

# Supplementary Committee Agenda



## **Housing Scrutiny Panel Tuesday, 24th March, 2015**

**Place:** Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping

**Time:** 5.30 pm

**Committee Secretary:** Mark Jenkins (Directorate of Governance)  
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### **5. NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING (Pages 3 - 8)**

To agree the attached notes of the last Panel meeting held on 9 February, these replace the notes from the October 2014 meetings, previously agreed.

### **6.a Housing Revenue Account Business Plan Key Action Plan (2014/15) - 12 Month Progress Report (Pages 9 - 20)**

(Director of Communities) To consider the attached report and appendix omitted from the agenda.

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**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL  
NOTES OF A MEETING OF HOUSING SCRUTINY PANEL  
HELD ON MONDAY, 9 FEBRUARY 2015  
IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING  
AT 5.30 - 7.15 PM**

**Members Present:** S Murray (Chairman), Ms G Shiell (Vice-Chairman), Mrs R Gadsby, Mrs J Lea, C Roberts, Mrs J H Whitehouse and W Marshall (Tenants and Leaseholders Federation)

**Other members present:** D Stallan

**Apologies for Absence:** Mrs S Jones, B Rolfe and Mrs T Thomas

**Officers Present** A Hall (Director of Communities), S Devine (Private Sector Housing Manager) and M Jenkins (Democratic Services Assistant)

**35. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)**

It was noted that there were no substitute Members present at the meeting.

**36. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

(a) Pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct, Councillor S Murray declared a personal non pecuniary interest in the following item of the agenda by virtue of his mother being a user of Careline. The Councillor indicated that he would remain in the meeting for the duration of the meeting and voting thereon:

(i) Item 7 Proposed Council Rent Increase and Increased Scheme Management and Careline Charges – 2015/16.

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

The Terms of Reference and Work Programme were noted.

**38. NOTES OF THE LAST PANEL MEETINGS**

The Panel received two sets of notes from their meetings held on 16 and 21 October 2014 for approval.

**RESOLVED:**

That the notes of the Panel meetings held on 16 and 21 October 2014 be agreed, subject to amendments submitted as a supplementary item concerning the 21 October Panel meeting.

**39. LANDLORD ACCREDITATION SCHEME**

The Panel received a presentation regarding the Landlord Accreditation Scheme from the Private Housing Manager (Technical).

The Essex Landlord Accreditation Scheme (ELAS) was intended to raise standards in private sector rented accommodation. The Panel was advised that most private sector landlords have a very limited property portfolio, perhaps one or two properties, and the number of private landlords was currently unknown. The scheme encouraged private landlords to come forward, make themselves known and enhance their professionalism.

ELAS was a consortium of 8 Essex District Councils, including Epping Forest District Council, administered through Blue Watch a wholly owned trading company of the Chief Fire Officer's Association (CFOA) Blue Watch Ltd for 5 years. Membership was £95.00 per annum and once a landlord was registered their properties could be advertised free on the ELAS website, they could receive discounted property insurance, they would have access to free impartial advice and information and for landlords that have licenceable houses in multiple occupation (HMO), some councils including Epping would reduce the HMO licence fee by the annual subscription fee to ELAS of £95.00.

Despite the scheme being launched in September 2014 it had made slow progress with only two landlords having joined across Essex. It was hoped that with further publicity and exposure there would be an increase in membership. If the scheme was not successful, another option for consideration was the possible introduction of a licensing scheme for properties in the private rented sector. However the Panel were advised that certain criteria needed to be met in order for a licensing scheme to gain approval and if approved, it would absorb a great deal of resources. It was estimated that there were 8,000 private properties to let in the district.

Members thanked the Private Housing Manager for her presentation.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Presentation regarding Landlord Accreditation Scheme be noted.

**40. PROPOSED COUNCIL RENT INCREASE AND INCREASED SCHEME MANAGEMENT AND CARELINE CHARGES - 2015/16**

The Panel received a report regarding the Proposed Council Rent Increase 2015/16 and Charges to Older Tenants in Sheltered and Area Schemes from the Director of Communities.

At its meeting on 19 January 2015 the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee considered the HRA Budget 2015/16 and associated recommendations on the Council rent increase and charges to older tenants in sheltered and area schemes. The Committee agreed to make a number of recommendations to the Cabinet on these issues which were agreed at the Cabinet meeting on 2 February.

It was advised that the Cabinet had recommended to the Full Council an average overall increase in Council rent of 2.2% for 2015/16. In respect of the Council's Careline Service and the Scheme Management Service for sheltered housing and area schemes, the following decisions of the Cabinet were noted by the Panel:

- (a) The loss of £133,000 per annum Housing Related Support funding from Essex County Council;

- (b) The charges for the Council's Careline Service would be increased by £0.27 per week with effect from 6 April 2015;
- (c) That 10% of the time undertaken in duties by Scheme Managers previously attributed to Housing Related Support would be re-classified as Intensive Housing Management and charged as a Service Charge accordingly;
- (d) The charges for the Council's Scheme Management Service would be increased by 5% from 6 April 2015; and
- (e) The increased charges for the Careline and Scheme Management Services provided to Council tenants in receipt of housing benefit would not be met through any increase in compensating Housing Related Support Credit. The Housing Related Support Credit currently received by such tenants would be reduced by 8% with effect from 6 April 2015.

The intention of these policies would be:

- (i) For Careline Service to break-even; and
- (ii) The loss in HRS funding for the Scheme Management Service would be fully recovered from April 2016.

It was noted that as a result of spreading the required increases in charges over two years, the HRA would be subsidising the Careline Service and Scheme Management Service by around £58,000 during 2015/16. It was also noted that Essex County Council had given clear indications that it would be seeking to reduce the Essex-wide HRS funding during 2015/16, which was likely to result in the need for the Council to increase these charges further from April 2016.

**RESOLVED:**

That the summary of the proposed HRA Budget 2015/16 and associated recommendations on the Council rent increase and charges to older tenants in sheltered and area schemes for 2015/16 be noted.

**41. HOUSING IMPROVEMENTS AND SERVICE ENHANCEMENTS FUND - 2015/16**

The Panel received a report regarding the Housing Improvements and Service Enhancements Fund 2015/16 from the Director of Communities.

It was noted that for the past three years, the Cabinet had asked the Housing Scrutiny Panel to consider and recommend a proposed list of housing improvements and service enhancements to the Cabinet utilising the additional funding received by the HRA which the Panel had last examined in March 2014.

The purpose of the report was therefore:

- (a) To provide anticipated out turns of expenditure for 2014/15 regarding both individual projects and the programme as a whole; and
- (b) To recommend the use of the Housing Improvements and Service Enhancements Fund for 2015/16.

Since housing related income and expenditure was ring fenced to the HRA, any annual HRA surpluses not required therefore needed spending otherwise they resulted in increased HRA balances, which was why the Housing Improvements and Service Improvements Fund had been introduced from 2012/13.

There were 7 new housing improvements and service enhancements being undertaken in 2014/15, in addition to the completion of a further 7 projects extending/carried forward into 2014/15. Generally good progress had been made with the delivery of most of the projects during the year to date.

The Council's HRA business planning consultants identified that the HRA could commit £700,000 per annum for new and committed improvements and service enhancements from April 2015. It was advised that after utilising all of the resources available to the fund in 2014/15, there would still be a further £445,000 and £574,000 available for spending on new projects in the following two years based on current forecasts.

**RECOMMENDED:**

That subject to the views of the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation, the following recommendations be made to the Cabinet:

- (1) That the latest out-turn forecasts for each of the projects funded by the Housing Improvement and Service Enhancement Fund in 2014/15 be noted;
- (2) That the associated expenditure for any slippages on individual projects in 2014/15 be carried forward for completion in 2015/16;
- (3) That the Housing Scrutiny Panel has already recommended to the Cabinet that the cost of increasing the financial incentives for Council tenants downsizing their accommodation be met from the Housing Improvements and Service Enhancements Fund;
- (4) That the Cabinet has already agreed that the Fund should meet the costs relating to the Housing Revenue Account of increasing the size of the new Corporate Fraud Team from April 2015 subject to the required General Fund Continuing Services Budget (CSB) bid being agreed;
- (5) That the proposed list of housing improvements and service enhancements for 2015/16 and the associated recommendations for each project, as set out in Appendix 2 of the agenda report, be recommended for approval;
- (6) That the amount allocated from the Fund to the Major Capital Projects Reserve be recommended for increase in 2015/16 from £200,000 to £384,000 to fund future housing capital projects (either in 2015/16 or future years);
- (7) That at its meeting in January 2016, the Select Committee responsible for Housing Services be asked to consider and recommend to the Cabinet the proposed use of the Housing Improvements and Service Enhancements Fund for 2016/17;
- (8) That the Housing Scrutiny Panel's report to the Cabinet be based on the content of Director of Communities' report to the Panel; and

- (9) That the Cabinet be asked to record in the subsequent Cabinet minutes all the Cabinet decisions on the recommendations set out in bold in Appendix 2 of the Panel agenda.

#### **42. NEW HOUSING STRATEGY KEY ACTION PLAN 2015/16**

The Panel received a report regarding the New Housing Strategy Key Action Plan 2015/16 from the Director of Communities.

At its meeting in September 2009 the Cabinet adopted its current Housing Strategy which assessed the District's housing needs and set out the Council's approach to meeting those needs. The Strategy 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. It was agreed that the plans would be produced and updated on an annual basis for Cabinet approval and they would be monitored on a 6 monthly basis by this Panel.

It was advised that much of the Housing Strategy related to the provisions within the Local Plan and that which a new Plan was currently under consideration by the Council. Therefore, the Housing Portfolio Holder had previously agreed that the Housing Strategy should not be updated until the Local Plan Preferred Options (Draft Local Plan) had been published but that in the meantime, Annual Housing Strategy Key Action Plans should continue to be produced with progress monitored.

#### **RECOMMENDED:**

That a recommendation be made to the Housing Portfolio Holder that the proposed Housing Strategy Key Action Plan for 2015/16 be adopted and that progress with the Key Action Plan be monitored on a six monthly basis by the Housing Scrutiny Panel (or its successor body) in the normal way.

#### **43. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2014/15 - QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE**

The Panel received a report regarding Key Performance Indicators 2014/15 – Quarter 2 Performance from the Director of Communities.

A range of 36 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for 2014/15 was adopted by the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee in March 2014. The KPIs were important to the improvement of the Council's services and the achievement of its key objectives. They comprised a combination of some former statutory indicators and locally determined performance measures. The KPIs directed improvement effort towards services and the national priorities and local challenges arising from the social, economic and environmental context of the district that were the focus of the key objectives.

As part of the Overview and Scrutiny Review undertaken in 2013/14, changes had been made to arrangements for the quarterly review of KPI performance. From this municipal year, the existing scrutiny panels were responsible for the review of quarterly performance against specific KPIs within their areas of responsibility. Therefore, the report included only those indicators which fell within the areas of responsibility of the Housing Scrutiny Panel.

The overall position with regard to the achievement of target performance for all of the KPIs at the end of the second quarter (1 July to 30 September 2014) of the year was as follows:

- (a) 25 (69%) indicators achieved the cumulative second quarter target;
- (b) 11 (30%) indicators did not achieve the cumulative second quarter target, although 2 (5%) of these KPIs performed within the agreed tolerance for the indicator; and
- (c) 30 (83%) were currently anticipated to achieve the cumulative year end target.

Ten of the Key Performance Indicators fell within the Housing Scrutiny Panel areas of responsibility. The overall position with regard to the achievement of target performance at the end of the second quarter of the year for these ten indicators was as follows:

- (i) 10 (100%) indicators achieved the cumulative second quarter target; and
- (ii) 10 (100%) were currently anticipated to achieve the cumulative year end target.

The Housing Portfolio Holder thanked officers for their work on re-configuring the KPI reports so they were aligned to specific scrutiny panels. The Chairman requested that future KPI reports should be submitted in colour printing as this was easier to interpret.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Key Performance Indicators 2014/15 – Quarter 2 Performance report be noted.

**44. REPORTS TO BE MADE TO THE NEXT MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Chairman advised that he would update the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the Panel's work.

**45. FUTURE MEETINGS**

The next scheduled meeting of the Panel would be on Tuesday 24 March 2015 at 5.30p.m. in Committee Room 1.



## **Report to Housing Scrutiny Panel**

**Date of meeting: 24 March 2015**

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

**Subject: Housing Revenue Account Business Plan  
Key Action Plan (2014/15) -  
12-Month Progress Report**



**Officer contact for further information: Alan Hall – Director of Communities (01992 564004)**

**Committee Secretary: Mark Jenkins**

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### **Recommendation:**

**That the Panel considers the 12-Month Progress Report for the Key Action Plan contained within the HRA Business Plan 2014/15 (attached as an Appendix) and provides any feedback to the Housing Portfolio Holder and Director of Communities accordingly.**

### **Report:**

1. In April 2014, the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan for 2014/15 was produced, incorporating the Repairs & 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.
2. An important section of the HRA Business Plan is the Key Action Plan. This sets out the proposed actions the Council would be taking, primarily, over the following year. Having included the Key Action Plan within the Business Plan, it is good practice that the progress made with the stated actions is monitored; one of the Scrutiny Panel's Terms of Reference is to review progress during the year.
3. A 6-Month Progress Report on the actions contained within the Key Action Plan 2014/15 was reported to the Housing Scrutiny Panel in October 2014. An updated 12-Month Progress Report is attached as an Appendix to this report for consideration.
4. The Scrutiny Panel is asked to consider the Progress Report and to feed back to the Housing Portfolio Holder and Director of Communities any comments it considers appropriate. The Tenants and Leaseholders Federation is due to be consulted on the Progress Report at its meeting scheduled for 19<sup>th</sup> March 2015, and their comments will be reported orally at the meeting.
5. The proposed new Housing Revenue Account Business Plan for next year (2015/16), incorporating a new Key Action Plan, is reported elsewhere on the agenda.

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**HRA Business Plan 2014/15  
12-MONTH PROGRESS REPORT ON KEY ACTION PLAN**

Action	Corporate Housing Objectives	Responsibility for Achievement	Target Date	12-Month Progress Report (As at 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2015)
<b>Housing General</b>				
1) Review the HRA Financial Plan, through formal officer reviews on a quarterly basis and reviews by the Housing Scrutiny Panel on a half-yearly basis.	HO 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5	Director of Communities	Mar 2015	<b>Achieved</b> – The Quarter 1 Review was considered by officers, and the Quarter 2 Review was considered by the Housing Scrutiny Panel in October 2014. The Quarter 3 (officer review) was not undertaken, due to the Council's consultant being on sick leave. The Quarter 4 review is being undertaken by the Scrutiny Panel, as part of its consideration of the new Financial Plan for 2015/16.
2) <i>(Subject to Cabinet approval)</i> Consider additional appropriate housing improvements and service enhancements, funded from additional resources available to the HRA from April 2015, once the available additional funding is known.	HO 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5	Director of Communities	Jan 2015	<b>Achieved</b> – At its meeting in March 2015, the Cabinet agreed all of the Housing Scrutiny Panel's recommended housing improvements and service enhancements
3) Embed the operations of the Housing Service within the new Communities Directorate and complete all the identified tasks within the Communities Directorate Implementation Action Plan, in order to increase further the Housing Service's efficiency and effectiveness	HO 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 6	Director of Communities	<del>Mar 2015</del> Apr 2015	<b>Good Progress</b> – Most of the identified actions, and a number more, have been completed. The restructuring of the Communities Support Team still needs to take place
4) Introduce a new centralised, co-ordinated and customer focussed complaints handling regime for all Step 1 and Step 2 complaints within the Communities Directorate	HO 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6	Asst Director (Private Housing & Communities Support)	<del>Sept 2014</del> May 2015	<b>Delayed</b> – The new post will form part of the Communities Support Team, which is currently subject to restructuring proposals under Phase 2 of the Management Restructure.

### Council Housebuilding Programme

5) <i>(Subject to Cabinet approval)</i> Adopt an updated Development Strategy for the Council's Housebuilding Programme, taking account of strategic and policy decisions since the adoption of the previous version and the Programme's current position	HO 1 / 2 / 3 / 5 / 6	Asst Director (Housing Property & Development)	<del>July 2014</del> Dec 2014	<b>Achieved</b> – The Cabinet adopted the updated Development Strategy at its meeting in February 2015, on the recommendation of the Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee.
6) Subject to the Council's funding bid to the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) being successful, seek and obtain Investment Partner status with the HCA, to enable the Council to draw down the funding and charge affordable rents for newly-built properties.	HO 1 / 5 / 6	Asst Director (Housing Property & Development)	<del>Dec 2014</del> Apr 2015	<b>In Progress</b> – The Council was successful in securing £0.5 Million grant from the HCA. East Thames is now in the process of formulating the Council's application to the HCA for Investment Partner status.
7) Start on site with Phase 1 of the Council's Housebuilding Programme, to provide 23 new affordable rented homes in Waltham Abbey.	HO 1 / 2 / 3 / 5 / 6	Asst Director (Housing Property & Development)	<del>July 2014</del> Nov 2014	<b>Achieved</b> – Phase 1 started on site in November 2014.
8) Start on site with an improvement scheme at Marden Close and Faversham Hall, Chigwell Row, to convert the 20 existing bedsits a former hall into 12 one bedroom flats	HO 1 / 2 / 3 / 6	Asst Director (Housing Property & Development)	Aug 2014	<b>Achieved</b> – Works started on site in September 2014.
9) Consider and determine which level of the Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH) new Council properties should meet, to inform future development appraisals and the standards for future developments.	HO 6	Asst Director (Housing Property & Development)	<del>Sept 2014</del> Jan 2015	<b>Achieved</b> – Following consideration of the issues, the Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee has agreed that, from Phase 2 onwards, developments should meet Level 4 of the Code.
10) Progress Phase 2 of the Housebuilding Programme, providing new affordable rented homes at Burton Road, Loughton, including the receipt of planning permission and the procurement of the works contractor, in readiness for a start on site in Spring 2015	HO 1 / 2 / 3 / 5 / 6	Asst Director (Housing Property & Development)	Mar 2015	<b>Delayed</b> – The planning application for Phase 2 was refused by the Area Plans Sub-Committee. At its meeting on 5 <sup>th</sup> March 2015, the Cabinet Committee considered the options available and agreed to submit a revised planning application for the same number of homes (52 homes).

11) Undertake development and financial appraisals for the majority of the Council's remaining sites with development potential and, through the Council's Housebuilding Cabinet Committee, determine which sites planning permission for development should be sought.	HO 1 / 2 / 3 / 5 / 6	Asst Director (Housing Property & Development)	<del>Mar 2015</del> May 2015	<b>In Progress</b> – Development and financial appraisals were presented to the Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee for a number of potential development sites towards the end of 2015. Two further meetings of the Cabinet Committee are planned for Spring 2015 to consider the remaining 22 feasibility studies from the primary list of sites.
<b>Housing Management</b>				
12) <i>(Subject to Cabinet approval if necessary)</i> Review the success of, and if appropriate amend as a result, the Council's new Housing Allocations Scheme, to ensure that it meets the Council's housing objectives.	HO 2	Asst Director (Housing Operations)	Oct 2014	<b>Achieved</b> – In March 2015, the Cabinet agreed to make a number of changes to the Housing Allocation Scheme with effect from July 2015, following detailed consideration by the Housing Portfolio Holder and the Housing Scrutiny Panel.
13) Prepare for the procurement of a new choice based lettings provider, for when the existing contract with Locata Housing Services ends in 2015.	HO 1 / 2	Asst Director (Housing Operations)	June 2015	<b>In Progress</b> – The Council is working with the other local authorities that comprise the Herts and Essex Housing Options Consortium to procure a new choice based lettings provider.
14) Review the success of, and if appropriate amend as a result, the Council's new Tenancy Policy - and in particular the use of 10-year fixed term flexible tenancies for all new lettings of Council properties with 3 or more bedrooms.	HO 2	Asst Director (Housing Operations)	Oct 2014	<b>Achieved</b> – In March 2015, following detailed consideration by the Housing Portfolio Holder and the Housing Scrutiny Panel, the Cabinet agreed that the use of fixed term tenancies should be extended to <b>all</b> Council properties re-let to new tenants (not just 3 bedroom properties as currently the case) with effect from July 2015.
15) Undertake a high profile publicity campaign to receive information from residents about social housing fraud	HO 1 / 2	<del>Asst Director (Housing Operations)</del> Chief Internal Auditor	<del>Dec 2014</del> June 2015	<b>In Progress</b> – Preparations are underway. The campaign will now be led by the Council's Chief Internal Officer, who will shortly be responsible for the new Corporate Fraud Team from April 2015 (see (16) below)

16) Incorporate the Social Housing Fraud Team within a new Corporate Fraud Team, in order to increase/improve the sharing of intelligence, staffing resources and expertise	HO 1 / 2	Chief Internal Auditor	<del>Sept 2014</del> Dec 2014	<b>Achieved</b> – The Cabinet has agreed to the formation of a Corporate Fraud Team from April 2105 (excluding Benefits Fraud Officers who will be transferring to the DWP from September 2015). The two existing Housing Fraud Officer posts will form part of the new Corporate Team.
17) Formulate and adopt a Social Housing Fraud Strategy, to clearly set out the Council's approach to dealing with social housing fraud, and how and when the different remedies available will be used	HO 1 / 2 / 5	Asst Director (Housing (Operations))	May 2014	<b>Achieved</b> – The Housing Portfolio Holder has adopted the new Social Housing Fraud Strategy, following detailed consideration by the Housing Portfolio Holder.
18) Commence an Environmental Improvement Scheme for the Oakwood Hill Estate, Loughton, through a specially-formed Task Force of key individuals and partners established to review and consider the available options	HO 2 / 3 / 4	Asst Director (Housing Property & Development)	<del>Jan 2015</del> April 2015	<b>In Progress</b> – The Task Force has been formed, under the chairmanship of the Housing Portfolio Holder, and has had a number of meetings to date. Match funding has been secured from Essex Highways, to repair/improve all the adopted footpaths on the estate. The Task Force has also formulated a menu of other improvement options, that are currently being costed.
19) Introduce an IT system to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the management of the Council's leasehold property portfolio	HO 1 / 2 / 3 / 5 / 6	Communities Support Manager	<del>Sept 2014</del> Sept 2015	<b>Delayed</b> – Due to internal staffing issues, this has not been progressed as quickly as had been hoped. The two current Housing IT vacancies are included within restructure of the Communities Support Team. Once this new structure has been implemented, good progress is then expected.
20) Undertake a fundamental review of processes and policies for the re-letting of empty Council properties, through the commission of a study by an experienced and independent specialist, in order to increase efficiency and effectiveness and to improve re-letting times	HO 1 / 2 / 3 / 4	Director of Communities	Mar 2015	<b>Delayed</b> – No progress has been made on this due to other commitments of the Director of Communities. However, in the meantime, empty property re-let times have improved.

### Tenant Participation

21) Consider and respond as appropriate to the recommendations of the first Service Review (on handling housing complaints) produced by the Tenants Scrutiny Panel	HO 1 / 2 / 3 / 4	Asst Director (Private Housing & Communities Support)	<del>Sept 2014</del> Jan 2015	<b>Achieved</b> – The report and recommendations from the Tenant Scrutiny Panel's Service Review on the handling of housing complaints was reported to both the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation and the Housing Scrutiny Panel, and the majority of recommendations are being implemented - notably the creation of a new post of Customer Relationship Officer to co-ordinate and respond to housing complaints.
22) Train tenants of the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation and recognised tenants associations to undertake periodic "mystery shopping" exercises on the Council's housing services, and for other social housing providers	HO 2 / 3 / 4	Tenant Participation Officer	<del>Mar 2015</del> Jan 2015	<b>In Progress</b> – Training has been provided to the tenant participants and the first mystery shopping exercise by tenants will take place in Spring 2015.

### Housing Related Support

23) Review the future of the Council's Careline Service, in the light of the County Council's decision to procure a county-wide telecare contract from one provider	HO 1 / 2	Asst Director (Housing Operations)	Mar 2015	<b>Achieved</b> – Following Essex County Council's decision to reduce funding for the Councils Careline Service by £52,000 p/a (40%) from April 2015 and a review of options by the Housing Portfolio Holder, the Cabinet has agreed a range of alternative funding measures to meet the loss in income - primarily through increased charges to service users, including (for the first time) those in receipt of housing benefit. This has safeguarded the viability of the Careline Service for the time being. However, there are concerns that significant funding reductions will be made again from April 2016. Separately, Essex CC's Commissioning Manager has recently indicated that Essex
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				CC is minded to enter into discussions with existing telecare providers (including EFDC) about a negotiated arrangement for the use of existing telecare provision across Essex.
24) Complete the first schemes under the programme of providing scooter stores at sheltered housing schemes	HO 2	Housing Assets Manager	<del>Oct 2014</del> April 2015	<b>In Progress</b> – The two pilot schemes (at Chapel Road, Epping and Parsonage Court, Loughton) are on site and due to be completed by April 2015.
25) Install a free Wi-Fi service at the Council's Homeless Persons Hostel at Norway House, North Weald, in order to enable residents and their children to access the internet	HO 2	Housing Options Manager	Oct 2014	<b>Achieved</b> – The work was completed in October 2014, and has been well received by residents.
<b>Housing Repairs and Maintenance</b>				
26) Install mains operated smoke detectors in all Council owned properties over the next 5-years	HO 2 / 3	Housing Assets Manager	Mar 2017	<b>In Progress</b> – In excess of 80% of Council-owned properties now have mains smoke alarms installed.
27) Timetable at least one meeting each year with the Tenants Federation to discuss the annual repairs and maintenance programme.	HO 3 / 4	Asst Director (Housing Property & Devt) / Housing Assets Manager	Mar 2015	<b>Planned</b> – This meeting takes place in March and is part of the consultation process that informs the Business Planning process.
28) Identify a new depot site from which to relocate the Housing Repairs Service to free up the existing Epping Depot for redevelopment.	HO 1 / 3 / 6	Asst Director (Housing Property & Devt)	Mar 2015	<b>In Progress</b> – A schedule of space requirements has been drawn up and has been issued to officers in Estates and Valuation to identify alternative sites. This is also a standard agenda item at the Asset Management Co-ordination Working Group, and will continue to be so until a site is identified.
29) Closely monitor the new materials supply contract with Grafton Buildbase, and if performance deteriorates to an unacceptable level, then implement arrangements with an alternative supplier.	HO 1 / 3	Housing Repairs Manager (Mears)	<del>June 2014</del> Mar 2015	<b>In Progress</b> – For the first 12-months of the contract, Buildbase failed to meet an acceptable standard of service for the supply of materials. This resulted in an improvement notice being served in accordance with the contract. Since the



				service of the improvement notice, there has been an acceptable improvement in supply. However, a further stepped improvement is anticipated once the IT interface is implemented in April 2015.
30) Undertake a tender to appoint at least two Framework contractors to undertake Gas Servicing and breakdown works to gas heating and hot water appliances in time to coincide with the existing contract end date in July 2015.	HO 1 / 3	Housing Assets Manager	July 2015	<b>In Progress</b> – An advertisement was placed in the EU Journal with 16 expressions of interest received. PQQs have been evaluated and a short list of 5 contractors compiled. Tenders are due out in March 2015
31) Migrate from the Council's existing bespoke Schedule of Rates to the industry standard National Housing Federation Schedule of Rates (NHF SOR)	HO 3 / 5	Housing Repairs Manager (Mears)	<del>May 2014</del> Dec 2014	<b>In Progress</b> – This proved problematical initially, due to integration issues between Northgate OHMS and Mears' IT system (MCM). A specialist IT Consultant has been appointed and as a result the implementation is now due in April 2015, once refresher training has taken place for Repairs staff.
32) Renew at least 3,300 key components each year to maintain its housing stock to a more modern standard based on industry standard life cycles.	HO 3	Housing Assets Manager / Housing Repairs Manager (Mears)	Mar 2015	<b>In Progress</b> – With over 2,861 key building components already replaced in Quarter 3, this programme is well under way.
33) Continue with the Repairs Focus Group	HO 3 / 4	Asst Director (Housing Property & Devt)	Mar 2015	<b>Ongoing</b> – This group continues to meet on a quarterly basis
34) Complete the installation of external wall insulation to around 40 properties using Green Deal Cash Back funding.	HO 1 / 3	Housing Assets Manager	Sept 2014	<b>Achieved</b> – This programme was completed by the 24 September 2014 deadline, which attracted a grant of over £160,000 in Green Deal Cash-Back
35) Roll out the 75% discount for leaseholders for 30-minute front entrance fire door installations to flats	HO 2 / 3	Housing Assets Manager	Mar 2015	<b>In Progress</b> – 165 leaseholders have so far taken up the offer of a discount for a replacement fire-protected front entrance door.

<p>36) Implement the second set of “key deliverables” as agreed by the Repairs Advisory Group and the Housing Portfolio Holder:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To introduce an on-line repairs diagnosis and reporting service with access to book appointments on-line</li> <li>• To develop and introduce a mobile phone App for smartphones for tenants to report repairs and book appointments.</li> <li>• To introduce materials product warranty notification software to warn of any warranty in existence</li> <li>• To undertake an HQN Repairs Self-Assessment.</li> </ul>	HO 1 / 3	Housing Repairs Manager (Mears)	<del>Dec 2014</del> June 2015	<b>Partly Achieved</b> – The on-line diagnostic system and product warranty capture system are due to be rolled out in June 2015. However, the mobile phone app was successfully launched in March 2015. HQN commenced its independent assessment of the Repairs Service in September 2014, starting with a series of interviews with operatives, staff and tenants. This is now being followed up with a review of the repairs documentation. The outcome of the review is anticipated in April 2015.
37) Seek to include at least one local business on the list of tenderers for all future contracts.	HO 3	Housing Assets Manager / Housing Repairs Manager (Mears)	Mar 2015	<b>Ongoing</b> – This is being achieved on all contracts so far this year. However, this cannot be guaranteed for EU procurement exercises, such as gas servicing, as this is subject to a strict and consistent marking regime of PQQ’s
38) Commence a programme of Refurbishment to Communal Kitchens in Sheltered Housing Schemes	HO 3	Housing Assets Manager	Mar 2015	<b>Year 1 Achieved</b> – Kitchens have been completed at Buckhurst Court, Buckhurst Hill; Parsonage Court and Hedgers Close, Loughton; Jessopp Court, Waltham Abbey; Frank Bretton House, Ongar; and Leonard Davis House, North Weald. A further 5 kitchens are in the pipeline for 2015/16.
39) Undertake a feasibility study for Chalet Replacements at Norway House	HO 2 / 3 / 6	Housing Assets Manager	Mar 2015	<b>In Progress</b> - The anticipated remaining life of the existing chalets is around 5-years, mainly due to the quality of the floors. A feasibility study has been undertaken, which is being considered alongside other management factors. Officers that manage the site are currently being consulted before a report goes forward to the Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee.

**Key to Corporate Housing Objectives**

HO 1 - Value for Money  
HO 2 - Housing Management

HO 3 - Repairs and Maintenance  
HO 4 - Tenant Participation

HO 5 - Housing Finance  
HO 6 - Housing Development

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