

Housing Strategy Key Action Plan 2016
Six-Month Progress Report as at 1st June 2016

No	Category	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Progress Report (as at 1 st June 2016)
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 April 2017	Delayed – The former Housing Portfolio Holder previously determined that the new Housing Strategy should not be formulated until the Draft Local Plan (Preferred Approach) has been published (due to the dependency on the Draft Plan), which has been delayed (see No. 4 below)
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 Oct 2016	In Progress - This is due to be discussed further with neighbouring partners at the (officers') meeting of the Co-operation for Sustainable Development Group Co-op Board on 18 July 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 Nov 2016	In Progress - This work is due to be completed during the consultation period on the Draft Local Plan (Preferred Approach) (see No. 4 below). This is partly due to the outcome of the Government's consultation on the introduction of starter homes not yet being announced.
4	Local Plan	Agree a Draft Local Plan (Preferred Approach) and undertake the appropriate Sustainability Appraisal	Planning Policy Manager	Spring Oct 2016	In Progress - The Draft Local Plan (Preferred Approach) is due to be considered by Cabinet and Full Council in October 2016, for approval to undertake consultation on the Draft Plan, which will also include the outcome of the Sustainability Appraisal.
5	Local Plan	Undertake a Consultation Exercise on the Draft Local Plan (Preferred Approach)	Planning Policy Manager	July Nov 2016	In Progress - A new Local Development Scheme is due to be agreed by the Cabinet on 21 July 2016, which is likely to propose a 6-week consultation period from 31 October 2016.

6	Local Plan	Submit the Final Local Plan to the Planning Inspectorate for an Examination in Public	Planning Policy Manager	Sept 2017	Not yet required – This will follow-on from the consultation on the Draft Local Plan (Preferred Approach). It is expected that the submission of the Final Local Plan will be made in late 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 Oct 2016	In Progress – This will form part of the Draft Local Plan (Preferred Approach). However, the regulations on the operation of starter homes are not due until October 2016, so this element may not be able to be determined in time for the Draft Local Plan consultation.
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 Oct 2016	In Progress - This will be included in the Draft Local Plan (Preferred Approach).
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 Sept 2016	In Progress – The Council continues to be in discussions with Essex County Council and other partners on the proposed terms of the legal arrangements.
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	Director of Communities	Mar Sept 2016	Delayed - Officers are in discussion with Higgins Homes, the developer of the adjacent site of the former Sir Winston Churchill PH, over appropriate arrangements for the required parking for the Higgins

		Vere Road, Loughton being undertaken by the Council, through the Council Housebuilding Programme, instead of by a housing association			development and resultant public parking, which could affect the proposed affordable housing development. It is anticipated that a report on this issue will be considered by the Asset Management and Economic Development Cabinet Committee in the near future.
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	On Target – The developer for the Barnfield, Roydon development has contracted with B3Living to provide the 3 shared ownership homes, as part of the agreed development approach with the Council (see No.12 below). The developer of Knollys Nursery is in active discussions with two of the Council's Preferred Housing Association Partners over the affordable housing provision on the site. Progress by the developers of the other sites is unknown.
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	Achieved – Following receipt of planning permission for a revised scheme, the developer has entered into a Development Agreement with the Council to provide the 8 affordable rented homes for the development, which is due to be commenced shortly.
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	Achieved – The development has now received planning permission, including the provision of 40% affordable housing. A report will be considered by Cabinet in due course on the most appropriate approach to marketing the sale of the site and the delivery of the affordable housing.

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 Dec 2016	On Target - A report will be considered by Cabinet in due course on the most appropriate approach to marketing the sale of the Pyrles Lane development site, as well as the delivery of the affordable housing.
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 Oct 2016	Delayed – Due to workload and other commitments.
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 Oct 2016	Delayed – Officers have been awaiting the outcome of the Housing and Planning Bill and the DCLG's consultation on the proposed detailed planning arrangements for the introduction of starter homes. The Bill has now received Royal Assent, but the outcome of the consultation is still awaited. Once received, a report will be submitted to the Cabinet on a Revised Affordable Housing Policy which will cover a proposed future approach to starter homes, shared ownership and affordable rented properties on new developments.
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 Dec 2016	Delayed – Due to insufficient progress being made by the contractor to build the new homes, the Council terminated its construction contract with the contractor at the beginning of June 2016. Officers are now in discussions with another contractor, with a view to this contractor completing the required works.

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 June 2016	On Target – The contractor has taken possession of the site and will be starting works on site shortly.
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	On Target – Planning permission has been obtained for all the sites within Phase 3 and the Council's Housebuilding Cabinet Committee has agreed a Procurement Strategy to deliver the new homes through 8 separate small contracts, which will be tendered shortly.
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	Achieved – 7 sites within the proposed Phase 4 have received planning permission; 4 sites have been refused planning permission; 3 sites have been withdrawn on the advice of planning officers; and 1 site is awaiting a planning submission being made.
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	On Target – Planning applications are currently in the process of being submitted and the first sites are due to be determined in June 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	Achieved – The Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee agreed to the creation of two new posts of Housing Development Manager and Housing Development Officer, both on 3-year fixed term contracts. Following a recruitment process, an offer has been made to a candidate for the Housing Development Manager post. It was not possible to recruit to the Housing Development Officer post, so the best way forward is currently being considered.

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	Achieved – Development and Financial Appraisals for all of the identified potential development sites have been completed and considered by the Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee.
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	Achieved – A new District-wide Nominations Agreement has now been signed with all of the Council's Preferred Housing Association Partners.
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	Under Review : awaiting Government Guidance – Late in the Parliamentary process for the passage of the Housing and Planning Bill, the Government amended the proposal to introduce fixed-term tenancies for up to 5 years to up to 10 years for those with a disability, or up to 19 years for those with children (up to nine years of age). The Council currently offers fixed term tenancies of 10 years to all new tenants, so the detailed arrangements are awaited from the DCLG in order to assess whether or not the Council needs to review its approach.
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 2016	In Progress – Although no accommodation has been requested or provided yet, it is expected that the Council's offer will be taken up within the next few months.

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 (Private Sector and Communities Support)	Apr 2017	In Progress - Late in the Parliamentary process for the passage of the Housing and Planning Bill, the Government amended its proposals to amend the income threshold outside of London to £31,000 per annum and to introduce a "taper" whereby social rents will be increased by 15p per annum for every £1 per annum income over the £31,000 threshold, up to the "market rent or near market rent". Officers will shortly be establishing a Project Team to oversee the Council's implementation of the new scheme, which the DCLG has said will commence from April 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	Awaiting Government Guidance – The requirement for stock-owning councils to pay a levy to the Government, based on: an assumption that councils will sell all void properties over Government-specified value thresholds (to be determined); and a Government estimate for each council of the number and value of such properties arising each year has been included in the Housing and Planning Act 2016. However, no information has yet been provided by the DCLG on what the value thresholds will be for different parts of the country, nor how the levy will be calculated or what the levy will be for each local authority. It is therefore not possible to plan to sell higher value properties, or to pay the levy, until the detailed arrangements are clear.
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 Oct 2016	Delayed – Although an initial feasibility study has been received from the Council's consultants, it needs detailed consideration - which has not been possible due to officers' focus on progressing the Council's Housebuilding Programme. However, it is hoped that this can be progressed once the new Housing Development Manager (see No. 22 above)

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 Sept 2016	In Progress – Following the decision of the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee that the provision of returnable tenancy deposits should be through third party deposit agents, this is being actively pursued. However, this is proving problematical, with tenancy deposit agents being unreceptive.
31	Homelessness	Consider the provision of further 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	Achieved - The Cabinet agreed to the provision of additional funding for further rental loans, through the Council's "Invest to Save" Scheme.
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	In Progress – The required Peer Review has been undertaken and an Action Plan agreed, which must be completed before the Gold Standard Award can be received.
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 Dec 2016	In Progress – An officer Project Team has been established to consider this issue in detail, and has formulated a number of draft recommendations. The next stage is for an Older Persons Housing Needs Assessment to be commissioned, in order to further inform the review. Once the Assessment is completed, the outcome and recommendations of the review will be reported to the Communities Select Committee in the first instance.
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	In Progress – This forms part of the discussions with Essex County Council and other partners on the proposed terms of the legal arrangements for the development of the St. Johns area of Epping (see No. 9 above).

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	In Progress - This will be included in the Draft Local Plan (Preferred Approach).
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 August 2016	In Progress – Officers from both the Council and Essex County Council are members of the Hillhouse Project Group. The formulation of a Masterplan for Hillhouse is close to completion, which includes the proposed inclusion of a new Independent Living Scheme. The next stage is for outline planning permission to be sought for the overall development proposals, based on the Masterplan, which is planned to be submitted in August 2016.
37	Empty Homes	Review and revise the Council's Housing Service Strategy on Empty Properties	Private Housing Manager (Technical)	Mar 2016	Achieved – This was considered and endorsed by the former Housing Select Committee in March 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	Limited progress – There have been no opportunities identified for rural housing schemes in villages, through the Council's Rural Planning Exceptions Policy, since the formulation of the Action Plan.
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	In Progress – An Action Plan has been formulated. This includes consultation on a draft accommodation standard. However, the National Union of Farmers (NFU) has advised nursery owners not to co-operate with the Council. Management Board has therefore agreed that this negative stance should be raised with the Chief Executive of the NFU.

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 Jan 2017	<p>In Progress – Essex County Council has continually delayed re-tendering for the provision of housing improvement agencies in the County, and has therefore extended the existing contracts with the Council's CARE Agency, and the other two agencies in Essex, a number of times. It is understood that the latest extension is now into 2016.</p> <p>The indications are that the County Council continues to be satisfied with the quality, performance and costs of the Council's own CARE Agency and, as a result, is likely to contract with the Council for a further period, rather than include the Council's service within the proposed competitive tender arrangements for the rest of Essex.</p>
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