

## Scrutiny Standing Panel Agenda



### **Housing Scrutiny Standing Panel Wednesday, 7th December, 2005**

**Place:** Committee Room 2, Civic Offices, Epping

**Time:** 5.00 pm

**Democratic Services Officer:** Zoe Folley(Direct Line:01992 564532)  
zoefolley@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

**Members:**

Councillors S Murray (Chairman), Mrs R Gadsby (Vice-Chairman), K Angold-Stephens, R Chidley, P Gode, Mrs A Grigg, Mrs J Lea, L Martin, Mrs S Perry, T Richardson and Mrs J H Whitehouse

**Epping Forest Tenants & Leaseholders Federation:** Mrs M Carter

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS MEETING IS OPEN TO ALL MEMBERS TO ATTEND**

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

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

(Head of Research and Democratic Services) To report the appointment of any substitute members for the meeting.

**3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

(Head of Research and Democratic Services). To declare interests in any items on the agenda.

In considering whether to declare a personal or a prejudicial interest under the Code of Conduct, Overview & Scrutiny members are asked pay particular attention to paragraph 11 of the Code in addition to the more familiar requirements.

This requires the declaration of a personal and prejudicial interest in any matter before an OS 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.

**4. NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING - 15 SEPTEMBER 2005 (Pages 5 - 8)**

Attached.

**5. TERMS OF REFERENCE / WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 9 - 14)**

(Chairman/Lead Officer) To consider the attached report.

**6. REFFERALS FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (Pages 15 - 18)**

(Head of Housing Services). To consider the attached report.

**7. EMPTY PROPERTIES IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR - CURRENT POSITION ON DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGY**

A report entitled 'Empty Properties in the Private Sector' was presented to the Panel on 15 September 2005. It was anticipated that a follow up paper, with regard to the development of the strategy, would be available for discussion for the meeting of 7 December 2005. However, this has not been possible.

A further Panel meeting is to be arranged towards the end of January 2006 in order to discuss this item. At this time Environmental Services would hope to be in a position to feed back on the partnership bid made to the Regional Housing Pot and the findings, with regard to empty properties, from the House Condition Survey.

**8. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUSINESS PLAN 2005 (KEY ACTION PLAN) - SIX-MONTH PROGRESS REPORT (Pages 19 - 30)**

(Head of Housing Services). To consider the attached report.

**9. WITNESS PROTECTION MOBILITY SCHEME (Pages 31 - 32)**

(Head of Housing Services). To consider the attached report

**10. JOINT CHOICE BASED LETTINGS SCHEME - ORAL UPDATE (Pages 33 - 42)**

(Head of Housing Services). To consider the attached report.

**11. EPPING FOREST LOCAL SUPPORTING PEOPLE STRATEGY 2005 - 6 MONTH PROGRESS REPORT (Pages 43 - 60)**

(Head of Housing Services). To consider the attached report.

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

To consider which reports are ready to be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its next meeting.

**13. FUTURE MEETINGS**

To consider the forward programme of meeting dates for the Panel.

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**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL  
NOTES OF A MEETING OF HOUSING SCRUTINY STANDING PANEL  
HELD ON THURSDAY, 15 SEPTEMBER 2005  
IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2, CIVIC OFFICES, EPPING  
AT TIMES NOT SPECIFIED**

<b>Members Present:</b>	S Murray (Chairman), Mrs R Gadsby (Vice-Chairman), K Angold-Stephens, R Chidley, P Gode, Mrs A Grigg, Mrs J Lea, L Martin, Mrs S Perry, T Richardson and Mrs J H Whitehouse
<b>Other members present:</b>	Mrs J Davis, M Heavens and F Maclaine
<b>Apologies for Absence:</b>	(none)
<b>Officers Present</b>	A Hall (Head of Housing Services), R Wilson (Assistant Head of Housing Services (Operations)), P Pledger (Assistant Head of Housing Services (Property and Resources)), Mrs M Pearce (Housing Needs Manager), S Devine (Environmental Health Officer) and Z Folley (Democratic Services Assistant)
<b>Also in attendance:</b>	Mrs M Carter (Epping Forest Tenants and Leasholders Federation)

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

The Panel noted that there were no substitute members appointed for the meeting.

**11. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest made pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct.

**12. NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

Noted.

**13. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Noted.

**14. EMPTY PROPERTIES IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR**

S Devine presented the report. Noted that a more detailed report would be submitted to the next meeting to consider the legal powers, other measures available and also an outline of the issues that should be included in a strategy. Agreed that the staff implications of work be added to paragraph 13 of page 14.

Noted the work the Council undertook with East Thames Group to help those on a low income gain property. Noted that it could be suggested to the Group that under this arrangement they give priority to leasing empty dwellings. Noted that these issues could be incorporated within an Empty Home Strategy.

**ACTION**

S Devine to produce further report for next meeting.

**15. HOUSING ALLOCATIONS SCHEME**

Marion Pearce presented the report. Attention was drawn to an information booklet produced by Housing Services on the allocations scheme.

Noted the qualification criteria, referral information and priorities for the SAFE scheme. Noted the throughput and new use for Norway House and targets for secure tenancies.

The Panel considered the banding system for the prioritisation of housing applications. Noted that the assessment was based on needs and took into account the length of time an applicant lived in the area. As a result of this priority was given to residents of the District.

The report was endorsed and recommended to the Cabinet on 10 October 2005.

**16. CHOICE BASED LETTINGS**

R Wilson presented the report.

He drew attention to staff implications, the regional fund for the scheme, Partnership working and schemes at neighbouring Authorities.

The report was endorsed for the Portfolio Holder to consider.

**17. INTRODUCTORY TENANTS SCHEME**

R Wilson presented the report.

The report was endorsed and recommended to the Cabinet on 10 October 2005.

**18. HOUSING SERVICES STRATEGY ON TENANT PARTICIPATION**

P Pledger presented this report.

Members paid particular attention to the actions plans for the strategy and the proposal to set up two new residents associations each year from an agreed list. It was suggested that wards Members should be consulted over this action to seek their views on proposed schemes.

Members proposed that ward members should receive information and be consulted on specific ward issues and Tenant Participation activities.

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) That the Housing Service Strategy on Tenant Participation be noted.
- (2) That the Panels comments be incorporated within the Strategy.

**19. BEST VALUE SERVICE REVIEW OF HOUSING SERVICES - SIX-MONTHLY PROGRESS REPORT ON SERVICE DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

The Panel considered the third Six – monthly progress report on the Housing Development Plan together with a summary report which identified the improvements that had been made and those that had yet to be achieved.

**RESOLVED:**

That the third Six – Monthly Progress Report on the Housing Service Development Plan be noted.

**20. HOUSING STRATEGY ACTION PLAN - SIX MONTHLY PROGRESS REPORT**

The Panel considered the latest Six – month progress report for the Key Action Plans contained in the Housing Strategy 2004-07. The progress report set out the proposed actions the Council would take over the following 1-3 years to address housing needs in the District.

**RESOLVED:**

That the latest Six – month Progress Report for the Key Action Plans contained within the in the Housing Strategy 2004-07 be noted.

**21. WORK PLAN - PROGRESS REPORT**

The Panel considered the current position with regard to their work plan incorporating some additional tasks agreed by the Panel at recent meetings.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Progress Report on the Panel's Work Programme 2005/06 be noted.

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

There were no reports to be made.

**23. FUTURE MEETINGS**

**ACTION:**

Z Folley to place an item in the Members Bulletin to identify the Panels preferences regarding the date of the next meeting.

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***Report to the Housing Scrutiny Panel***

SCRUTINY

***Date of meeting: 7 December 2005***



Epping Forest District Council

**Subject: Housing Scrutiny Panel Work Programme 2005/6 – Progress Report**

**Officer contact for further information: Alan Hall, Head of Housing Services**

**Committee Secretary: Zoe Folley**

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**Recommendations:**

**That the attached Progress Report on the Panel's Work Programme 2005/6 be noted.**

**Report**

1. At its first meeting in July 2005, the Panel noted its Work Programme set by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel.
2. Attached is the current position with regard to each of the tasks assigned to the Panel, which includes additional tasks agreed by the Panel since July 2005.

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Housing Scrutiny Panel  
Work Programme 2005/6

PROGRESS REPORT  
(As at 23 November 2005)

Item	Priority	Original Report Deadline	Current Position
<b>ORIGINAL WORK PROGRAMME</b>			
(1) Annual Ethnic Monitoring Review of Housing Applicants	High	July 2005	<b>Completed</b> - At the 21 July 2005 meeting.
(2) Updated draft Housing Service Strategies on Older People and Housing Management	Medium	July 2005	<b>Completed</b> – At the 21 July 2005 meeting.
(3) Updated draft Housing Strategy	High	Sept 2005	<b>Delayed</b> - Now to be presented to the Panel's next, or following, meeting, due to the wide-scale consultation that will need to be undertaken.
(4) Implementation of Choice Based Lettings	Medium	First Report – Sept 2005	<b>On Target</b> - First report considered at the meeting on 15 <sup>th</sup> September 2005. Agreement given to work in partnership with neighbouring authorities, and to submit a joint bid for funding to the ODPM. This was subsequently agreed by the Housing Portfolio Holder. The outcome of the bid, if known, will be reported orally at the December meeting of the Panel.
(5) Annual Review of the Housing Allocations Scheme	Medium	Sept 2005	<b>Completed</b> – At the 15 September meeting. Officers' proposals were supported by the Panel, and subsequently agreed by the Cabinet.
(6) Six-monthly Progress Report on Local Supporting People Strategy Action Plan	Medium	Sept 2005	<b>Report made to this meeting of the Panel</b> - Since the Strategy was considered by Overview and Scrutiny in March 2005 and approved by Cabinet in April 2005, progress as at 1 October 2005 (i.e. six months after adoption) is being considered at this meeting.

(7) Six-monthly Progress Report on Housing Services Development Plan Action Plan	Medium	Sept 2005 and March 2006	<b>On Target</b> - First six monthly report considered at the 15 September meeting.
(8) Annual Review of Housing-Related Fees and Charges	High	Nov 2005	<b>No longer required</b> – The report was presented to the Finance & Performance Management Scrutiny Panel instead.
(9) Report on Findings of Private Sector House Condition Survey	Medium	Dec 2005	<b>Not yet due.</b>
(10) Updated draft HRA Business Plan	Medium	March 2006	<b>Not yet due.</b> The Draft HRA Business Plan will be reported to the next meeting.
(11) Updated draft Local Supporting People Strategy	High	March 2006	<b>Not yet due.</b> The draft Local Supporting People Strategy will be reported to the next meeting.
(12) Six-monthly Progress Report on Housing Strategy Action Plan	Medium	March 2006	<b>Completed &amp; Provided Early</b> - Due to the new Housing Strategy not yet being ready, a Six-month Progress Report on the current Housing Strategy was considered at the 15 September meeting.
(13) Draft Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy	High	March 2006	<b>Not yet due.</b>
(14) Initiatives for Reducing the Number of Empty Properties in the Private Sector	High	March 2006	<b>Slightly delayed</b> - Agreed at the 21 July meeting that the Panel should consider a few reports on the issues, leading up to a draft Empty Property Strategy to be considered in March 2006.  A scoping report on the proposed scrutiny was reported the 15 September meeting of the Panel.  A report on the possible use of collaborative initiatives and enforcement for inclusion within the Empty Property Strategy will be presented to the Panel's next meeting in January 2006.

## ISSUES ADDED TO WORK PROGRAMME DURING THE YEAR

(15) Discretionary rights to be provided to introductory tenants	High	Sept 2005	<b>Completed</b> - At the 15 September meeting
(16) Review of Housing Service Strategy on Tenant Participation	Medium	Sept 2005	<b>Completed</b> - At the 15 September meeting
(17) Homelessness Strategy	Medium	March 2006	<b>On Target</b> – The Consultation Draft has nearly been produced. Following the consultation exercise, the draft Homelessness Strategy will be considered by the Panel, before adoption by the Cabinet.
(18) Member Briefings	Medium	October 2005	<b>Completed</b> – A Members Information Evening was held in September 2005, and two Briefings on Basic Housing Law were held in October 2005
(19) Increasing the amount of affordable housing	High	March 2006	<b>New Task: Report made to this meeting of the Panel</b> – A report on the proposed scope of the report is being considered at this meeting.
(20) Requests from Witness Mobility Scheme	Medium	December 2005	<b>New Task: Report made to this meeting of the Panel</b> – A report on this issue is being considered at this meeting
(21) Housing Service Strategy on Rent Administration and Collection	Low	January 2006	<b>New Task:</b> The revised draft Housing Service Strategy will be reported to the Panel's next meeting in January 2006
(22) Housing Service Strategy on House Sales, Land Sales and Leasehold Services	Low	January 2006	<b>New Task:</b> The revised draft Housing Service Strategy will be reported to the Panel's next meeting in January 2006

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## **Report to the Housing Scrutiny Panel**

**Report reference:**

**Date of meeting: 7 December 2005**

# SCRUTINY



**Subject: Referrals from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

- (a) Amendment to the Terms of Reference of the Housing Scrutiny Panel**
- (b) Increasing the Amount of Affordable Housing in the District**

**Officer contact for further information: Alan Hall, Head of Housing Services**

**Committee Secretary:**

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### **Recommendation:**

- 1) That the deletion by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of Term (3)(v) (relating the consideration of the Annual Review of Housing-Related Fees and Charges prior to consideration by the Cabinet) from the Panel's Terms of Reference be noted;**
- 2) That the request of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the Housing Scrutiny Panel to consider ways of increasing the amount of affordable housing within the District, as an addition to its Work Programme 2005/6, be noted.**
- 3) That the scope of a future report to the Panel on ways to increase the amount of affordable housing in the District be as set out in Paragraph 8 of the report, together with any other suggestions of the Panel.**

### **Amendment to Terms of Reference**

1. At the beginning of the Municipal Year, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed the Terms of Reference for each of the Standing Scrutiny Panels. One of the Terms of Reference for the Housing Scrutiny Panel (Term (3)(v)) was as follows:

“To consider and provide comments to the Housing Portfolio Holder on the following matters, prior to consideration by the Cabinet...(v) Annual Review of Housing-Related Fees and Charges”

2. However, it has been discovered that this overlaps with one of the Terms of Reference of the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel, which is to consider the draft budgets for each portfolio, which would include fees and charges.

3. It has been agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that it is not necessary for two standing scrutiny panels to scrutinise proposals for Housing-Related Fees and Charges prior to consideration by the Cabinet and that, of the two, it is more appropriate for the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel to undertake this function, as part of its overall scrutiny of Council-wide proposals for fees and charges. The Chairman of the Housing Scrutiny Panel was consulted on this proposal, and raised no objections.

4. The Committee agreed, therefore, to delete reference to this issue from the Terms of Reference for the Housing Scrutiny Panel, which the Panel is asked to note.

## Increasing the Amount of Affordable Housing Within the District

5. At its meeting in November 2005, the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel considered the performance made in the Second Quarter of 2005/6 with the new set of Key Performance Indicators, previously agreed by the Cabinet. Two of these relate to the amount of affordable housing being provided in the District.

6. At the meeting, the Leader of Council expressed concern at the low levels of affordable housing being facilitated by the Council, compared with the increasing need. The last Housing Needs Survey (2003) estimated that 665 new affordable homes were required *per annum* to meet the current and arising need over the following five years. As a result, the Panel agreed to recommend to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that the Housing Scrutiny Panel be asked to consider ways in which the amount of affordable housing provided within the District could be increased. This was subsequently agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 10 November 2005.

7. It is anticipated that the Head of Housing Services will report in detail on this issue at the Panel's next meeting. However, it would be helpful if the Panel could consider the scope of the report. It should be noted that the Council's ability to increase the amount of affordable housing is constrained by three main issues:

- Land – The Council has exceeded its Essex Structure Plan targets for new housebuilding, and all allocated sites have been developed. Therefore, all new developments (including associated affordable housing requirements) are on unplanned “windfall” sites. This will not change until the Council releases new land in response to the requirements of the East of England Plan, or makes a decision to allocate land in advance of the Plan
- Grant – Although affordable housing can be provided without grant from the Housing Corporation or the Council, the amount (compared to the percentage of market housing on sites) is significantly reduced without grant. In any event, land is still needed.
- Members' Priorities – The Council is responsible for delivering many different – often conflicting - policies and services, and must balance these priorities. It is possible that more affordable housing could be provided, at the expense of other priorities.

8. The Head of Housing Services and the Management Board have given consideration to the scope of the report to the Panel, and recommend that the scope of the report to the Panel's next meeting should cover the following:

- Details of historic and forecast performance on the provision of new affordable housing
- Consideration of the legal ability and desirability of an initiative to allow the development of residential accommodation in the Green Belt, providing 100% affordable housing, as a very special reason for departing from normal Green Belt policy – in advance of the release of land through the East of England Plan
- The scope for developing on substantial parts of large amenity areas on Council estates
- Setting an absolute minimum amount of 20% affordable housing that will be acceptable on large development sites, irrespective of other planning gains
- The Council's ability to provide additional Social Housing Grant
- A review the Council's General Fund and HRA landholdings to assess the scope and



implications of providing land to an RSL, free of charge to provide 100% affordable housing, or to a developer to provide a mix of market and affordable housing (with the OMV being paid for the market housing land, with the affordable housing land provided free)

- A commitment to comply with the Council's agreed Joint Commissioning Scheme, whereby the Council will only support a bid to the Housing Corporation if a developer works with one RSL nominated by the Council, in order to minimise the amount of grant required, thereby increasing the likelihood of bids being funded.

9. The Panel is asked to agree the scope of the report, and consider whether there are any other proposals to be included.

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## **Report to the Housing Scrutiny Panel**

**Report reference:**

**Date of meeting: 7 December 2005**

**Portfolio: Housing – Cllr M. Heavens**

**Subject: Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2005 (Key Action Plan)  
– Six-Month Progress Report**

**Officer contact for further information: Alan Hall, Head of Housing Services (ext 4004)**

**Committee Secretary: Zoe Folley (ext 4532)**

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### **Recommendations:**

**That the Panel considers the latest Six-month Progress Report for the Key Action Plan contained within the HRA Business Plan 2005 and provides any feedback to the Housing Portfolio Holder and Head of Housing Services accordingly.**

### **Report**

1. In March 2005, the Council's latest Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan (2005) was produced. This document sets 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 action the Council will take over the following 1-3 years. Having included the Key Action Plan within the Business Plan, it is essential that the progress made with the stated actions are monitored. In the past, progress reports have been presented to this Overview and Scrutiny Committee (1), six months after publication. However, this function has now been included within the Terms of Reference for the Housing Scrutiny Panel, under the Council's new scrutiny arrangements.
3. Now that six months has elapsed from the production of the HRA Business Plan, the latest progress report (as at 30 September 2005) is attached to this report.
4. The Scrutiny Panel is asked to consider the Progress Report and to feed back to the Housing Portfolio Holder and Head of Housing Services any comments it considers appropriate.
5. The HRA Business Plan will be revised and updated in March 2006, in order for it to be published prior to the commencement of the new financial year.

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**Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2005/6 – Six Monthly Progress Report on Key Action Plan  
(As at 1 November 2005)**

Action	Responsibility for Achievement	Target Date	Progress Report
<b>Housing General</b>			
Investigate the feasibility of introducing an electronic records and document management system (ERDMS) within Housing Services	Asst Head of Housing Services (Property & Resources)	April 2006	<p><b>In Progress.</b> A Housing Project Team has been established. However, a corporate approach to ERDMS within the Council is under consideration.</p>
Analyse the identified risks within the Housing Risk Register, and assess/record the likelihood and impact of the risks happening	Asst Head of Housing Services (Property & Resources)	Sept 2005	<p><b>Achieved.</b> The impact assessment has been completed. The Housing Risk Register will be reviewed for the next HRA Business Plan, in the light of comments received from Zurich Municipal, the Council's insurers</p>
<b>Best Value</b>			
Complete the implement of the Service Development Plan, formulated following the Best Value Service Review of Housing Services	Head of Housing Services	April 2006	<p><b>In Progress.</b> When last reported to the Housing Scrutiny Panel in September 2005, the majority of improvements (78%) had been achieved, and none had not been achieved. Nearly all (89%) of the highest priority achievements had been completed. The achievements not yet achieved fall into two main categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvements that cannot yet be achieved - either because they are in progress and cannot be undertaken quicker or because they are dependent on other improvements being achieved.</li> <li>• Improvements that have been delayed, primarily because of a lack of staff resources or due to other more urgent work needing to be given priority</li> </ul>
Seek ISO 9000:2001 quality assurance accreditation for a further three years	Housing Resources Manager	May 2005	<p><b>Achieved.</b> Re-accreditation was achieved in May 2005 for a further three years.</p>

**Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2005/6 – Six Monthly Progress Report on Key Action Plan  
(As at 1 November 2005)**

Action	Responsibility for Achievement	Target Date	Progress Report
<b>Housing Management</b>			
Introduce the Leasehold Services module of the integrated housing IT system	Housing Resources Manager	April 2006	<p><b>Delayed.</b> Following the restructure of the Council's ICT Service, this module will be implemented by ICT. However, the increased staffing complement of ICT has not yet been appointed, which has led to delays in implementation.</p>
Consider the introduction of the Estate Management module for the integrated housing IT system	Asst Head of Housing Services (Operations)	June 2005	<p><b>Achieved.</b> The module has been evaluated and it has been agreed in principle to purchase. However, it will need to be implemented by the Council's ICT Service, for which the difficulties referred to above apply.</p>
Seek an alternative location for the Waltham Abbey Housing "Surgery"	Area Housing Manager (North)	April 2006	<p><b>No Longer Required.</b> Following a comprehensive survey of all tenants in Waltham Abbey and a very low number of visitors using the Waltham Abbey Housing Surgery, the Housing Portfolio decided that the Housing Surgery should be closed, which has now been implemented.</p>
Introduce a Harassment Policy for dealing with residents experiencing harassment from Council tenants	Area Housing Managers	April 2006	<p><b>Delayed.</b> No progress has been made on this issue, due to other commitments. However, it is intended that the Policy will be produced by April 2006.</p>
Develop the introduction of a choice based lettings scheme.	Asst Head of Housing Services (Operations) / Housing Needs Manager	April 2007	<p><b>In Progress.</b> Following detailed examination by the Housing Scrutiny Panel, it has been agreed that the Council will work with 5 other neighbouring councils to jointly commission an agency to operate a Choice Based Lettings Scheme across all the local authority areas. A bid for £96,000 has been made to the ODPM to assist with the implementation costs, on which the decision is awaited.</p>

**Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2005/6 – Six Monthly Progress Report on Key Action Plan  
(As at 1 November 2005)**

Action	Responsibility for Achievement	Target Date	Progress Report
<p>Introduce a new Introductory Tenancy Scheme, giving new tenants a non-secure tenancy for 12 months.</p>	<p>Asst Head of Housing Services (Operations)</p>	<p>Dec 2005</p>	<p><b>In Progress.</b> The Cabinet has agreed the introduction in principle. A consultation exercise has been undertaken of all tenants and with partners, who generally support the scheme. The Housing Scrutiny Panel has considered in detail the discretionary rights that introductory tenants should receive. At its meeting on 14 November 2005, the Cabinet will consider the outcome of the consultation exercise, the discretionary rights that would be given and whether to implement the scheme.</p>
<p>Place the Housing Mutual Exchange Register on the Council's internet, with photos and search facilities</p>	<p>Principal Housing Officer (Information/Strategy)</p>	<p>Sept 2005</p>	<p><b>In progress.</b> The Register has been converted into an electronic format and a test site has been established for the Council's website. It is hoped that the scheme can go live on the website by January 2006.</p>
<p>Introduce a Tenants Contents Insurance Scheme, operated by an external insurance provider</p>	<p>Housing Resources Manager</p>	<p>July 2005</p>	<p><b>Achieved.</b> A Tenants Contents Insurance Scheme was introduced in April 2005, operated independently of, but promoted by, the Council. For the first six months of operation: 114 households have joined the scheme 2 households are in arrears with their premiums 1 household has been suspended from the scheme due to non-payment 2 claims have been made and accepted totalling £130</p>
<p>Review the Housing Allocations Scheme and consider ineligibility of applicants with high income or assets</p>	<p>Housing Needs Manager</p>	<p>Sept 2005</p>	<p><b>Achieved.</b> The review of the scheme was undertaken by the Housing Scrutiny Panel and the Cabinet subsequently agreed the Panel's recommended changes, including provisions for demoting applicants with high levels of assets and/or incomes to lower bands.</p>

**Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2005/6 – Six Monthly Progress Report on Key Action Plan**  
(As at 1 November 2005)

Action	Responsibility for Achievement	Target Date	Progress Report
Introduce the facility for tenants to make rent payments via the internet	Housing Resources Manager	Sept 2005	<p><b>Achieved.</b> A facility for tenants to pay via the internet was introduced in Spring 2005.</p>
<b>Tenant Participation</b>			
Facilitate the formation of two additional recognised tenants associations within the District	Tenant Participation Officer	April 2006	<p><b>In Progress.</b> Efforts are being made to re-introduce a Ninefields Residents Association and an Association for part of the Debden Estate, Loughton.</p>
Introduce a Rural Tenants Forum comprising representatives in rural locations that have no recognisable estates and where formal associations are difficult to establish.	Tenant Participation Officer	April 2006	<p><b>In Progress.</b> Names of potentially interested tenants have been obtained through the "Beyond Suburbia" project and it is planned to hold a meeting of interested tenants in the near future.</p>
Hold a second Tenants Open Day, in Waltham Abbey, in conjunction with the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation	Tenant Participation Officer	June 2005	<p><b>Achieved.</b> The second Tenants Open Day was held on a Saturday in Waltham Abbey in June 2005.  Following discussion with the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation, it has been agreed that no further Open Days should be held, due to a relative lack of support from tenants, but that Housing Services should attend local events to publicise its work.</p>
Enter into a new Tenant Participation Agreement with the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation for a further three years	Tenant Participation Officer	Nov 2005	<p><b>Achieved.</b> A new Tenant Participation Agreement has been agreed by the Tenants and Leaseholders Association and the Housing Portfolio Holder, which will be formally signed when the current Agreement ends at the beginning of December 2005.</p>



**Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2005/6 – Six Monthly Progress Report on Key Action Plan**  
(As at 1 November 2005)

Action	Responsibility for Achievement	Target Date	Progress Report
<b>Supporting People and Supported Housing</b>			
Consult tenants of the Council's sheltered housing scheme at Wickfields, Chigwell on an improvement scheme to convert existing bedsits into self contained flats, and assess whether the scheme should be undertaken by the Council or a housing association, through a small scale stock transfer	Head of Housing Services	Oct 2005	<p><b>Achieved.</b></p> <p>A stock options appraisal established that it would be most cost effective to the Council to undertake an improvement scheme through a stock transfer to a housing association, which has been agreed in principle by the Cabinet, and that the housing association should be Warden Housing.</p> <p>The tenants have been informally consulted, which established that 93% of tenants (all but one) are, in principle, in favour of a stock transfer to enable an improvement scheme to be undertaken.</p> <p>The next stage is to submit an application to transfer to the ODPM and to produce the formal Offer Document to tenants.</p>
Extend the Council's Careline Control Centre, to prepare for increased expansion of service	Housing Manager (Older People's Services)	April 2006	<p><b>In Progress.</b></p> <p>Plans have been drawn up and a planning application submitted, the outcome of which is awaited.</p>
Submit at least one tender for the monitoring of alarm systems for other authorities and housing associations by the Council's own Careline Service.	Asst Head of Housing Services (Management)	April 2007	<p><b>No Progress.</b></p> <p>No invitations to tender have arisen in locations where officers feel would be appropriate for the Council to submit a tender.</p>
<b>Housing Repairs and Maintenance and Energy Efficiency</b>			
Timetable at least one meeting each year with the Tenants Federation to discuss the repairs and maintenance expenditure programme.	Asst Head of Housing Services (Prop & Resources) Housing Assets Manager	Ongoing	<p><b>Achieved.</b></p> <p>The HRA Business Plan, incorporating the Repairs &amp; Maintenance 5 year expenditure plans, was presented and issued to the Tenants &amp; Leaseholders Federation in April.</p>

**Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2005/6 – Six Monthly Progress Report on Key Action Plan**  
(As at 1 November 2005)

Action	Responsibility for Achievement	Target Date	Progress Report
<p>Undertake tendering on a long-term contract for combined gas servicing and maintenance work only, with only small ad-hoc repairs included so that the contractors can concentrate on servicing and CP12 certificates.</p>	<p>Housing Assets Manager</p>	<p>April 2005</p>	<p><b>Achieved.</b> Following a competitive tendering process, a 5-year partnering contract has been let to Gracelands and T A Horn for the north and the south of the district respectively. Subject to performance, the contract is renewable for a further 5-years.</p>
<p>Submit a report to the Housing Portfolio Holder recommending that:</p> <p>(a) Generic performance specifications be prepared, which set the quality and standards of work to be undertaken on each property, rather than undertake individual surveys and schedule all work to be included.</p> <p>(b) All properties be divided in the five year cyclical programmes into two lists, to create two five year contracts for two contractors.</p> <p>(c) Appropriate contract documentation be developed for the work, taking into account legal advice.</p> <p>(d) Contractors be required to undertake detailed surveys and prepare schedules of work, based on the performance specification</p>	<p>Housing Assets Manager</p>	<p>Sept 2004</p>	<p><b>Achieved</b> The 2005/6 External Repairs &amp; Redecorations Contract has been let on the basis of performance specifications, as a pilot for a future long-term partnering contract.</p> <p><b>In Progress.</b> Property lists are being compiled, with a view to letting the works as a long-term partnering contract.</p> <p><b>In Progress.</b> Consultants have been appointed to develop the contract documentation.</p> <p><b>Achieved</b> The principles of a future partnering contract, where the contractors undertake the detailed surveys, have been introduced into a pilot contract in 2005/6</p>

**Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2005/6 – Six Monthly Progress Report on Key Action Plan**  
(As at 1 November 2005)

Action	Responsibility for Achievement	Target Date	Progress Report
<p>(e) Contractors be benchmarked against each other in terms of quality, programme and price, using standard construction best practice key performance indicators.</p> <p>(f) Quality inspections be undertaken and at the same time, undertake a full stock condition survey report for updating the OHMS attribute database.</p>			<p><b>Achieved.</b> Construction best practice KPI's have been established to measure the quality and performance of each contractor. These will be used as a benchmark for future years.</p> <p><b>Achieved.</b> Undertaking a pilot contract - whereby contractors are required to undertake detailed surveys and prepare schedules of work (based on the performance specification) - has allowed officers to undertake stock condition and Decent Homes Surveys in-house.</p>
<p>Implement electronic mobile working for the Housing Repairs Section</p>	<p>Housing Repairs Manager</p>	<p>Dec 2005</p>	<p><b>In Progress.</b> Smart Phones with software have been issued to staff. Training has been arranged for November &amp; December 2005. The system is due to go live on 2 January 2006</p>
<p>Recommend to the Housing Portfolio Holder that:</p> <p>(a) a new category of repairs be introduced to be undertaken within three days, for repairs covered by the Right to Repair legislation that do not need to be undertaken within 24 hours.</p> <p>(b) the target time for routine works be reduced from 8 weeks to 6 weeks.</p>	<p>Housing Repairs Manager</p>	<p>Dec 2004</p>	<p><b>Achieved.</b> The report was approved by the Housing Portfolio Holder in February 2005.</p> <p><b>No Progress.</b> Due to the recruitment difficulties experienced by the DSO, the target time for routine works has remained at 8 weeks. However, following the recent introduction of single status job evaluation, the DSO are now seeking to recruit tradesmen, which should enable the target time to be reduced.</p>

**Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2005/6 – Six Monthly Progress Report on Key Action Plan  
(As at 1 November 2005)**

Action	Responsibility for Achievement	Target Date	Progress Report
<p>Undertake a feasibility study to assess in detail the costs and benefits of a fully operational 12 hours repairs help line being introduced, with calls handled by the repairs section between 8.00am and 5.15 pm and by Careline between 5.15pm and 8.00pm</p>	<p>Asst Head of Housing Services (Prop &amp; Resources)</p>	<p>Dec 2004</p>	<p><b>In progress.</b> The report was approved by the Housing Portfolio Holder in June 2005. An IT data line has been installed and staff training arranged. Tenants will be notified in Housing News in December 2005, with a view to going live on 2 January 2006.</p>
<p>Investigate further ways of using the accompanied viewing process to help let difficult-to-let properties.</p>	<p>Asst Head of Housing Services (Prop &amp; Resources)</p>	<p>Dec 2005</p>	<p><b>In progress.</b> Multiple accompanied viewings for difficult to let properties are currently being undertaken for a trial period in November &amp; December 2005.</p>
<p>Make more information available about disabled adaptations to residents, setting out the responsibilities of the Council, procedures, targets, contacts in the form of a leaflet.</p>	<p>Housing Assets Manager</p>	<p>Dec 2004</p>	<p><b>In Progress.</b> A leaflet has been drafted and is due to be printed and available for distribution in January 2006.</p>
<p>Explore the feasibility of an OT being jointly employed between Housing Services, Environmental Services and Social Services to oversee all disabled adaptation and DFG requests within the District, subject to the approval of funding</p>	<p>Housing Assets Manager</p>	<p>April 2005</p>	<p><b>In progress.</b> A meeting has been held between Housing and Essex County Council Social Care to explore the options. Follow up meetings with Environmental Services and Finance are to be held to explore funding options. A site visit to other local authorities that have undertaken a similar function is due in January 2006.</p>
<p>Set up partner frameworks with the voluntary sector organisations and the EFPCT to widen the scope of benefits for residents.</p>	<p>Housing Assets Manager</p>	<p>Dec 2004</p>	<p><b>In progress.</b> Essex County Council Social Care are setting up follow-up meetings with voluntary sector and private sector organisations in January 2005.</p>

**Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2005/6 – Six Monthly Progress Report on Key Action Plan**  
*(As at 1 November 2005)*

Action	Responsibility for Achievement	Target Date	Progress Report
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**Housing Benefits**

Implement a Document Management System and Workflow	Assistant Head of Finance (Benefits)	Mar 2006	Consideration is being given to implementation. However, a corporate approach to ERDMS within the Council needs to be established first.
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**Key to Corporate Housing Objectives**

- HO 1 - Best Value
- HO 2 - Housing Management
- HO 3 - Repairs and Maintenance
- HO 4 - Energy Efficiency
- HO 5 - Tenant Participation
- HO 6 - Housing Benefits
- HO 7 - Housing Finance

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## **Report to the Housing Scrutiny Panel**

**Report reference:**

**Date of meeting: 7 December 2005**

**Portfolio: Housing – Cllr M. Heavens**

**Subject: Witness Protection Mobility Scheme**

**Officer contact for further information: Alan Hall, Head of Housing Services (ext 4004)**

**Committee Secretary: Zoe Folley (ext 4532)**

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### **Recommendations:**

- 1) That the Scrutiny Panel considers, and makes a recommendation to the Housing Portfolio Holder, on whether or not the Council should accept occasional requests for Council accommodation to applicants referred by the Home Office's Witness Protection Mobility Scheme; and**
- 2) That, if it is recommended that occasional requests should be accepted, it be further recommended to the Housing Portfolio Holder that;**
  - a) No more than one property be offered to applicants on the Witness Protection Mobility Scheme within any 12 month period;**
  - b) Only flats or maisonettes be offered, not houses;**
  - c) Only accommodation with no more than two bedrooms be offered;**
  - d) The Head of Housing Services must be satisfied that the applicant is unlikely to cause, or be the cause, of any anti-social behaviour; and**
  - e) The Housing Allocations Scheme be amended accordingly, with effect from 1 April 2006.**

### **Report**

1. From time to time, the Council receives requests for assistance from the Home Office's Witness Protection Mobility Scheme. The Scheme has been set up to assist important witnesses to public prosecutions to relocate, and to often take on new identities, in order to avoid any repercussions from them giving evidence at trials.
2. When requests are received, the Council is only provided with a brief, sanitised explanation of the case, including details of the household composition and need. In nearly all cases, for obvious reasons, the applicants live outside the District.
3. The scheme is not statutory and, to date, no requests for assistance have been accepted by the Head of Housing Services due to the high housing need within the District. However, in view of the relative regularity of requests now being received (around three or four per year), it is felt that a formal policy decision on this issue needs to be made. The Housing Portfolio Holder has therefore asked the Scrutiny Panel to consider whether or not it feels the Council should accept occasional referrals from the Scheme and, if so, on what terms.
4. In considering whether or not the Council should accept some requests for assistance, the Scrutiny Panel clearly needs to balance the high housing needs of residents within the District with its wider responsibility to assist with crime reduction.

5. If it is felt that the Council should accept occasional requests, it is suggested that it be subject to the following:

- a) No more than one property be offered to applicants on the Witness Protection Mobility Scheme within any 12 month period;
- b) Only flats or maisonettes be offered, not houses;
- c) Only accommodation with no more than two bedrooms be offered; and
- d) The Head of Housing Services being satisfied that the applicant is unlikely to cause, or be the cause, of any anti-social behaviour.

6. At its last meeting, the Scrutiny Panel recommended to the Cabinet a number of changes to the Housing Allocations Scheme, which were subsequently agreed, to take effect from the 1 April 2006. If it is recommended to respond to occasional requests from the Witness Protection Mobility Scheme, it will require a minor change to the Allocations Scheme. It is therefore suggested that this takes effect from the same date as the other changes.



## ***Report to the Housing Scrutiny Panel***

***Date of meeting: 7 December 2005***

**Portfolio: Housing – Cllr M. Heavens**

**Subject: Joint Choice Based Lettings Scheme – Oral Update**

**Officer contact for further information: Roger Wilson, Asst.  
Head of Housing Services (Operations) (ext 4419)**

**Committee Secretary: Zoe Folley (ext 4532)**

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### **Recommendations:**

**That an oral report be received on the outcome of the bid to the ODPM for funding to implement a Joint Choice Based Lettings Scheme by the Herts and Essex Housing Options Consortium.**

### **Report**

1. At its last meeting, the Panel recommended to the Housing Portfolio Holder (which was subsequently agreed) that the Council should join together with five neighbouring local authorities and the registered social landlords that operate within our areas to:
  - Form the Herts and Essex Housing Options Consortium to establish, commission and manage a Joint Choice Based Lettings Scheme; and
  - Submit a bid for £96,000 to the ODPM's Regional Fund, to assist with the implementation of a Joint Scheme.
2. The bid was subsequently submitted by the Consortium by the closing date. A copy of the final version of the bid is attached for the Scrutiny Panel's information.
3. The ODPM has said that it would announce the outcome of the bids in November 2005. Therefore, if an announcement has been made, an oral report will be provided to the Scrutiny Panel on the outcome of the Consortium's bid and, if successful, the next steps.

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**Bid to the ODPM's Choice Based Lettings Regional Fund  
by the  
Herts & Essex Housing Options Consortium**

**PART A – CORE INFORMATION**

**1. Lead Authority and Contact Name for Grant Funding**

Epping Forest District Council  
Civic Offices  
Epping  
Essex CM16 4BZ

Roger Wilson  
Asst Head of Housing Services (Operations)  
rwilson@eppingforestddc.gov.uk  
01992 564419

**2. Rationale and Background to the Formation of the Consortium**

All the partners of the Consortium operate within the London Commuter Belt Sub-Region (which comprises all the local authorities in Hertfordshire and five Essex authorities). The Sub-Regional Housing Group's latest Housing Strategy incorporates an Action Plan, within which there is a key action to explore the scope for collaborative working on Choice Based Lettings (CBL) within the Sub-Region. As a result, meetings have been held - and investigative surveys undertaken - across the Sub-Region over the past six months to explore this scope. As a result, and encouraged by the availability of the ODPM's funding, the Essex and Hertfordshire local authorities in the East of the Sub-Region have worked hard, within a short timescale, to form the Herts and Essex Housing Options Consortium, agree a common approach to the development of a Joint CBL Scheme, and formulate and submit this bid.

The Consortium shares the Government's view that such an approach will achieve the greatest choice and flexibility in meeting our customers' housing needs, and that there are a number of benefits from larger, cross-local authority, schemes, which are articulated within this Bid. In particular, they enable greater regional mobility and help to break down artificial boundaries. For RSLs, they cut the costs of being involved in several different schemes.

**3. Partners of the Consortium and Bid**

The six local authority partners within the Consortium are listed below and comprise all of the local authorities in the eastern part of the London Commuter Belt Sub-Region (i.e on the Herts and Essex border), with the exception of Harlow DC, which has already introduced a CBL Scheme:

Brentwood BC  
Broxbourne BC

Chelmsford BC  
East Herts DC

Epping Forest DC  
Uttlesford DC

The 25 RSL members of the Consortium listed below all currently have nomination arrangements with one or more of the local authority partners. It should be noted that two local authorities within the Consortium (East Herts and Chelmsford) have transferred the whole of their housing stock, and a third (Broxbourne) are currently at an advanced stage. The numbers in brackets refer to the number of local authority Consortium partners with whom the RSL has existing nomination arrangements and (\*) denotes a stock transfer RSL (or proposed) within the Consortium's area

Aldwyck  
Colne  
Hastoe  
Paradigm  
Springboard

Brentwood  
East Thames  
Hereward  
Riversmead  
Stadium

Broxbourne(\*)  
Estuary  
London & Quadrant  
Rural HT  
Swan

Chelmer (\*)  
Flagship  
Metropolitan  
Sanctuary  
Warden

Circle Anglia(\*)  
Guinness  
Moat  
Shaftesbury  
William Sutton

Most of the RSL Partners already have extensive experience of operating CBL Schemes in other local authority areas.

The agreed organisational structure of the Consortium is attached as an Appendix.

#### **4. Regional and Sub-Regional Strategic Context**

One of the objectives of the Regional Housing Strategy for the East of England is to provide mixed communities and widen choice. The Strategy states that the Regional Housing Delivery Group will support the development of CBL through the sub-regions by providing information exchange on good practice and links to regional representative agencies for vulnerable groups.

The Sub-Regional Housing Strategy has an objective of achieving social inclusion, and to ensure access and choice to housing. Section 2 above refers to the inclusion of collaborative working on CBL within the Sub-Regional Strategy's Action Plan.

#### **5. Amount of Landlords' Stock to be Included Within the Scheme**

Each of the local authority landlords within the Consortium have committed to the provision of 100% of their stock to the Scheme, with the exception of some individual vacancies which, for various reasons, need to be taken out of the CBL process. The RSL Partners have committed to provide all of their stock to the Scheme, where local authorities have nomination rights. In many cases, RSLs will also provide other vacancies, where nominations do not apply. Furthermore, the RSLs have agreed to look to expand provision to all vacancies. In the first instance, for a short trial period, each landlord may only allocate a proportion of vacancies to the Scheme, to test the Scheme's operation.

#### **6. Approval for the Scheme by Members, Support of Partners and Consultation with Statutory and Community Organisations**

It is confirmed that the appropriate elected members and/or committees of each of the Consortium's local authorities have given their full, formal, support to their council being both a member of the Consortium and to the Consortium's bid.

Furthermore, each of the RSL partners have been fully involved with the formation of the Consortium and the development and submission of this Bid, and have expressed their commitment in writing.

Some consultation has already been undertaken with partner organisations on the proposed approach. However, should the Bid be successful, the Consortium will undertake detailed consultation on the proposed operation of the Scheme before implementation, including the following:

- Customers (tenants and housing applicants), through focus groups and existing Newsletters
- District-wide tenant and leaseholder federations/fora (where they exist)
- Councils for voluntary services
- Disability advocate groups
- BME community groups
- Citizens Advice Bureaux
- Essex and Hertfordshire Supporting People Teams
- Parish and town councils

A Briefing Paper will be produced by the Consortium, explaining how CBL works and the proposals for the Scheme's operation, which will be sent (or in some cases a summary will be provided) to the above groups - together with any other groups that become aware of the process and express an interest in being provided with further information – and invited to provide any comments on the proposed approach.

The Consortium will be contacting the Essex and Hertfordshire Race Equality Councils to discuss issues relating to BME communities. It should be noted that there are no Tenant Management Organisations within the Consortium's area. **Page 36**

## 7. Sharing Good Practice

If the Consortium's bid is successful, we recognise that not only will it be one of the first to receive funding from the ODPM's CBL Regional Fund, it will also be one of the first where a number of local authorities and RSLs within a housing sub-region have come together in a formal way to work collaboratively on CBL outside London and large metropolitan areas.

Therefore, the Consortium would be keen to share any good practice we develop with GO-East, the ODPM, other local authorities and RSLs – particularly those interested in bidding for funding in Round 2. The Consortium will also assist the Regional Housing Delivery Group with its information exchange on good practice, referred to in Section 4 above.

## **PART B - THE CONSORTIUM'S COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO CHOICE BASED LETTINGS**

### 8. Key Objectives of the Consortium and Joint CBL Scheme

The Consortium's key objectives for the CBL Scheme are as follows:

- To work collaboratively amongst local authority and RSL partners
- To jointly commission an existing CBL Agency to operate the Joint CBL scheme on behalf of all the partners
- To consult other partners and interested organisations on the operation of the Scheme
- To increase efficiency, through the minimising of implementation and ongoing costs
- To increase opportunities for cross-border mobility and nomination arrangements
- To maximise the number of vacant properties that are let through the scheme
- To maximise choice, accessibility and ease of operation for customers
- To ensure that vulnerable and homeless people, and those who do not have English as their first language, are not excluded and are able to obtain full benefits from the Scheme
- To adopt a holistic "housing options" approach to customers
- To explore the opportunities for extending the Scheme to private sector landlords
- To share good practice on joint working with other local authorities and RSLs

### 9. Approach to the Operation of the Scheme – Use of an Existing CBL Agency

Following the successful establishment of other joint approaches to the operation of CBL Schemes – mainly by the London boroughs - a number of "CBL Agencies" have been formed, usually by the local authorities involved. These CBL Agencies are now very experienced at managing the entire process, including producing, printing and distributing the periodic vacancy magazine, telephony, information technology and the electronic and manual receipt of the bids from customers. At the end of each "bidding" cycle, the Agency returns a summary of the "bids" to each authority, who then prioritises offers made to the successful customer based on their own Allocations Scheme. The Agency also provides regular and detailed statistical information to the local authority on bids.

There are lots of benefits to the Consortium and our customers in contracting with an existing CBL Agency to provide the Consortium's CBL Scheme, as opposed to setting up our own joint operation from scratch, and the Consortium will therefore contract with an existing CBL Agency to operate its CBL Scheme, on the Consortium's own terms, through a competitive tendering process. This approach will: substantially reduce IT complexities and costs; benefit from the Agency's experience; save significant officer time in implementation; reduce significantly the implementation period; and benefit immediately from the range of customer bidding mechanisms, thereby increasing the choice for customers in the way they can bid (see Section 10 below). These existing agencies have also produced their "User Guides", translated into a range of other languages, to increase their accessibility.

For these reasons, the Consortium has adopted this approach. However, it is emphasised that the CBL Agency will operate the Consortium's Joint CBL Scheme as a "stand-alone" operation, to the Consortium's own requirements, and not as an extension to their existing scheme(s).

The other benefit of this approach is that, because the systems have already been well tested, the Consortium intends to commence the operation of the CBL scheme in a number, probably all, of the local authority areas from the outset. This will also enable the benefits of collaborative working to be obtained straight away, without a pilot being undertaken in one area - which would have high operational costs for the pilot authority. It should be noted, however, that because some of the partner local authorities want to first move from a points system to a banding system for their Allocations Scheme, it may take longer to the launch date than if the Scheme commenced with just one authority. However, the overall period to full implementation will be the same as if a pilot had first been undertaken.

## **10. Project Management – Appointment of CBL Consultant**

Implementation of any CBL Scheme is complex, but a Joint CBL Scheme amongst 6 local authorities and their landlords brings significant additional challenges. However with expertise, combined with good project management, it also offers many opportunities for time and cost savings, through avoiding duplication of effort.

For this reason, if the bid is successful, the Consortium will appoint an experienced consultant, specialising in the implementation and operation of CBL schemes, to project manage the implementation and to co-ordinate the activities of the Consortium's Partners. This will include: the production of the Joint CBL Agency Specification; undertaking the Agency tendering; co-ordination and provision of evaluation advice; undertaking of contract negotiations; liaison with the CBL Agency on implementation; co-ordination of Partners; project-management of CBL implementation for each Partner (jointly and individually); and liaison/negotiation with existing Housing IT providers on requirements and costs of modules and interfaces.

## **11. Offering Choice to Customers**

One of the benefits gained from the size and experience of an existing CBL Agency, is that customers will be able to use, immediately, a variety of electronic/interactive and other ways to receive information on vacancies across the Consortium's area (*since the website, magazine and other media will provide details of vacancies arising in each local authority to all customers registered across the Consortium's area*). Customers will also be able to bid for individual properties, from launch, using these electronic/interactive ways, which include:

- One interactive website, providing information on all vacancies within the Consortium's area, (including photos, details of location, type, rent, service charge, council tax band and landlord of the available accommodation) and enabling customers to "bid" on-line.
- Interactive kiosks located at key locations within the Consortium's area, giving access to the website to obtain information and to bid
- Publication of a periodic magazine (weekly or fortnightly), providing the same information as the website, and providing vouchers for customers to return by post or by hand
- The ability to submit "bids" by post, telephone, text messages and email or Internet – all interactive and utilising automatic call management.
- The ability to subscribe to receive the periodic magazine by post, which will be of particular benefit to customers in rural locations
- A facility for customers to "automatically bid" for vacancies that arise within particular areas, which will be of particular benefit to older and other vulnerable people

Furthermore, over time, customers will be able to increase their likelihood of success by bidding for vacancies for which they are more likely to be chosen. This will be achieved through the results of

the “bidding” on each property advertised being published on the website and in the next magazine, setting out the number of “bids” received on each property, as well as the Band and registration date, or points level, of the successful customer. This will help customers to see how long the successful customer has been waiting, compared to them.

Since all homeless applicants must be registered on their local authority’s Housing Register by law, they will also be able to bid under the CBL Scheme, through their housing application.

## **12. Increasing Mobility and Cross-Border Movement**

At the end of the “bidding” cycle, each local authority will analyse the “bids” received for their area and offer each property, following a prioritisation and selection process in accordance with their own Allocation Scheme. Generally, the property would be offered to the customer who had “bid” for the vacancy and was either in the highest band, and who has been registered the longest (for those authorities using banding systems) or had the most points (for those using points schemes).

Customers from any of the partner local authority areas will be able to register with any other partner local authority, and bid for vacancies in that District.

Through the website and periodic magazine, other important information on housing options will be provided, including details of mobility schemes, particularly the all-embracing, MoveUK scheme.

Quite uniquely, two of the partners (East Herts and Uttlesford DCs) currently share nomination rights for a proportion of vacant properties that arise in their area – through the Stansted Area Housing Partnership – with each authority receiving a set percentage of nominations. The Joint CBL Scheme will therefore increase further the choice given to their customers.

Once the scheme is in operation, the Consortium will explore the possibility of devising a common application form, enabling customers to only have to complete one form to register with the local authorities of their choice.

## **13. Low Cost Home Ownership (LCHO) Shared Ownership and Key Worker Schemes**

The Consortium will include vacancies that occur for shared ownership and other LCHO opportunities, including key worker housing, within the Joint CBL Scheme. For all customers bidding for such properties, nominations to RSLs will be prioritised in accordance with the Allocations Schemes. RSLs will then offer properties in accordance with the priority given, provided that customers are able to meet the required income criteria.

In respect of key worker housing, the Consortium will work closely with the two Zone Agents for Essex and Hertfordshire (Moat and Aldwyck), both of whom are RSL Partners of the Consortium, in order to maximise the capture of demand for key worker housing, not only from areas covered by the Consortium, but for the whole of the Sub-Region.

## **14. Private Sector Landlords**

Should this bid be successful, the Consortium’s Project Plan includes provision for inviting private sector landlords to provide details of market-rented vacancies to the Scheme, for which customers for social housing can apply - via the appropriate local authority. RSL Partners offering market rented properties will also advertise vacancies through the Joint CBL Scheme.

## **15. The Housing Options Approach**

By implementing a Joint CBL Scheme – and giving greater choice and empowerment to customers - the local authority partners will be able to adopt more of a “housing options” approach to the provision

of social housing. Indeed, on implementation, a number of local authority officers across the Consortium's area will be re-designated "Housing Option Advisors to reflect their increased advisory role and the demise of their "allocation officers' " role. In addition to focussed advice, including advice on "bidding strategies", the Scheme will:

- Promote a wider range of housing options (e.g. shared ownership, LCHO, private rented and mobility) – See Sections 11, 12 and 13 above)
- Through the website and magazine, provide information on other related housing services (e.g. care and repair schemes, DFGs and disabled adaptations)
- Increase the marketing of, and give prominence to, the small numbers of difficult to let properties, and encourage customers with low priority to apply.

### PART C - COSTINGS AND EXTENT OF ODPM FUNDING

The costings for the implementation of the Joint CBL Scheme (excluding the Partners' officer time and ongoing costs), and the required ODPM funding, are as follows:

Item	Cost	ODPM Grant
<b>Project Management:</b> 160 days CBL Consultancy (@ £450 p/d) to provide the project management services set out in Section 10	£72,000	£43,000
<b>ICT :</b> (a) Purchase of additional Housing IT modules/ interfaces, purchase of internal ICT staff support time, purchase and commissioning of 12 internet kiosks across Consortium's area (b) CBL consultant – See Section 10 (10 days)	£63,000	£43,000
<b>Information and Publications:</b> (a)(CBL Consultant) Produce consultation material for partner organisations, undertake consultation, disseminate outcomes (b)(CBL Agency) - including creation of website, leaflets, promotional material, posters, Scheme Guide, bidding vouchers	£20,000	£10,000
<b>Training:</b> (CBL Agency) Operational - for LA and RSL staff. Awareness - for partner organisations	£5,000	-
<b>Totals</b>	<b>£160,000</b>	<b>£96,000</b>

The costs not funded by the ODPM will be funded equally between the 6 local authorities, for which they are making capital and revenue budget provision in the forthcoming budget cycle.

It is estimated that the ongoing fee to the CBL Agency by each local authority will be reduced by around 40% as a result of operating as a Consortium.

### PART D - OUTLINE PROJECT TIMETABLE

	Start	End
Outcome of ODPM Bid	-	Nov 2005
Appointment of CBL Consultant	Jan 2006	Feb 2006
Produce Joint Specification	Mar 2006	May 2006
Consult Partner Organisations on CBL Scheme	May 2006	Jun 2006
Tender/Appoint CBL Agency	July 2006	Aug 2006
CBL Scheme Implementation/Preparation	Sept 2006	Mar 2007
Publicise to private landlords and invite to join CBL Scheme	Oct 2006	Mar 2007
Joint CBL Scheme Commences	-	Mar 2007



# Herts and Essex Housing Options Consortium

## Organisational Structure

<b>Herts &amp; Essex Housing Options Consortium</b>	
<b>Membership</b>	All LA and RSL organisation members
<b>Purpose</b>	Overarching body comprising all organisations
<b>Meeting Frequency</b>	Annually

<b>Member Strategy Group</b>		
<b>Membership</b>	One councillor from each LA	
<b>Advised by</b>	1 officer from each LA + 2 RSL reps <sup>(*)</sup>	
<b>Purpose</b>	To give a member lead to the direction of the Consortium and to monitor progress with the Joint CBL Scheme	
<b>Meeting Frequency</b>	During implementation	As required
	After implementation	Six-monthly

<b>Operational Group</b>		
<b>Membership</b>	1 officer from each LA + 2 RSL reps <sup>(*)</sup>	
<b>Purpose</b>	To manage all operational issues relating to the Joint CBL Scheme	
<b>Meeting Frequency</b>	During implementation	As required
	After implementation	Quarterly

(\*) = RSL reps selected by representatives of all the RSL members of the Consortium

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## **Report to Housing Scrutiny Panel**

**Date of meeting: 7 December 2005**

**Portfolio: Housing – Cllr M. Heavens**

**Subject: Epping Forest Local Supporting People Strategy 2005-2009  
Six-month Progress Report (August 2005)**

**Officer contact for further information: Alan Hall, Head of Housing Services  
Committee Secretary: Zoe Folley**

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### **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

**That the Six-month Progress Report for the Epping Forest Local Supporting People Strategy 2005-2009, attached, be considered.**

### **Background**

1. At its meeting held on 29 March 2005, the former Overview and Scrutiny Committee (1) considered the Draft Epping Forest Local Supporting People Strategy 2005-2009, and recommended its adoption to the Cabinet, which was subsequently agreed by the Cabinet on 25 April 2005.
2. “Supporting People” is a major Government initiative, which introduced a new policy and funding framework for supported housing and ancillary welfare services in April 2003. It brought together a range of national and local funding regimes and consolidated them into a cash-limited “single pot”, administered by a Commissioning Body at the County level.
3. Supported housing includes the provision of accommodation for the elderly, physically disabled, people with learning disabilities, the mentally ill, young people with drug and alcohol problems etc.
4. As the “administering body” for Supporting People in Essex (excluding Southend and Thurrock), Essex County Council is responsible for producing an Essex Supporting People Strategy. However, in view of the importance of supported housing in the District, fairly uniquely, the District Council produces an annual Local Supporting People Strategy in liaison with the District Supporting People Core Strategy Group, which comprises agencies involved with supported housing in the District. The Local Strategy sets out the local planning and delivering of high quality housing-related support services to vulnerable people.
5. Local providers and user representatives involved in supported housing were consulted on the Local Strategy through the Epping Forest Inclusive Forum, which comprises such representatives, prior to consideration by the Committee.

### **Six-month Progress Report on the Key Action Plan**

6. An important part of the Epping Forest Local Supporting People Strategy, approved by the Cabinet in April 2005, is the Key Action Plan, which comprises all the separate tasks required to develop supported housing in the District. Having formulated the Action Plan, it is clearly important to monitor progress. Therefore, in accordance with good practice, a Six-month Progress Report on the Key Action Plan has been produced. Consideration of the Six-month Progress Report is included within the Housing Scrutiny Panel’s Terms of Reference,

and is therefore attached for consideration by the Panel.

7. The next Local Supporting People Strategy will be produced in February/March 2006, to cover the period 2006-2010, following consultation with the Epping Forest Inclusive Forum in late 2005.

**Epping Forest Local Supporting People Strategy 2005-2009  
Six Monthly Progress Report on Key Action Plan  
(As at 1 October 2005)**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Lead Organisation</b>	<b>Current Position</b>
<b>General Strategic</b>			
Re-introduce the new Supported Housing Needs Index to identify and assess applicants for supported housing.	March 2005	Epping Forest District Council	<b>Slow Progress.</b> The SNI software has now been received, but has not yet been implemented.
Ensure that at least 4 meetings of the Epping Forest Supporting People Core Strategy Group are held every year.	Ongoing	Epping Forest District Council and Essex County Council SP Team	<b>On Target.</b> Two meetings have been held in the first six months.
Hold an Inclusive Forum meeting to comment on the next draft version of the Epping Forest Local Supporting People Strategy.	November 2005	Epping Forest District Council and Epping Forest Core Strategy Group	<b>On Target.</b> Arrangements are being made to hold the next Inclusive Forum meeting in January 2006.
<b>Older People</b>			
Raise awareness of Jessopp Court, the step down from hospital discharge scheme to increase referrals. Monitor its usage and assess whether there is the need for an extension of the scheme.	November 2005	Joint Management Team for Older People	<b>Abandoned.</b> The "step down" flat received very little use by the PCT and Essex Social Care. As a result, the scheme has been discontinued by the PCT and Social Care. The flat has been passed back to EFDC.

**Epping Forest Local Supporting People Strategy 2005-2009  
Six Monthly Progress Report on Key Action Plan  
(As at 1 October 2005)**

Task	Target Date	Lead Organisation	Current Position
Complete the 20-bed extension to Cunningham House, North Weald for people with Alzheimer's Disease and dementia, with capital funding provided by the Housing Corporation.	January 2005	The Abbeyfield Society	<p><b>Achieved.</b> The scheme has been completed. However, there was a lengthy delay between completion and occupation, due to staff training</p>
Seek funding through the Local Delivery Plan 2005/6 for a Mental Health Liaison Post to support inpatient areas, Intermediate Care, A&E Diversion and NHS Funded Nursing Care.	January 2006	EF PCT	<p><b>Not Achieved.</b> Funding was not agreed for this post</p>
Following the transfer of the Council's sheltered housing scheme at Robert Daniels Court, Theydon Bois to Warden Housing complete a £2m extension and conversion scheme.	December 2005	Warden Housing Association	<p><b>On Target.</b> The improvement scheme is scheduled to be completed in December 2005.</p>
Ensure the successful implementation of the Case Finding Initiative across Epping Forest to reduce unnecessary hospital admission.	June 2005	EF PCT	<p><b>Achieved.</b> Following a successful pilot, "Case Finding" and "Case Management" is now in place in each locality in Epping Forest. Five Case Managers are now in post.</p>

**Epping Forest Local Supporting People Strategy 2005-2009  
Six Monthly Progress Report on Key Action Plan  
(As at 1 October 2005)**

Task	Target Date	Lead Organisation	Current Position
<p>Implementation of the Local Trades Scheme through the production of a list of contact details for local tradesmen that have undergone a number of safety checks.</p>	<p>April 2005</p>	<p>Epping Forest Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership</p>	<p><b>On Target.</b> The scheme exists and has been advertised locally to recruit and interest local traders to sign up to the scheme. VAEF are currently processing applications for those who have applied to join the scheme. The first traders should be on the scheme in the New Year.</p>
<p>Investigate the feasibility of converting bedsits at the Council's sheltered housing scheme at Wickfields, Chigwell into self-contained flats.</p>	<p>September 2005</p>	<p>Epping Forest District Council</p>	<p><b>Achieved.</b> The Feasibility Study has been completed, which has established that a conversion scheme is possible. An options appraisal has also been undertaken, which established that the most cost-effective method of delivery to EFDC was through a stock transfer to a housing association, rather than by EFDC itself. As a result, EFDC agreed in principle to a stock transfer to Warden Housing, with a dowry of £1.1m, subject to the support of the residents.  An informal residents consultation exercise has been undertaken, which has established that there is overwhelming support in principle for both the proposed improvements and the stock transfer. EFDC's Cabinet will consider a report in October 2005 on the next steps.</p>

**Epping Forest Local Supporting People Strategy 2005-2009  
Six Monthly Progress Report on Key Action Plan  
(As at 1 October 2005)**

Task	Target Date	Lead Organisation	Current Position
<p>Review the Council's Grants Policy with particular consideration to the possibility of assistance being given by means other than grants.</p>	<p>April 2005</p>	<p>Epping Forest District Council C.A.R.E.</p>	<p><b>In Progress.</b> A consultant is currently carrying out a private sector house condition and energy efficiency survey. The results will inform a review of the Private Sector Housing Grants Policy.</p>
<b>Home Improvement Agency</b>			
<p>In the light of the vote of no confidence in the recommendations of the Everdale Report, work with the Supporting People Team on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A core specification for HIAs</li> <li>• Equitable distribution of Supporting People funding between Essex HIAs</li> <li>• Cross-boundary collaboration where appropriate.</li> </ul>	<p>April 2005</p>	<p>Epping Forest District Council Essex County Council SP Team Other Essex HIAs Other Essex Authorities</p>	<p><b>Achieved.</b> A Core Specification and the distribution of funding have been agreed. A standard Service Level Agreement has been produced and is currently being signed in each of the districts by ECC, the District Council and the local HIA managing agent.</p>
<p>Assist in the review of the Council's Grants Policy, in relation to the assistance that can be provided to HIA clients.</p>	<p>April 2005</p>	<p>Epping Forest District Council</p>	<p><b>In Progress.</b> A consultant is currently carrying out a private sector house condition and energy efficiency survey. The results will inform a review of the Private Sector Housing Grants Policy.</p>



**Epping Forest Local Supporting People Strategy 2005-2009  
Six Monthly Progress Report on Key Action Plan  
(As at 1 October 2005)**

Task	Target Date	Lead Organisation	Current Position
To consider ways of attracting client contributions to the Handyperson Service.	April 2005	Epping Forest District Council C.A.R.E. Advisory Panel	<p><b>In Progress.</b> The C.A.R.E. Advisory Panel have considered this matter and a further report will be presented to the Panel in October. Consideration is also being given to a request for increased funding for the Service in 2005/2006.</p>
Particularly in the light of the uncertainty over funding for C.A.R.E after March 2005, maximise existing funding and consider ways of attracting additional funding in order to meet market demand.	April 2005	Epping Forest District Council Essex County Council Supporting People Epping Forest PCT	<p><b>Ongoing.</b> The new Service Level Agreement provides assurance of funding for 3 years with a further period of 2 years subject to a successful service review.  The C.A.R.E. Advisory Panel is currently considering how contributions might be attracted to the Handyperson Service. Consideration is also being given to a request for increased funding for the Handyperson Service in 2005/2006.</p>
<b>Mental Health</b>			
Improve the discharge arrangements for people in hospital due to mental illness.	April 2005	North Essex Mental Health Partnership Trust and Epping Forest PCT	<p><b>Delayed.</b> There are not the bed spaces or homes available with 24hour specialist care to place people in once they have left hospital. This is resulting in delays in people being discharged.</p>

**Epping Forest Local Supporting People Strategy 2005-2009  
Six Monthly Progress Report on Key Action Plan  
(As at 1 October 2005)**

Task	Target Date	Lead Organisation	Current Position
<p>Review the future use of the residential rehabilitation and longer-term care unit at Regent Road, Epping following its closure. Hold a public consultation before any decision is made.</p>	<p>June 2005</p>	<p>North Essex Mental Health Partnership Trust</p>	<p><b>No Progress.</b> There has been no decision made regarding the future use of the unit at Regent Road.</p>
<p>Support TeenAIM to improve mental health awareness amongst young people through schools and Youth Clubs etc.</p>	<p>April 2005</p>	<p>North Essex Mental Health Partnership Trust and Epping Forest PCT</p>	<p><b>Ongoing.</b> TeenAIM are currently running mental health awareness workshops and drops at a variety of venues, including schools. Information is available on the AIM website, as well as a leaflet and newsletters promoting mental health awareness amongst young people.</p>
<p>Increase the level of involvement that users have in the planning of services and service delivery. Continue to support SAFE, Epping Forest Advocacy Service to help achieve this aim.</p>	<p>April 2005</p>	<p>North Essex Mental Health Partnership Trust and Epping Forest PCT</p>	<p><b>Ongoing.</b> NEMHPT and EF PCT continue to support SAFE.</p>
<p>Await news from Supporting People regarding the expression of interest for the expansion of the floating support service from 12 to 18 units and the additional part-time floating support worker.</p>	<p>July 2005</p>	<p>Cygnets Housing Association And Essex County Council SP Team</p>	<p><b>No Progress.</b> The Essex SP Commissioning Body has not invited bids for new/expanded services. The Essex SP Development Fund for 2006/7 will be utilised for the Value Improvement Project for floating support.</p>

**Epping Forest Local Supporting People Strategy 2005-2009  
Six Monthly Progress Report on Key Action Plan  
(As at 1 October 2005)**

Task	Target Date	Lead Organisation	Current Position
<p>Continue to increase and improve mental health services for older people through joined up working between the Community Mental Health Team for Older People, the Primary Health Service (PCT) and Social Care Teams.</p>	<p>June 2005</p>	<p>Community Mental Health Team for Older People, Epping Forest PCT and Social Care Teams</p>	<p><b>In Progress</b> Work is ongoing to improve integration and a seamless service delivery. For example, the CMHT are working closely with the generic wards at St Margaret's Hospital and the community mental health nurses are working closely with both residential and nursing homes with regards to supporting the staff and service user.</p>
<b>Learning Disabilities</b>			
<p>Commence the construction of six, eco-friendly, self-contained flats and the provision of 24-hour support for people with learning disabilities on District Council-owned land at Cripsey Avenue, Ongar, with capital funding allocated by the Housing Corporation.</p>	<p>January 2005</p>	<p>East Living</p>	<p><b>Achieved.</b> Construction was commenced in May 2005, with completion due in May 2006. Commencement was delayed for a significant period, due to the slow response by Thames Water to divert a sewer under the site, which only they are authorised to do.</p>

**Epping Forest Local Supporting People Strategy 2005-2009  
Six Monthly Progress Report on Key Action Plan  
(As at 1 October 2005)**

Task	Target Date	Lead Organisation	Current Position
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<b>Physical Disabilities</b>			
<p>In the light of the reduction in the ODPM contribution towards Disabled Facilities Grants, reconsider the priorities in the Council's Grants Policy.</p>	<p>April 2005</p>	<p>Epping Forest District Council</p>	<p><b>Ongoing.</b> Notification has been received from the ODPM of an additional £15,000 SCG allocation for 2005/2006. However, an increase in the number of DFG applications being submitted means that this matter will still need consideration.  A consultant is currently carrying out a private sector house condition and energy efficiency survey. The results will inform a review of the Private Sector Housing Grants Policy.</p>
<p>Provide a wheelchair accessible flat and four mobility flats as part of the Robert Daniels Court sheltered housing scheme's Improvement Scheme.</p>	<p>December 2005</p>	<p>Warden Housing</p>	<p><b>On Target.</b> These five flats are scheduled to be completed in December 2005.</p>
<p>Seek capital funding from the Housing Corporation to commence the construction of 8 self-contained flats for people with physical disabilities, on partly owned by the District Council at Mason Way, Waltham Abbey.</p>	<p>October 2005</p>	<p>Ability Housing Association</p>	<p><b>Delayed.</b> The highway rights placed on the land, which were causing problems and delays, have been removed. Ability Housing Association have been attempting to purchase</p>

**Epping Forest Local Supporting People Strategy 2005-2009  
Six Monthly Progress Report on Key Action Plan  
(As at 1 October 2005)**

Task	Target Date	Lead Organisation	Current Position
<p>Subject to capital funding being provided by the Housing Corporation for the physical disabilities scheme at Mason Way, Waltham Abbey, liaise with the Essex Supporting People Team to re-configure the residential support provided at Lakeside Close, Chigwell to floating support across the two schemes.</p>	<p>April 2006</p>	<p>Ability Housing Association and Essex County Council SP Team</p>	<p>the remainder of the site from Wimpey Homes, but without success.  Ability HA is therefore seeking to develop the site in two phases, with the first phase of 4/5 bungalows on the Council's land. Ability HA are seeking funding from the Housing Corporation in the next Bidding Round.</p> <p><b>Not due yet.</b>  This will be subject to the outcome of the bid to the Housing Corporation for Mason Way, which will not be known until January/February 2006.</p>
<b>Single Homelessness</b>			
<p>Review the availability of ODPM funding for the two temporary Homelessness Prevention Officer posts, to consider whether one or both posts can continue.</p>	<p>February 2005</p>	<p>Epping Forest District Council</p>	<p><b>Achieved.</b>  ODPM funding has been secured for 2005/6, and EFDC has agreed to provide the additional top-up funding to extend the service to at least April 2006.</p>

**Epping Forest Local Supporting People Strategy 2005-2009  
Six Monthly Progress Report on Key Action Plan  
(As at 1 October 2005)**

Task	Target Date	Lead Organisation	Current Position
<p>Review whether additional properties to the existing 10 properties should be leased under the Epping Forest New START Scheme, to accommodate homeless people, including single applicants.</p>	<p>April 2005</p>	<p>East Homes</p>	<p><b>Achieved.</b> EFDC has agreed to extend the Scheme by 10 properties, to 20 properties, and to submit an associated bid to the ODPM for funding.  The scheme has also been renamed "Fresh START", due to a new, completely separate, Government scheme being launched, called New Start.</p>
<p>If the planning application is approved for the development of the two former Hostel Managers' flats at Leader Lodge, North Weald, investigate the best from of procuring the development needs to be investigated.</p>	<p>September 2005</p>	<p>Epping Forest District Council</p>	<p><b>Delayed.</b> An outline planning permission was submitted in August 2004, proposing ten self-contained flats. However, the Head of Planning and Economic Development had concerns about the effect of a lime tree on the site.  Following lengthy discussions between the Heads of Housing and Planning &amp; Economic Development, agreement on a way forward was reached, involving the relocation of the proposed access to the site, enabling the retention of the lime tree, located on the proposed access.  However, informal consultation with Essex County Council has resulted in the Highway Authority considering the proposal 'unacceptable on safety grounds'. This is due to their view that the junction with Hurricane Way will become busier because of the proposed residential</p>

**Epping Forest Local Supporting People Strategy 2005-2009  
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(As at 1 October 2005)**

Task	Target Date	Lead Organisation	Current Position
			<p>development on the Parade Ground (even though the main vehicular access to this development is located elsewhere). This applies even if the new access road is relocated as close as possible to the lime tree. In their view, the scheme is acceptable only as originally proposed, at the opposite end of the site.</p> <p>EFDC's Plans Sub-Committee will therefore need to either agree to the removal of the lime tree, take a different view than the Highways Authority on the location of the access, or refuse the planning application.</p> <p>There are currently around 20 households in bed and breakfast accommodation.</p>
Investigate the feasibility and cost of additional chalets at Norway House	September 2005	Epping Forest District Council	<p><b>No Progress.</b></p> <p>It is not intended to investigate this, until the outcome of the planning application for the development of Leader Lodge is known.</p>
Continue providing the Kings Church Brentwood Furniture Exchange service to the Waltham Abbey residents, from the Brentwood headquarters using the Town Mead Depot site for storage. Seek funding from CRED to expand this service.	April 2005	Lighthouse Furniture Project and Epping Forest District Council VAEF	<p><b>In Progress.</b></p> <p>The Lighthouse Furniture Project is now a registered social company and was successful with the CRED bid submitted on behalf of the Epping Forest and Brentwood District's. The scheme is now fully operational in Brentwood from a new base and is in negotiations with EFDC on the lease for the Town Mead depot in Waltham</p>

**Epping Forest Local Supporting People Strategy 2005-2009  
Six Monthly Progress Report on Key Action Plan  
(As at 1 October 2005)**

Task	Target Date	Lead Organisation	Current Position
Complete a further feasibility project into the need for a foyer in the District, providing accommodation and employment for young people.	March 2005	Epping Forest Foyer Project and YMCA	Abbey as the base for this District. They have begun take referrals from this District through the Brentwood base.  <b>Slow Progress.</b> The Epping Forest Foyer Project (a voluntary organisation) has been working with the YMCA. However, disappointingly, the YMCA have not progressed any proposals. The Foyer Project now opened up discussions with East Thames Housing Group.  There are a number of problems with the principle of providing a foyer, not least the need for capital and revenue funding from the Housing Corporation and Supporting People Team, which is unlikely to be forthcoming.  However, the Foyer Project and the Head of Housing Services are discussing potential (limited) sites.
<b>People with Drug and Alcohol Problems</b>			
Commence the provision of three residential schemes for people with drug and alcohol problems across the County, to which clients from Epping Forest will have access.	April 2006	Essex County Council and Mosaic	<b>No Progress.</b> Planning permission has not been granted. There has not been any further action identified to take the schemes forward.



**Epping Forest Local Supporting People Strategy 2005-2009  
Six Monthly Progress Report on Key Action Plan  
(As at 1 October 2005)**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Lead Organisation</b>	<b>Current Position</b>
Await news from Supporting People regarding the expression of interest for the expansion of the floating support service from 12 to 18 units and the additional part-time floating support worker.	July 2005	Cygnets Housing Association And Essex County Council SP Team	<b>No Progress.</b> The Essex SP Commissioning Body has not invited bids for new/expanded services. The Development Fund will be utilised for the Value Improvement Project for floating support.
<b>Ex-Offenders</b>			
Update the Epping Forest Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership Strategy following the Epping Forest Crime and Disorder Unit recommendations	April 2005	Epping Forest Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership	<b>Achieved.</b> The strategy was published in April 2005. Supported by the Epping Forest Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.
Develop target measurement and risk measurement systems in relation to the provision of accommodation for ex-offenders	April 2005	Probation Service - Essex	[ Awaiting Progress Report from Probation Service – Essex ]

**Epping Forest Local Supporting People Strategy 2005-2009  
Six Monthly Progress Report on Key Action Plan  
(As at 1 October 2005)**

Task	Target Date	Lead Organisation	Current Position
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**Women at Risk Of Domestic Violence**

<p>Complete the construction of five self-contained flats and the provision of on-site support for women at risk of domestic violence on District Council-owned land at Cripsey Avenue, Ongar, with capital funding allocated by the Housing Corporation's Safer Communities Fund.</p>	<p align="center">February 2005</p>	<p align="center">East Living</p>	<p><b>Achieved.</b> The refuge was completed at the end of February 2005, with all flats let to Council nominees from within the District.</p>
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**Teenage Parents**

<p>Investigate with Brentwood Borough Council and Uttlesford District Council the possible introduction of a cross-boundary young parent scheme, comprising 8-10 self contained flats with access to some communal facilities, together with associated support. Seek capital funding from the Housing Corporation and revenue funding from Essex Social Care and the Essex Commissioning Body.</p>	<p align="center">September 2005</p>	<p align="center">Epping Forest District Council, Essex Social Services, Essex County Council SP Team, Epping Forest PCT, Estuary Housing Association.</p>	<p><b>In Progress.</b> The Project Team has selected Colchester Quakers Housing Association to manage the scheme, and provide the support, and Mosaic Homes to undertake the development.  Essex Supporting People Team have confirmed that it will guarantee the required supporting people revenue funding, if the Housing Corporation provide the required capital funding.  Mosaic Homes are submitting a bid for capital funding to the Housing Corporation for conventional funding, as well</p>
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**Epping Forest Local Supporting People Strategy 2005-2009  
Six Monthly Progress Report on Key Action Plan  
(As at 1 October 2005)**

Task	Target Date	Lead Organisation	Current Position
			<p>as from the Corporation's Special Project's Fund. Capital funding from Essex County Council is also being sought.</p> <p>The Project Team have agreed, in principle, that the scheme should be built within the Epping Forest District, with Ongar and Epping identified as the first and second preferences respectively.</p>
Investigate the feasibility of the development 6 children's centres in Epping Forest.	June 2005	Essex County Council and Sure Start	<p><b>In Progress.</b></p> <p>Feasibility is still being investigated. The children's centres will either serve the area directly around them or provide outreach services. Exiting buildings are being explored to deliver the services, as there is not the capital for new builds.</p>
<b>Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Groups</b>			
Work in partnership with the Essex Housing Officers Group, to formulate and progress an action plan for the Essex Equality and Diversity Project, through a specially appointed Action Team.	June 2005	Essex Housing Officers Group	<p><b>On Target.</b></p> <p>An Action Plan has been formulated. The Essex Housing Officers Group has also agreed to fund the first year of a two year appointment of a Housing Equalities and Diversity Development Officer. Interviews were held in October and a candidate was appointed.</p>

**Epping Forest Local Supporting People Strategy 2005-2009  
Six Monthly Progress Report on Key Action Plan  
(As at 1 October 2005)**

Task	Target Date	Lead Organisation	Current Position
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<b>Service Monitoring and Reviews</b>			
Catch up on the Service Reviews that have been suspended for Year 2 Quarter 3 due to accreditation problems and the delay of the Value For Money tool.	February 2005	Essex County Council SP Team	<p><b>In Progress.</b></p> <p>Over half of all the service reviews are completed. The other half are either awaiting contract issues to be resolved or validation visits to be carried out. All service reviews must be completed by March 2006.</p>