Review and revise the Council's Housing Service Strategy on Empty Properties	Private Housing Manager (Technical)	Mar 2016	
38	Rural Housing	Continue to work with Hastoe Housing Association and Parish Councils to investigate the development potential for rural housing schemes in villages, through the Council's Rural Planning Exceptions Policy	Director of Communities	Mar 2017	
39	Decent Homes – Private Sector	Deliver the Action Plan formulated by the Nursery Workers Accommodation Working Party and consider and adopt a corporate protocol for dealing with unsuitable living conditions within agricultural and nursery accommodation, from a housing, planning, legal and economic development perspective	Private Housing Manager (Technical)	Dec 2016	

40	CARE Agency	Prepare for, and meet, the requirements for the new contract with Essex County Council for funding the Council's in-house Caring and Repairing in Epping Forest (CARE) Agency	Private Housing Manager (Grants and CARE)	July 2016	
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## **Report to Housing Select Committee**

**Date of meeting: 12 January 2016**

**Portfolio: Housing – Cllr D. Stallan**

**Subject: Proposed Council Rent Increase 2016/17**

**Officer contact for further information:**

**Alan Hall – Director of Communities (01992 56 4004)**

**Committee Secretary: Mark Jenkins (01992 56 4607)**

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### **Recommendations:**

- (1) That the Summary of the proposed HRA Budget 2016/17 (if available to be tabled at the meeting) be noted; and**
- (2) That the Select Committee receives an oral presentation on the main issues relating to the HRA Budget 2016/17 and associated rent increase from the Director of Communities.**

### **Report:**

1. At its meeting to be held on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2016, the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee will be considering the HRA Budget 2016/17 and an associated recommendation on the Council rent increase for 2016/17. Members of the Resources Select Committee will also be invited to attend the meeting and take part in the discussion on all of the Council's budgets for 2016/17.
2. The recommendations of the Cabinet Committee will then be considered by the Cabinet, at its meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2016, which will make its recommendations to the next meeting of the Full Council.
3. It has become customary for the Housing Select Committee to be briefed each year by the Director of Communities on the key issues relating to the HRA Budget and, in particular, the proposed Council rent increase.
4. Since the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee will be held over a week after the Housing Select Committee meeting, it has not been possible to provide any budgets or reports with the Agenda. However, it is hoped that the HRA Summary 2016/17, and the associated commentary provided to the Cabinet Committee on the HRA Budget, will be available to table at the meeting.
5. In any event, at the meeting, the Director of Communities will brief members of the Select Committee on the key issues relating to the HRA Budget and associated proposed rent increase.

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