

Scrutiny Standing Panel Agenda



Housing Scrutiny Standing Panel Thursday, 3rd July, 2008

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

Time: 5.30 pm

Democratic Services Officer: A Hendry - The Office of the Chief Executive

Members:

Councillors S Murray (Chairman), Mrs R Gadsby (Vice-Chairman), D Bateman, R Brookes, J Collier, K Chana, D Dodeja, Mrs J Lea, Mrs P Richardson, Mrs L Wagland, Mrs J H Whitehouse and J Wyatt

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)

(Assistant to the Chief Executive) To report the appointment of any substitute members for the meeting.

3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

(Assistant to the Chief Executive). 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. TERMS OF REFERENCE / WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 5 - 6)

(Chairman/Lead Officer) The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has agreed the Terms of Reference of this Panel and associated Work Programme. This is attached. The Panel are asked at each meeting to review both documents.

5. HOUSING BVPI AND LPI PERFORMANCE INDICATORS - OUT-TURN 2007/08 (Pages 7 - 14)

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

6. DE-DESIGNATION OF PROPERTIES FROM OLDER PEOPLE'S OCCUPATION (Pages 15 - 22)

(Director of Housing Services) to consider the attached report.

7. ETHNIC MONITORING (Pages 23 - 26)

(Director of Housing Services) to consider the attached report.

8. PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING STRATEGY

(Director of Housing Services) to consider the attached report.

9. UNAUTHORISED PARKING ON HOUSING ESTATES – MEMBERS CONSULTATION (Pages 27 - 56)

(Director of Housing) To consider the attached report and appendices.

10. REVIEW OF EPPING FOREST CARELINE (Pages 57 - 70)

(Director of Housing) To consider the attached report.

11. CHOICE BASED LETTINGS - 6 MONTH REVIEW (Pages 71 - 102)

(Director of Housing) 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 note the forward programme of meeting dates for the Panel. They are:

9th October 2008;
8th January 2009; and
26th March 2009.

TERMS OF REFERENCE - STANDING PANEL

Title: Housing

Status: Standing Panel

Terms of Reference:

(1) To undertake reviews of public and private sector housing policies on behalf of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Housing Portfolio Holder or Head of Housing Services and to make any recommendations arising from such reviews to the Housing Portfolio Holder or Cabinet as appropriate.

(2) To undertake specific projects related to public and private sector housing issues, as directed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and to make any recommendations arising from such reviews to the Housing Portfolio Holder or Cabinet as appropriate.

(3) To consider and provide comments to the Housing Portfolio Holder on the following matters, prior to consideration by the Cabinet:

- (i) Draft Housing Strategy (to be adopted by full Council in accordance with the Council's Constitution)
- (ii) Draft Private Sector Housing Strategy
- (iii) Draft Private Sector Housing Grants Policy
- (iv) Annual Review of the Housing Allocations Scheme

(4) To consider and provide comments to the Housing Portfolio Holder on draft versions of the following documents:

- (i) Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan
- (ii) Local Supporting People Strategy
- (iii) Housing Service Strategies

(5) To undertake the Annual Ethnic Monitoring Review of Housing Applicants and Housing Allocations, in accordance with the Code of Practice in Rented Housing.

(6) To monitor progress with the actions plans contained in the following documents, on a six-monthly basis:

- (i) Housing Strategy
- (ii) Local Supporting People Strategy
- (iii) Private Sector Housing Strategy
- (iv) Housing Services Development Plan

(7) To consider the Housing Portfolio Holder's draft response to any consultation papers relating to public or private sector housing that the Housing Portfolio Holder considers warrants a response from the Council.

(8) In relation to Traveller issues to consider and monitor: **(NEW)**

- (a) the position regarding tolerated sites and;
- (b) the management of travellers who enter onto land within the district with a view to unauthorised encampments, with particular reference to the legal remedies available, interactions with other agencies such as Essex Police and Essex County

Council and the provision of emergency and/or transit sites within the district;

(c) Government's guidance on the needs of travellers in the context of the Council's review of its District Local Plan and the Essex Housing Needs Assessment;

(d) the results of the Commission for Racial Equality's study on traveller issues in which this Council participated, once published;

(8) To report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Council and the Cabinet with recommendations on matters allocated to the Panel as appropriate.

Chairman: Cllr Stephen Murray

Report to Housing Scrutiny Panel

Date of Meeting: 3 July 2008

Portfolio: Housing



Officer contact for further information: A. Hall, Director of Housing (Ext 4004)

Democratic Services Officer: A. Hendry (Ext 4246)

Subject: Housing BVPI and LPI Performance Indicators – Out-turn 2007/08

Recommendations:

- (1) That the Council's housing performance in relation to Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) and Local Performance Indicators (LPIs) in 2007/08 be considered; and**
- (2) That consideration be given to whether or not the information provided in this report should be considered by the Scrutiny Panel at its July meeting on an annual basis in future.**

Report:

1. Up to March 2008, all councils have been required to record, monitor and publish Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) for a range of Council services, including Housing. In addition, local authorities are encouraged to record, monitor and publish Local Performance Indicators (LPIs) for services which the local authority considers important. From the range of BVPIs and LPIs, the Council has selected Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), which it considers particularly important indicators to monitor. From April 2008, the lengthy number of BVPIs have been replaced by a smaller number of National Indicators. As a result, from April 2008, the Council has re-designated some of the former BVPIs as LPIs, so that they continue to be monitored and reported.

2. Performance against all the Council's BVPIs and LPIs is monitored on a quarterly basis by the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel. However, the Chairman of the Housing Scrutiny Panel has asked that performance on the Housing BVPIs and LPIs be reported to, and considered by, the Housing Scrutiny Panel.

3. Attached as an Appendix is a table listing all of the Housing BVPIs and LPIs, which provides the following information in respect of each one:

- **The KPI/BVPI/LI Reference number**
- **Summary of the indicator's definition** – BVPI definitions are set nationally. Reference to "High" means that the higher the figure, the better the performance. Conversely, reference to "Low" means that the lower the figure, the better the performance.
- **The target for 2007/8** – These were set by the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel. In most cases, for BVPIs, this was set at the "Top

Quartile” level achieved across all district councils in England in 2005/6 (i.e. the level above which a council’s performance was within the best 25% of all district councils). Where performance was already above this level, the target was often set higher. Where it was well below, the target was sometimes set lower.

- **The out-turn for 2007/8** – This gives the performance out-turn for last year
- **The Top Quartile for 2006/7** – This was the Top Quartile level for all district councils in 2006/7 (the more recent year that comparative data is available). This is useful to compare the performance out-turn in 2007/8 against. The table shows both the Top Quartile level and whether the Council achieved the 2006/7 Top Quartile level.
- **The out-turn for 2006/7** – This gives the performance out-turn for the previous year, which is provided for comparative purposes with the latest year’s performance.
- **Improvement in 2007/8** – This shows whether the Council’s performance in 2007/8 was better (“Yes”) or worse (“No”) than the previous year (2006/7).
- **Traffic Light (versus Target for 2007/8)** – This shows whether the performance in 2007/8 achieved the target set for 2007/8.

Green = target achieved
Red = target not achieved

4. From the table in the Appendix, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- The Council’s housing performance **improved** in 2007/8 in respect of 14 indicators (58%)
- There was **no change** in housing performance for 4 indicators (17%)
- The Council’s housing performance **worsened** in 2007/8 in respect of 6 indicators (25%)
- Housing performance **met or exceeded** the target in respect of 16 indicators (67%)
- Housing performance **failed to meet** the target in respect of 8 indicators (33%)
- Housing performance **was in** the Top Quartile for all district councils in respect of 3 BVPIs (25%) and **was not in** the Top Quartile in respect of 9 BVPIs (75%)

5. It is interesting to note that, in respect of the 6 indicators that did not improve in 2007/8, 2 still met the target. The following explanations are given for the 6 indicators that did not improve in 2007/8:

Indicator	Comments
Percentage of tenants evicted as a result of rent arrears	This is considered by officers to be an inappropriate indicator. The Audit Commission’s assumption is that a high number of evictions represents poor performance; a low number represents good performance. In officers’ view, the most important factor is the Council’s performance on collecting rent and minimising rent arrears. It will be noted from the Appendix that the Council excelled in both the rent collection rate (well into the Top Quartile) and the level of arrears in 2007/8. It is inevitable that, to achieve low rent arrears, evictions will be necessary as a last resort. This does not represent poor performance, but effective rent arrears management.

<p>Average length of stay in hostel accommodation of households that are unintentionally homeless and in priority need</p>	<p>This is considered by officers to be another inappropriate indicator. Whilst it is acknowledged that it is not ideal for homeless households to be accommodated in hostel accommodation, the reality is that they need to be accommodated somewhere. It is quite usual for appropriate accommodation not to be available at the time of homelessness, and accommodating homeless households in hostel accommodation on a temporary basis is considered far better than bed and breakfast accommodation. Moreover, since the Council does have a hostel, it is considered better to make use of this facility, rather than keep rooms empty – this enables more non-homeless households on the Housing Register to be accommodated in Council housing with secure tenancies. The Top Quartile is zero. Therefore, to be in the Top Quartile, the Council would have to use other forms of temporary accommodation and/or provide homeless households with permanent Council (or RSL) accommodation straight away. In any event, it should be noted that the Council's target for this indicator was met.</p>
<p>Average number of days to re-let Council dwellings</p>	<p>It is accepted that performance with this important indicator is poor. In response, a Voids Working Party has been set up, chaired by an Asst. Director of Housing, to look a ways of reducing the void period. Two main problems have been identified. Firstly, the average period includes a number of difficult-to-let properties, particularly bedsits and some flats in sheltered accommodation, which inflate the average time and are, to a large extent, outside of the Council's control. Secondly, the period of time repairs are undertaken at void properties by the Works Unit is higher than acceptable. Under the recent Top Management Restructure, responsibility for the Works Unit passed to the Housing Directorate in May 2008, and a strategy to improve performance has already been devised and is being implemented.</p>
<p>Former tenant rent arrears</p>	<p>The main reason for the reduction is due to an abnormally high amount of former tenant arrears collected in the previous year. This was due to a significant increase in the number of occupiers who were identified as "tolerated trespassers" (i.e. tenants who breach a court order) and were therefore classed as former tenants. Any payments they then made, including whilst they were in occupation, were therefore former tenant arrears. However, due to a change in the law, the number of tolerated trespassers reduced dramatically in 2007/8. In any event, it should be noted that the Council's target for this indicator was met.</p>
<p>Routine repairs undertaken within target time</p>	<p>It is accepted that performance with this important indicator is poor. Indeed, it is accepted that the target time for the completion of routine repairs is quite lengthy. As explained above, responsibility for the Works Unit, which is responsible for the completion of most response repairs passed to the Housing Directorate in May 2008 and a strategy to improve performance is being implemented.</p>
<p>Number of affordable homes completed and ready for occupation during the year</p>	<p>The target was set, based on the expected number of completions in 2007/8. However, for various reasons, slippage occurred with the commencement of a number of affordable housing developments, and the out-turn was lower than the previous year. This was mainly due to a dearth of development sites in the District generally. However, it should be noted that the average % affordable housing agreed in</p>

	Section 106 (planning) agreements for large housing developments during 2007/8 was 71%, far more than the target of 40%, and higher than the 30% achieved in the previous year. Moreover, it should be noted that there are around 460 affordable homes in the pipeline (with planning permission) for future years, with a further 325 affordable homes that may also come to fruition.
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- 6. A copy of this report will be provided to the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation at its next meeting for information.

- 7. The Scrutiny Panel is asked to consider whether the information provided in this report on housing performance should be considered by the Scrutiny Panel at its July meeting on an annual basis in future.

BEST VALUE/LOCAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS - OUTTURNS 2007/08

TARGET 2007/08	Performance target for 2007/08
OUTTURN 2007/08	Performance outturn for 2007/08
TOP QUARTILE?	Illustration of performance for 2007/08 against the district top quartile for 2006/07 Yes/No (for BVPIs only), and the top quartile position
OUTTURN 2006/07	Comparison of performance improvement (or otherwise) between 2006/07 and 2007/08
IMPROVEMENT YES/NO	Illustration of performance improvement (or otherwise) between 2006/07 and 2007/08
RED	Outturn performance target not met for 2007/08
AMBER	Outturn performance for 2007/08 not met, but within 5.00% of target
GREEN	Outturn performance target met for 2007/08

Housing Portfolio

PI (AND KPI) REF	SUMMARY DEFINITION AND POLARITY INDICATOR (GOOD PERFORMANCE IS AN OUTTURN HIGHER OR LOWER THAN TARGET)	TARGET 2007/08	OUTTURN 2007/08	TOP QUARTILE 2006/07	OUTTURN 2006/07	IMPROVEMENT in 2007/8 YES/NO	TRAFFIC LIGHT (v Target) 2007/08
KPI BV63 Deleted	The average SAP rating of the Council's dwellings (HIGH)	67.00	69.00	No 72.00	66.00	Yes	GREEN
BV64 Deleted	Private vacant dwellings returned to occupation or demolished as a result of action by the Council (HIGH)	38.00	33.00	No 55.00	0.00	Yes	RED
KPI BV66a Retained as LPI	Rent collected as a proportion of rents owed on housing revenue account dwellings (HIGH)	98.84%	99.41%	Yes 98.50%	98.83%	Yes	GREEN
BV66b Deleted	Tenants with more than seven weeks gross rent arrears as a percentage of total tenants (LOW)	8.00%	8.36%	No 3.43%	8.39%	Yes	RED
BV66c Deleted	Percentage of tenants in arrears who have been served a Notice Seeking Possession (LOW)	21.00%	15.49%	No 13.61%	22.34%	Yes	GREEN
BV66d Deleted	Percentage of tenants evicted as a result of rent arrears (LOW)	0.15%	0.22%	No 0.17%	0.20%	No	RED
KPI BV183b Deleted	Average length of stay (weeks) in hostel accommodation of households that are unintentionally homeless and in priority need (LOW)	26.00	20.29	No 0.00	20.23	No	GREEN
KPI BV184a Replaced as NI	Proportion of Council dwellings which were non-decent at the start of the year (LOW)	5.00%	5.00%	Yes 10.00%	6.00%	Yes	GREEN
KPI BV184b Deleted	Percentage change in the proportion of non-decent Council dwellings between the start and end of the year (HIGH)	16.00%	31.90%	No 32.90%	10.90%	Yes	GREEN
BV202 Deleted	Rough sleepers (LOW)	1.00	0.00	Yes 0.00	1.00	Yes	GREEN
KPI BV212 Deleted	Average number of days to re-let Council dwellings (LOW)	41.00	54.00	No 25	51.00	No	RED
BV213 Deleted	Homeless situations resolved by Housing Advice Services (HIGH)	12.00	10.00	No 4.00	10.00	N/A	RED

LPI H1a Deleted	Former Tenant Arrears collected (HIGH)	£80,000.00	£85,240.00	N/A	£119,465.00	No	GREEN
LPI H1b Retained as LPI	Current rent arrears as proportion of rent roll (LOW)	1.60%	1.52%	N/A	1.69%	Yes	GREEN
LPI H2a Retained as LPI	Emergency repairs undertaken within target time (HIGH)	99.00%	99.00%	N/A	99.00%	No change	GREEN
LPI H2b Retained as LPI	Urgent repairs undertaken within target time (HIGH)	95.00%	89.00%	N/A	89.00%	No change	RED
LPI H2c Retained as LPI	Routine repairs undertaken within target time (HIGH)	95.00%	84.00%	N/A	90.00%	No	RED
LPI H3 Retained as LPI	Satisfaction with repairs (HIGH)	98.00%	98.00%	N/A	98.00%	No change	GREEN
LPI H10a Retained as LPI	Average number of single homeless households placed in bed and breakfast accommodation (LOW)	6.00	3.70	N/A	17.30	Yes	GREEN
LPI H10b Deleted	Average number of homeless households placed in hostel accommodation (LOW)	32.00	15.50	N/A	22.80	Yes	GREEN
LPI H10c Replaced as NI	Average number of homeless households placed in other temporary accommodation (LOW)	100.00	62.70	N/A	154.30	Yes	GREEN
KPI H15a Deleted	The number of affordable homes completed and ready for occupation during the year (HIGH)	59.00	19.00	N/A	25.00	No	RED
KPI H15b Deleted	The amount of affordable housing required as part of Section 106 Agreements signed during the year (HIGH)	40.00%	71.00%	N/A	30.80%	Yes	GREEN
LPI EH2 Deleted	Response to service requests (Care and Repair) (HIGH)	92.00%	99.80%	N/A	98.60%	Yes	GREEN

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Report to the Housing Scrutiny Panel

Date of meeting: 3 July 2008

Portfolio: Housing – Councillor D Stallan

Officer contact for further information: Roger Wilson ext. 4419

Committee Secretary: Adrian Hendry, ext 4246

Subject: De-designation of Properties from Older People's Occupation



Recommendations/Decisions Required:

That the Housing Scrutiny Panel considers the current policy of de-designating properties on housing estates from older person's occupation, (which have proved difficult to let to this client group), and allocating to younger applicants.

Background

1. Following some concerns raised by Members about the numbers of properties, formerly designated specifically for occupation by older people on housing estates, being let to younger people, the Housing Portfolio Holder has asked for this report to be submitted to the Panel for consideration.
2. During the mid 1980s, the Council designated around 1,300 properties as specifically suitable for older people due to their size, type and location. Such properties are exempt from the right to buy. A list of the properties designated at that time is attached at Appendix One. It is important to note that these properties do not include sheltered housing for older people which would not be de-designated from older persons use.
3. In the late 1980s, the former Housing Committee agreed that 118 properties be removed from the list as they had proved unpopular with older people, at a time when there was a growing need for small flats to be let to young married couples. In 1990, a further 58 properties were removed from the list, since there was a significant lack of demand, often having to be offered to older applicants who had only one point under the old points system of allocations.
4. On 30 October 1991, following consideration by the former Working Group on Housing, Housing Committee agreed that the then District Health and Housing Officer be given delegated authority to "de-designate" properties previously considered specially suitable for older people, where they cannot be let to older people. The Working Group on Housing noted that this was due to Housing experiencing difficulties letting such properties, with the result that they remained vacant, losing rental income, for unacceptable periods of time, when they could be let to general needs applicants, from whom there is a high demand.
5. More recently, when vacancies occur, designated properties for older people have proved even more difficult to let to older applicants. Under the old system of allocations, up to 10 offers were made and refused by this client group, resulting in void times increasing.
6. Officers have carefully considered (in accordance with Member delegations) which properties should remain designated for older people's use. A current list of all designated older people's properties on housing estates is attached at Appendix Two. As can be seen, there are fewer properties designated compared to the original list. As a result, far less properties are now being de-designated.

7. Following the introduction of the HomeOption (Choice Based Lettings) Scheme in November 2007, designated properties for older people are advertised in the fortnightly free-sheet and on the website seeking expressions of interest from applicants aged 60 years or over. In some cases, no expressions of interests have been received, not even from older applicants in the lowest Band. Moreover, many applicants who do express an interest often refuse the offer of accommodation, extending void periods.

8. If any properties on the new de-designated list prove difficult to let to older applicants after appearing in one edition of the free-sheet, a standard letter is sent to all applicants in the lowest bands (5 and 6) advising them of the opportunity of possibly being successful should they express an interest. If no interest is expressed in the subsequent free-sheet, then the age limit is reduced by 5 years from 60 to 55 years of age and so on until it is let.

9. The Council currently has 3,995 applicants on its Housing Register, of these 386 (9.7%) are applicants over 60 years of age with 1,581 (40%) being younger applicants wanting one-bedroom accommodation. These statistics support the Council's decision to de-designate appropriate flats originally set aside for older persons use, bearing in mind that, of the total number of those on the list awaiting one bedroom accommodation, 75% are younger applicants. If the Council left such properties empty awaiting interested older applicants, it would increase the already unacceptably high void periods further, ignoring the ever-increasing demand from younger applicants.

10. The Housing Scrutiny Panel is asked to consider the current policy of de-designating properties on housing estates from older persons use, and provide the Housing Portfolio Holder with any comments.

Consultation

11. The Tenants and Leaseholders Federation was consulted at its meeting on 20 May 2008, and agreed that the Council has no alternative but to de-designated older people's accommodation on housing estates where no older applicants express an interest in the accommodation.

LOUGHTON (CONT...)

Rochford Avenue: Nos 9-24 (inc).
 Sandford Avenue: Nos 2-8 (even), 9-16 (inc),
 17-23 (odd), 25-39 (odd)
 The Spinney: Nos 1-30 (inc).
 Torrington Drive: Nos 9-33 (odd), 37-133
 (odd), 134-168 (inc),
 170-197 (inc), 199.
 Valley Hill: Nos 87-99 (odd), 103-117 (odd),
 120, 136-150 (even).
 Willingale Road: Nos 336-350 (even).

NAZEING

Hyde Mead: Nos 14, 16, 29-39 (odd),
 49-55 (odd).
 St. Leonards Road: Nos 1-23 (odd).

NORTH WEALD

Queens Road: Nos 68-74 (even), 126-130
 (even), 131-133 (inc),
 196-206 (even).
 School Green Lane: Nos 13, 15.
 Watermans Way: Nos 1-44 (inc).

ONGAR (and surrounding area)

Brookfields, Shelley: Nos 2, 6-12 (even).
 Coles Close, Shelley: Nos 1-7 (inc).
 Cripsey Avenue, Shelley: Nos 81-99 (odd).
 Epping Road, Toot Hill: Nos 28-40 (even).
 Garden Fields, Stanford Rivers: Nos 1, 2,
 3, 6, 7.
 High Street, Ongar: Nos 91, 93
 Jacksons Close, Ongar: Nos 1-10 (inc), 14,
 17 - 20 (inc)
 Millfields, High Ongar: Nos 1, 2, 4,
 31 - 34 (inc)
 Mill Lane, High Ongar: Nos 1 - 5 (odd),
 58 - 72 (even)
 Moreton Road Shelley: Nos 30, 90 - 104
 (even) 114, 116
 St. Peters Ave, Shelley: Nos 44 - 62 (even)
 Turners Close, Ongar: Nos 27, 28, 30, 31
 Woodland Way, Ongar: Nos 15 - 21 (odd),
 10-44 (even).

ROYDON

Parkfields: Nos 26-32 (even), 92, 94, 98,
 100.
 Temple Mead: Nos 5-9 (odd), 10-21 (inc),
 23-31 (odd).

RURAL AREAS (North of the District)

Berners Roding: No 2.
 Birds Green, Willingale: Nos 3-5 (inc).
 Bobbingworth Mill, Bobbingworth:
 Nos 3-6 (inc).
 Colvers, Matching Green: Nos 12-21 (inc),
 23-25 (inc).
 Crown Close, Sheering: Nos 2-10 (inc).
 Gould Close, Moreton: Nos 1, 3, 4,
 9-12 (inc), 14.
 High Pastures, Sheering: Nos 1, 3, 4.
 Houchin Drive, Fyfield: Nos 1-4 (inc)
 6, 8.
 Lower Road, Sheering: Nos 5-11 (odd).
 Moreton Road, Fyfield: Nos 12, 14, 28,
 32, 106-112 (even).
 Ongar Road, Fyfield: Nos 41-51 (odd).
 Primley Lane, Sheering: Nos 61-65 (odd).
 Rainbow Road, Matching Tye: Nos 26-40
 (even), 29, 33-41 (odd).
 School Lane, Abbess Roding: Nos 1-5 (inc).
 The Chestnuts, Willingale: Nos 1-6 (inc).
 The Glebe, Magdalen Laver: Nos 7-10 (inc).
 The Hoppitt, Moreton: Nos 1-15 (inc).
 The Plashetts, Sheering: Nos 1-5 (odd),
 2-8 (even), 30-36 (even),
 42-56 (even).
 Walker Avenue, Fyfield: Nos 1-15 (odd).

THEYDON BOIS

Avenue Road: Nos 11, 13, 15.
 Graylands: Nos 31, 35, 36.
 Pakes Way: Nos 30, 34, 36.
 Poplar Row: Nos 1-5 (odd).
 Thrifts Mead: Nos 7, 7a, 8, 9, 28-41 (inc).

WALTHAM ABBEY

Amesbury: Nos 2a, 4a, 6a.
 Anwell Court: Nos 37-43 (odd).
 Badburgham Court: Nos 10-23 (inc),
 28-34 (even), 23, 37-49 (odd),
 50-63 (inc).
 Beechfield Walk: Nos 14-20 (even).
 Brickendon Court: Nos 5-12 (inc).
 Caneland Court: Nos 25-56 (inc)
 72-79 (inc).
 Caterham Court: Nos 13-20 (inc).
 Cullings Court: Nos 5-18 (inc).
 Edward Court: Nos 1-14 (inc), 16-28 (inc).
 Fountain Place: Nos 4, 4a, 3, 5, 3a, 5a,
 9, 10, 11.
 Fullers Close: Nos 1-32 (inc). Nos 1-32 (inc)
 Grant Court: Nos 24-27 (inc).
 Gladeway: Nos 2-24 (even).
 Greenyard: Nos 12-16 (inc), 12a-16a (inc).
 Grove Court: Nos 1-20 (inc).
 Harveyfields: Nos 10a-13a (inc).
 Haywood Court: Nos 25-28 (inc).
 Lucas Court: Nos 6-19 (inc).

WALTHAM ABBEY (CONT...)

Mallion Court: Nos 19-25 (odd),
 26-39 (inc).
 Maynard Court: Nos 11-16 (inc), 19-26
 (inc), 41-48 (inc).
 Millhoo Court: Nos 21-24 (inc).
 Moremead: Nos 1, 16, 20-25 (inc), 31, 32.
 Morris Court: Nos 16-19 (inc).
 Neal Court: Nos 1-32 (inc), 34-44 (inc).
 Newhall Court: Nos 9-18 (inc).
 Newteswell Drive: Nos 1-3 (inc), 5-8 (inc),
 17, 55, 56, 62-69 (inc).
 Paradise Road: Nos 14-19 (inc), 14a-19a
 (inc).
 Parvills: Nos 1, 10, 11, 35-42 (inc),
 46, 47, 59.
 Pasfield: No 1.
 Read Court: Nos 1-12 (inc), 23-13
 Rochford Avenue: Nos 33-45 (odd), 61-77
 (odd).
 Roundhills: Nos 56-72 (even).
 Sewardstone Street: Nos 15-17, 15a-17a (odd).
 Silver Street: Nos 1-5 (odd).
 Southweald Drive: Nos 39-44 (inc), 50, 51,
 55, 60, 61, 66.
 Stanford Court: Nos 1-12 (inc), 13-23 (odd).
 Stanway Road: Nos 3-10 (inc).
 Takely Close: Nos 1, 6-15 (inc), 21.
 Tillingham Court: Nos 1-12 (inc),
 13-19 (odd).
 Upshire Road: Nos 125-129, 125a-129a (odd).
 Woodford Court: Nos 8-15 (inc).
 Wormyngford Court: Nos 1-16 (inc).

Masons Way 200 - 214 (even)
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LOCATION	PROPERTYTYPE	NUMBERS
Alderwood Close, Abridge	Bungalows	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8
Amesbury, Waltham Abbey	Bungalows	2A, 4A, 6A
Barrington Close, Loughton	Flats & bungalows	1 to 6 (inc)8 to 13(inc)
Barrington Road, Loughton	Flats & bungalows	Evans 6 to 58 (inc)Evens 62 to76(inc)Odds 79 to 93(inc)
Beaconsfield Road, Epping	Bungalows	Evans 4 to14 (inclusive)Evans 18 to26(inclusive)
Brookfields, Ongar	Bungalows	2, 6, 8, 10, 12
Coles Close	Bungalows	1 to 7 (inclusive)
Colvers Matching Green	Bungalows	13 to 21(inclusive)23 to 25 (inclusive)
Coronation Hill, Epping	Bungalows	Evans 18 to 46(inclusive)52, 54.
Crown Close, Sheering	Bungalows	Evans 2 to 10 (inclusive)
Duck Lane, North Weald	Bungalows	Evans 4 to 12 (Inclusive)Evans 16 to 38(Inclusive)
Edward Court, Waltham Abbey	Flats	1 to 28 (inclusive)
Essex House, Waltham Abbey	Flats	1 to 4 (inclusive)7 to 12 (inclusive)
Fullers Close, Waltham Abbey	Flats	1 to 25 (inclusive)27, 29, 30, 31, 32
Greenyard, Waltham Abbey	Flats	12A, 13A, 14A, 16A, 12 to 16 (inclusive)
Grosvenor Path, Loughton	Bungalows	Evans 2 to 16 (inclusive)
Harveyfields, Waltham Abbey	Bungalows	10A, 11A, 13A
Houchin Drive, Ongar	Bungalows	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8
Hyde Mead, Nazeing	Bungalows	14, 16, 49, 51, 53, 55.
Hyde Mead, Nazeing	Bungalows	Odds 29 to 39 (inclusive)
Longcroft Rise, Loughton	Flats	54 - 61
Marlescroft Way, Loughton	Flats	1 to 6 (inc) 41 - 46 (inc)
Monksgrove Loughton	flats	6 - 15 (inc) 16 - 25 (inc)
Moremead, Waltham Abbey	Bungalows	1, 16, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 31.
Moreton Road, Ongar	Bungalows	12, 14, 28, 30, 32
Moreton Road, Ongar	Bungalows	Evans 90 to 116(inclusive)
Neal Court, Waltham Abbey	Flats	1 to 32 (inclusive)34 to 44 (inclusive)
Newteswell Drive, Waltham Abbey	Bungalows	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 17, 55, 56, 62, 63, 64, 66, 67, 68, 69
Ongar Road, Ongar	Bungalows	Odds 41 to 51 (Inclusive)
Paradise Road, Waltham Abbey	Flats	14A to 19A (inclusive)14 to 19 (inclusive)
Parkfields, Roydon	Bungalows	28, 30, 32
Parvills, Waltham Abbey	Bungalows	1, 10, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 46, 47, 59
Pasfield, Waltham Abbey	Bungalows	1
Poplar Row, Theydon Bois	Bungalows	1, 3, 5,
Queens Road, North Weald	Bungalows	126, 128, 130, 131, 132, 133, 196, 198, 200, 202, 204
Queens Road, North Weald	Bungalows	Evans 68 to 74(inclusive)
Rowley Mead, North Weald	Bungalows	1, 3
School Green Lane, North Weald	Bungalows	13, 15
School Lane, Abbess Roding	Bungalows	1 to 5 (inclusive)
Sheering Lower Road, Sheering	Bungalows	Odds 5 to 11 (inclusive)
Southweald Drive, Waltham Abbey	Bungalows	39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 50, 51, 55, 61, 66
St Peters Avenue, Ongar	Bungalows	Evans 44 to 62 (inclusive)
Takeley Close, Waltham Abbey	Bungalows	1, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 21
Temple Mead, Roydon	Bungalows	5, 7, 9 to 21 (inclusive)Odds 23 to 31 (inclusive)
The Chestnuts, Willingale	Bungalows	1 to 6 (inclusive)
The Gladeway, Waltham Abbey	Bungalows	2 to 24 (inclusive)
The Glebe, Magdalan Laver	Bungalows	7 to 10 (inclusive)
The Hoppit, Ongar	Bungalows	1 to 15 (inclusive)
The Plashetts, Sheering	Bungalows	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8Evans 30 to 36 (inc)Evans 42 to 46 (inc)
The Spinney, Loughton	Flats	1-30 (inclusive)
Thriffs Mead, Theydon Bois	Bungalows	7A, 7, 9, 28 to 41 (inclusive),
Torrington Drive, Loughton	Flats	All
Walker Avenue, Ongar	Bungalows	1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 13, 15
Watermans Way	Bungalows	1 to 23 (inclusive)25 to 31 (inclusive)33 to 44 (inclusive)
Woodford Court, Waltham Abbey	Flats	8 to 15 (inclusive)
Woodland Way, Ongar	Bungalows	10 - 38 (evens) 15,19,21 & 44
Woodredon Close, Roydon	Bungalows	1 to 6 (inclusive)

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Report to the Housing Scrutiny Panel

Date of meeting: 3 July 2008

Portfolio: Housing – Councillor D Stallan



Officer contact for further information: Roger Wilson extension 4419
Committee Secretary: Adrian Hendry, ext.4246

Subject: Ethnic Monitoring

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

That no recommendations be made concerning amendments to the Council's Allocations Scheme due to ethnicity as current figures do not show a significant disparity between the ethnicity of applicants on the Housing Register, and those allocated both general needs and sheltered accommodation through the Housing Register.

Report:

1. The Council has a Policy Statement for Equal Opportunities in the Provision of Housing Services. The Policy Statement includes a requirement for an annual review of the ethnicity of applicants on the Housing Register, compared with the ethnicity of those allocated accommodation. In addition during 2006, the Council undertook Race and Diversity Impact Assessments across all Services. When assessing Older Peoples Housing Services it was identified that the ethnicity of applicants allocated sheltered accommodation should be monitored separately and is therefore included in this report.
2. The reason for the review is to identify whether or not there are any indications to suggest the Council may be discriminating against any one ethnic group. The review is undertaken by the Housing Scrutiny Panel.
3. The breakdown of the ethnic origin of applicants on the Housing Register at 31 March 2008 is set out in the following table:

Ethnic Group	Percentage (%)
White British/Irish	77.8
Bangladesh/Pakistan/India	0.8
African/Caribbean	1.8
Mixed Race	0.4
Other	4.2

Ethnic Group	Percentage (%)
Not Stated	15.0

4. The breakdown of the ethnic origin of Housing Register applicants allocated Council accommodation in 2007/2008 is set out in the following table:

Ethnic Group	Percentage (%)
White British/Irish	76.0
Bangladesh/Pakistan/India	0.4
African/Caribbean	2.2
Mixed Race	0.2
Other	3.1
Not Stated	18.1

5. Generally, the statistics confirm that the ethnicity of applicants allocated accommodation is similar to those of different ethnic groups on the Housing Register.

6. The following table shows the breakdown of the ethnic origin of applicants on the Housing Register awaiting sheltered accommodation as at 31/03/08.

Ethnic Group	Percentage (%)
White British/Irish	75.9
Bangladesh/Pakistan/India	0.6
African/Caribbean	0
Mixed Race	0
Other	1.0
Not Stated	22.5

7. The breakdown of the ethnic origin of Housing Register applicants allocated sheltered accommodation during 2007/2008 is set out in the following table:

Ethnic Group	Percentage (%)
White British/Irish	74.0
Bangladesh/Pakistan/India	0
African/Caribbean	0
Mixed Race	0
Other	4.0
Not Stated	22.0

8. When comparing the ethnic breakdown, there appears to be no significant disparity between the ethnicity of applicants in need of sheltered accommodation in the District and those allocated sheltered accommodation.

9. The breakdown of the ethnicity of the population of the District is set out in the table below for information (source EFDC Census 2001):

Ethnic Group	Percentage (%)
White British/Irish	92.41
Bangladesh/Pakistan/India	2.14
African/Caribbean	0.78
Mixed Race	1.04
Other	3.63

Statement in support of recommended action:

10. Although a large number of housing applicants do not disclose their ethnicity, it is evident from the analyses shown in the report that the ethnic make up of the Housing Register mirrors the allocation of vacancies sufficiently for the Council to be confident that its Allocations Scheme does not racially discriminate, either directly or indirectly. Therefore, no adjustments to the Allocations Scheme are recommended.

Consultation undertaken:

11. The Tenants and Leaseholders Federation will be updated on the report at their next meeting. The Housing Portfolio Holder has asked that the report be published in the Member's Bulletin after the meeting of the Panel.

Resource implications:

Budget provision: None

Personnel: None

Land: None

Community Plan/BVPP reference: Social inclusion

Relevant statutory powers: Housing Act 1996, as amended

Background papers: None

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications: Human Rights

Key Decision reference: (if required)

Report to the Housing Scrutiny Panel

Date of Report: 3 July 2008

Portfolio: Housing – Councillor D Stallan

Author: Roger Wilson ext. 4419

Committee Secretary: Adrian Hendry, ext.4246

Subject: Unauthorised Parking on Housing Estates



Recommendation:

The Panel is asked to consider the outcome of the consultation, finalise its views, and make recommendations to the Housing Portfolio Holder on the following three issues:

- (a) Whether the additional £300,000 available in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme from 2009/2010 be made available to fund further off-street parking schemes matched funded from the General Fund;**
- (b) Whether the maximum permitted amount of grass verge to be removed in order to construct a vehicular crossover be extended beyond the current policy of 6 metres in length; and**
- (c) Whether enforcement action is taken against residents who park their vehicles on grass verges.**

Report

1. The Housing Portfolio Holder has identified problems with parking and increased congestion on housing estates and recommended to the Cabinet that the Housing Scrutiny Panel consider the options to help alleviate the matter. The Scrutiny Panel considered a report on this issue at its meeting on 18 March 2008.
2. Although the Scrutiny Panel reached an initial view on the way forward, both the Scrutiny Panel and the Housing Portfolio Holder agreed that all Members should be consulted on their views

Background

Unauthorised Parking

3. Many of the Council's estates were built during the late 1940s and 1950s and were designed along garden village principles with cul-de-sacs, greens and grass verges. With the subsequent growth in car ownership, residents are experiencing severe parking problems on estates where parking both on and off road is at a premium. In addition, due to the introduction of permit parking, many side roads are becoming further congested (possibly by commuters) particularly in the Debden and Epping areas, with vehicles being forced onto grassed verges.
4. Complaints received by Housing from the public are very much on the increase; these include increased telephone calls, letters and occasionally petitions.
5. The complaints are about two main issues. Firstly, residents are unhappy that more vehicles are being parked on grass verges causing damage to the open green spaces, which are costly to

repair and can be dangerous to pedestrians and children playing. When, in response, enforcement action is taken by the Council, in the form of installing bollards, jockey rails or shrub planting, other residents complain about having nowhere to park with cars being displaced into already heavily congested side streets. Therefore, there is a need to agree a policy on the approach to be taken on unauthorised parking. Secondly, residents complain about the lack of off-street parking and put forward suggestions for schemes that could be constructed where they live.

6. In addition to receiving complaints from the public, Officers receive enquiries from Members. Some Members ask that enforcement action be taken to prevent vehicles from parking on the grassed verges with other Members asking officers not to take action as it will displace vehicles and cause problems in side streets.

7. Furthermore, residents often cross over large areas of grassed verge (in excess of 6 metres) illegally, parking vehicles in their front garden. Housing Management undertake the necessary enforcement action in as many cases as they are able within existing staffing resources.

Off-Street Parking Schemes

8. The Council is currently undertaking consultation exercises on a number of off-street parking schemes, which have been given priority under the agreed scoring system. A report will be submitted to the Cabinet during 2008 setting out the outcome of the consultations with costs and designs of each of the schemes. A copy of the Off-Street Parking Ratings Schedule is attached at Appendix One. It should be noted that when the list was drawn up, permit parking was not in force and therefore has not been taken into account within the scoring, although this is now being assessed.

9. The budget for off-street parking for 2008/2009 is £288,000 which includes amounts carried forward from previous years. Of this amount, £161,000 is Housing Revenue Account (HRA) funding with £127,000 General Fund. There is currently budget provision of £80,000 per annum in future years, with £43,000 funded from the HRA and £37,000 from the General Fund. As off-street parking schemes are very costly, it is anticipated that this year's budget will only fund around three schemes depending upon the costs of designs and re-locating any utilities.

10. At its meeting on 10 March 2008, the Cabinet was due to consider a report on the HRA Five-Year Forecast and agreed that HRA balances be reduced and maintained within the range of £3m to £4m. This results in an additional £300,000 each year being available from 2009/2010 in the Capital Programme, which could be made available to fund further off-street parking schemes. If the additional HRA funding were to be made available for this purpose, then this would have to be match funded by around £300,000 per annum from 2009/2010 from the General Fund from capital receipts which would result in an additional £2.4 million being available over four years from 2009/2010. This could provide around 25 additional schemes.

Vehicular Crossovers – 6 Metre Rule

11. Under the Council's current policy, the maximum permitted amount of grass verge to be removed in order to construct a vehicular crossover to allow residents to park their vehicles/s in their front garden is 6 metres. The 6 metre rule was agreed by the former Housing Committee on 23 March 1999 and re-affirmed by the Cabinet on 25 November 2002 and 10 April 2006. If the 6 metre rule was extended, this would enable, generally, for up to two vehicles to be parked off-road, although this would remove one available space on the street for the public to use on a first come first served basis.

Scrutiny Panel's Initial View

12. Having considered the three issues at its meeting on 18 March 2008, the initial view of the

Scrutiny Panel was as follows:

- That all the available additional HRA funding should be used for off-street parking schemes match funded from the General Fund;
- That the 6 metre rule be extended to 12 metres to enable more residents to be able to park one or more vehicles off road; and
- That all parking enforcement action should be postponed until the first two recommendations take effect.

13. The Tenants and Leaseholders Federation was consulted at its meeting on 13 March 2008. It agreed that all available additional funding should be used for off-street parking schemes. Although it agreed that the 6 metre rule be extended, it felt that residents should be required to use surfacing such as "grass crete" in an attempt to maintain the current green environment. However, officers have concerns about this material being used as in wintery weather grass verges could still become damaged and unsightly. Furthermore, the Federation's view was that enforcement action should be taken with immediate effect to remove vehicles from grass verges.

Member Consultation

14. As explained earlier, both the Scrutiny Panel and the Housing Portfolio Holder agreed that a formal consultation exercise be undertaken with all Members, as this issue affects estates across the District. Only four completed survey forms were received. The result of the survey is attached at Appendix Two. Additional comments received from Members are attached at Appendix Three.

15. The Scrutiny Panel is asked to consider the outcome of the consultation, and formulate its final recommendations to the Cabinet.

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OFF STREET PARKING RATINGS TABLE

Question 1	Percentage of council tenants.
Question 2	Lack of off street parking
Question 3	Consultation with residents
Question 4	Complaints by members of the public
Question 5	Road width
Question 6	Verge/footway damage
Question 7	Accident risk to pedestrians/drivers
Question 8	Special parking requirements

Location:	Status	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4	Question 5	Question 6	Question 7	Question 8	Total Score	
Centre Green		10	5		1	6	5	0	0	27	Streets/Areas To under go Feasibility assessment
The Gladway	On-hold	10	5		0	5	3	2	1	26	
Chester Close	Consultation	1	5		0	6	5	2	1	20	
Colebrook Gardens	Consultation	2	3		0	6	5	3	0	19	
Ivy Chimineys		6	5		0	2	3	2	1	19	
Barfields Gardens		5	4		1	5	1	2	1	19	
Hanson Drive	On-hold	4	4		0	5	1	3	1	18	
Harvey Gardens	Consultation	3	5		1	5	3	0	0	17	
Homecroft Gardens	On-hold	6	4		0	4	0	2	1	17	
School Lane	Consultation	8	4		0	2	1	2	0	17	
Audley Garden	Consultation	1	5		0	6	1	2	1	16	
Mowbrey Gardens	On-hold	4	5		0	4	0	2	1	16	Streets/Areas To be added to the
Colson Path		3	4		0	5	3	0	1	16	
Chestnuts, Willingale	On-hold	5	5		1	3	0	0	1	15	Streets/Areas that have been assessed - Not scoring higher enough / Assessed after the cut off date. (May 2007)
Hillcroft	Consultation	4	5		0	4	0	1	0	14	
Elm Close	On-hold	5	4		1	3	0	0	0	13	
Greenfields		1	5		0	5	0	0	1	12	
Hanson Close		3	5		0	3	0	0	0	11	
Graylands		2	3		0	3	3	0	0	11	
Borders Lane		3	3		0	1	3	0	1	11	
Stewards Green Road		5	2		0	3	0	0	0	10	
The Croft		3	3		0	3	0	0	0	9	
Coopers Close		2	2		0	3	1	0	0	8	
Queens Road										0	
Shrublands Close										0	
Green Glades										0	

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Unauthorised Parking on Housing Estates Results of Member Survey

Number of forms returned: 6

1. Do you agree that all the additional funding should be spent on off-street parking schemes on housing estates?

Yes 5 No 1

If no, would you agree to part of the additional funding being spent on off-street parking schemes on housing estates?

Yes 1 No Nil

If yes what proportion? 60%

2. Do you agree that the 6 metre rule should be extended?

Yes 5 No 1

If yes, what should the 6 metre rule be extended to?

12 metres 4

14 metres Nil

No restriction 1

3. Do you agree that enforcement should be put on hold until the off-street parking schemes are installed and the 6 metre rule is extended?

Yes 3

No 3

If yes, how long should enforcement action be put on hold?

4 months after policies in force 2

1 year 1

2 years Nil

3 years Nil

4 years Nil

5 years Nil

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Unauthorised Parking Survey Summary of Members' Comments

Any new standing created should be permeable because of environmental concerns. If any scheme is adopted, measures to stop parking on the remaining green sward must be adopted. The extreme situation in some closes is understood, however.

Councillor Mrs Pond

Our main problem is parking outside schools. We have three schools in Limes Farm in quite a small cul-de-sac. There is ground available adjacent to the hall.

Councillor Bateman

Green space is often used by the youth for recreation. Significant interruption of this can cause unwanted displacement. While parking can certainly be an issue, dedicating all monies to this while properties are not double glazed cannot be seen to contribute to a green agenda. Lack of enforcement can only lead to damaged green space which is in no one's interest.

Councillor Philip

Enforcement action should be put on hold for four months after off street parking schemes are installed and the 6 metres rule extended. In response to residents, money should be spent on repairing "corners" of the green and recreational areas where they have been damaged by vehicles. They should then be protected to prevent an occurrence. Finally, I would not support any parking schemes which take land from playing areas such as Western Avenue and Centre Drive in Epping.

Councillor Rolfe

Enforcement action should be put on hold for four months after off street parking schemes are installed and the six metre rule extended. Money should be spent on repairing and permanently protecting the corners of recreation areas where they have been damaged by vehicles. I would not support any parking schemes which take land from play areas, ie in Western Avenue or Centre Drive.

Councillor Mrs Hedges

Some form of protection is required for corners of roads and grass verges to prevent vehicles parking there.

Councillor Mrs Grigg

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Unauthorised Parking on Housing Estates - Questionnaire

1. Do you agree that all the additional funding should be spent on off-street parking schemes on housing estates?

Yes No

If no, would you agree to part of the additional funding being spent on off-street parking schemes on housing estates?

Yes No

If yes what proportion? 60%

3. Do you agree that the 6 metre rule should be extended?

Yes No

If yes, what should the 6 metre rule be extended to?

12 metres 14 metres No restriction

4. Do you agree that enforcement should be put on hold until the off-street parking schemes are installed and the 6 metre rule is extended?

Yes No

If yes, how long should enforcement action be put on hold?

1 year 2 years 3 years 4 years 5 years

Please add any further comments:

Green space is often used by the youth for recreation
significant interruption of this can cause unwanted
displacement
while parking can certainly be an issue dedicating all
monies to this while properties are not double glazed
can not be seen to contribute to a green agenda.
Lack of enforcement can only lead to damaged
green space which is in no-one's interest

Name: Councillor Solomon Phillips

PLEASE SEND YOUR RESPONSES BY 9 JUNE 2008 TO:

**Adrian Hendry
Democratic Services
Civic Offices
Epping**

THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART IN THE CONSULTATION

Response by Ken Angold Stephens (received 27 May 08).

Unauthorised Parking on Housing Estates – report from LRA Group

Unauthorised parking is a very contentious issue in many areas and it is our view that the questionnaire in the Council bulletin 21/2008 over-simplifies the problems and could, as a result, lead to an adverse decision on the basis that alternatives options were not available. Some of these were explored in a T & F panel 2 years ago.

In answer to the specific questions posed in the questionnaire:

Funding for off-street parking schemes. There has been a serious backlog of parking schemes for years and at the current rate of completion there is no prospect of them being completed in the foreseeable future. This has partly been due to an inadequate budget and it has been the cause of huge frustration on our estates and anger at this Council's failure to respond to the urgent requests for action from our residents. The Council should therefore use this opportunity to spend the maximum amount possible over the next 4 years to tackle this backlog; however as it is subject to match funding from the General Fund it may prove necessary to moderate the maximum figure to one that is affordable.

The 6m rule. This is very contentious and directly pits car owners against those who wish to protect our green spaces. Our view is that there are real difficulties in some areas and that a small relaxation of the 6m rule would be preferable to damaged verges; however we feel that 12m or longer is far too long and that this would lead to irreparable destruction of our green swards.

It is not always fully understood that one cross-over loses 1.5-2 road parking spaces (not one space as suggested in the Bulletin) in order to preserve sight lines and to allow for flared entrances. It also removes a road parking space from the opposite side of the road to the entrance if the road is narrow. A row of cross-overs would therefore eliminate any parking on the road and lead to less parking availability overall, unless the cross-over itself could accommodate 2 cars. If the cross-over is long enough to accommodate 2 cars then it is far better to create parking bays which would leave the sward substantially intact!

Our proposal therefore is that the 6m rule may be relaxed to a maximum of 8 or 9m as anything greater would seriously damage our green swards. If 2 neighbours wished to have a cross-over we would encourage them to share a single width cross-over. However since the implementation of a parking scheme might remove the need for a cross-over we would propose that all requests for cross-overs in roads where a parking scheme is planned within the next 4 years are not agreed until the parking scheme has been implemented unless a special case is made for a registered disabled resident. In addition we should specify that all front garden parking surfaces and cross-overs must be of porous materials but not shingle as this drags on to the green sward and pavements, that the cross-over should be grasscrete where possible (grasscrete is not generally suitable for clay soils) with bollards to stop parking spilling over onto other parts of the green sward. Note: Government legislation on front garden parking is expected later this year. Permeable surfacing is a likely requirement.

Enforcement. There are serious parking issues on all our estates, some of which is simply because there is nowhere else to go, but also some which is inconsiderate and some which

is dangerous. Whilst enforcement officers should be pragmatic where there is no alternative and it is not dangerous, there should be vigorous enforcement in dangerous areas, such as parking on corners or so far onto the pavement that pedestrians are forced to walk in the road. The more pragmatic approach should not be publicised as some drivers will perceive this as the green light to park anywhere and get away with it.

Unauthorised parking comment

It is apparent that the availability of legal parking spaces is becoming critical and I would say that this problem is not confined to authority built Housing Estates, but exist throughout the district where pavement and verge parking can be seen in the majority of steets.

It is quite true to say that it was not envisaged, when these estates were laid out, that the occupants would own a car, let alone 3 or 4 cars. Private housing stock, by contrast, was generally laid out with a garage and driveway in a generally lower density.

It is regretted that the apparent poor planning in respect of peoples aspirations for freedom and mobility is, in fact, still very relevant and is still happening due to the current application of "Parking standards", and this will lead to even more environmental damage in future years.

In my view we have arrived at the current situation through a combination of:

- Poor initial planning
- Failure to recognise and correct the planning errors
- Lack of enforcement

This means that there is now going to be serious damage caused to the environment *whatever we do*. It is for EFDC to now make some judgement about what can be done and which solution will mean the least amount of damage is caused.

One obvious feature of the housing estates is that they were laid out with quite generous amount of green recreational areas and residents have increasingly utilised these for parking. From this it is pertinent to conclude that as far as those particular people are concerned, the off street parking is of greater benefit than the green space. The comment that I would make about this is that, although we as members may want to do what we think is right for the environment, I do not think that we should high handedly impose our green credentials on residents who are desperate for some relief to a problem which can have serious implications and will certainly impact on peoples quality of life.

It is clear from my questionnaire response that I believe that the maximum of funding should be found, but I fear that even that will not be sufficient. In my view the solution lies in a combination of:

- Reducing the cost of conversions
- Charging some proportion to residents

I can see that the second point could be somewhat controversial, but it is surely true that where extra parking is provided or if longer crossovers are permitted the value of the houses, if in private ownership, will be enhanced, and I think that it is wrong for HRA funding to be used in this way. I also know that there have been cases where residents have offered to pay for schemes, and it would surely be sensible to allow this sort of participation if residents desire.

The most important study which must be carried out is the methodology and range of solutions which can be found. It should be recognised that the funding will barely cover the highest priority schemes identified if the standard method of road making is used. The cost of conventional construction is very high, and I am not convinced that the contractors used by Essex Highways can do an economical job in this instance.

One scheme that I would promote is to use a product called ground stabilising mesh from Grassmats Co., in order to convert certain verge areas to enable them to be used for parking, whilst keeping them in the green environment. This product only cost £14.85 per square metre and could be installed by our own leisure services department.

This (or similar) product has been used by Essex Highways within this district, and could be acceptable for residents who complain about the damage caused by motorists who park on verges and residents displaced from other areas

Benefits of Grassmat

Cheap to install

Retains green areas

Areas can still be used for play/recreation

Retains natural drainage

Should not need services survey

Drawbacks of Grassmat

Kerbs may need to be lowered*

Grass growth can be restricted if used too intensely

*In view of the fact that many drivers do drive up a kerb to (illegally) park I would question the necessity for kerbs to be lowered.

I would also remind members that there will be a “road ranger” scheme where we will (as I understand it) have a small team of road menders assigned to EFDC and it may be that some of this work i.e. kerb lowering could be programmed into their schedule.

Six Metre Rule

In my view the 6 metre rule should be abolished and there should be no restriction on the length of crossover allowed.

I understand the officers concern about safety of pedestrians, but this need to be balanced by the ensuing benefit of cars being parked off the street, giving better sightlines for drivers and pedestrians crossing the road.

We seem to forget that, as I understand it, parking on the public highway is actually still an offence. Surely the public highway was never meant to be an extension for private parking.

A particular and specific case is at the junction of Debden Lane and Pyrles Lane. The houses on the East side lay well back behind a deep verge and I understand that this is the area that crossovers have previously been refused under the 6 metre rule. This has been a busy route since the M11 opened, but there was no congestion until residents started parking on the street. Now there is congestion and queuing traffic at peak times every day giving rise to pollution and higher journey times.

In case members are worried that many long crossovers will result, I would suggest that the cost of the crossovers, which will in any case have to be borne by the householder, will be very high and act as something of a deterrent.

Enforcement

Although I understand the rational behind the relative lack of enforcement, I really think that “turning a blind eye” approach has actually not benefited the council, and has largely created the situation that we now have to deal with. It would be true to say that when people buy cars, probably the last thing they budget in the TCO (total cost of ownership) is the cost of the space that the car will occupy 24/7. If the cost of parking were at London car park rates then it would be safe to assume there would be few cars to cause a problem!

The lack of enforcement has, in effect meant that parking is completely free and that has, in turn, created a precedent from which it will be difficult for this council to recover.

It may also be recognised by the committee that the policy has also, in my opinion, inflated the value of many houses well beyond the “affordable” level for which they were intended, and the committee may have views on the benefits of this. Therefore my conclusion is that for any future policy to be effective, full enforcement is a prerequisite and there should be no relaxation.

Cllr R Frankel

Unauthorised Parking on Housing Estates - Questionnaire

1. Do you agree that all the additional funding should be spent on off-street parking schemes on housing estates?

Yes No

If no, would you agree to part of the additional funding being spent on off-street parking schemes on housing estates?

Yes No

If yes what proportion?

3. Do you agree that the 6 metre rule should be extended?

Yes No

If yes, what should the 6 metre rule be extended to?

12 metres

14 metres

No restriction

4. Do you agree that enforcement should be put on hold until the off-street parking schemes are installed and the 6 metre rule is extended?

Yes

No

If yes, how long should enforcement action be put on hold?

1 year

2 years

3 years

4 years

5 years

Please add any further comments:

Please see separate sheet.

Name: Councillor R. Frankel

PLEASE SEND YOUR RESPONSES BY 9 JUNE 2008 TO:

**Adrian Hendry
Democratic Services
Civic Offices
Epping**

THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART IN THE CONSULTATION

Unauthorised Parking on Housing Estates - Questionnaire

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Yes

No

If yes, how long should enforcement action be put on hold?

1 year

2 years

3 years

4 years

5 years

Please add any further comments:

Any new standing created should be permeable because of environmental concerns.
If any scheme is adopted, measures to stop parking on the remaining green sward must be adopted.
The extreme situation in some classes is understood however.

Name: Councillor Lawline Pond

PLEASE SEND YOUR RESPONSES BY 9 JUNE 2008 TO:

**Adrian Hendry
Democratic Services
Civic Offices
Epping**

THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART IN THE CONSULTATION

Unauthorised Parking on Housing Estates - Questionnaire

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If no, would you agree to part of the additional funding being spent on off-street parking schemes on housing estates?

Yes No

If yes what proportion?

3. Do you agree that the 6 metre rule should be extended?

Yes No

If yes, what should the 6 metre rule be extended to?

12 metres

14 metres

No restriction

where possible without doing away with grassed area completely

4. Do you agree that enforcement should be put on hold until the off-street parking schemes are installed and the 6 metre rule is extended?

Yes

No

If yes, how long should enforcement action be put on hold?

1 year

2 years

3 years

4 years

5 years

Sybil Lynn Wyatt.

19

Please add any further comments:

Our main problem is parking outside schools.
We have 3 schools in Lines Farm in quite
a small sub-division.
There is ground available adjacent to
the Hall.

Name: Councillor DAVID BATEMAN

PLEASE SEND YOUR RESPONSES BY 9 JUNE 2008 TO:

**Adrian Hendry
Democratic Services
Civic Offices
Epping**

THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART IN THE CONSULTATION

Unauthorised Parking on Housing Estates - Questionnaire

1. Do you agree that all the additional funding should be spent on off-street parking schemes on housing estates?

Yes No

If no, would you agree to part of the additional funding being spent on off-street parking schemes on housing estates?

Yes No

If yes what proportion?

3. Do you agree that the 6 metre rule should be extended?

Yes No

If yes, what should the 6 metre rule be extended to?

12 metres

14 metres

No restriction

4. Do you agree that enforcement should be put on hold until the off-street parking schemes are installed and the 6 metre rule is extended?

Yes

No

If yes, how long should enforcement action be put on hold? = *see comments overleaf*

1 year

2 years

3 years

4 years

5 years

Please add any further comments:

ENFORCEMENT ACTION should be put on ~~£~~ hold
for 4 months after offstreet parking schemes are
installed and the six metre rule extended.
Money should be spent on repairing and permanently
protecting the corners of recreation areas where they
have been damaged by vehicles.
I would not support any parking schemes which take
land from play areas ie in Western Avenue or Centre Drive

Name: Councillor JANET HEDGES

PLEASE SEND YOUR RESPONSES BY 9 JUNE 2008 TO:

**Adrian Hendry
Democratic Services
Civic Offices
Epping**

THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART IN THE CONSULTATION

Response to Unauthorised Parking on Housing Estates - Questionnaire

1. Do you agree that all the additional funding should be spent on off street parking schemes on housing estates?

YES

2. N/A

3. Do you agree that the 6 meter rule should be extended?

YES to 12metres

4. Do you agree that enforcement should be put on hold until the off-street Parking schemes are installed and the 6 meter rule extended?

YES for 1 year.

Comments

Some form of protection is required for corners of roads and grass verges to prevent vehicles parking there.

Cllr. Ann Grigg

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Unauthorised Parking on Housing Estates - Questionnaire

1. Do you agree that all the additional funding should be spent on off-street parking schemes on housing estates?

Yes No

If no, would you agree to part of the additional funding being spent on off-street parking schemes on housing estates?

Yes No

If yes what proportion?

3. Do you agree that the 6 metre rule should be extended?

Yes No

If yes, what should the 6 metre rule be extended to?

12 metres

14 metres

No restriction

4. Do you agree that enforcement should be put on hold until the off-street parking schemes are installed and the 6 metre rule is extended?

Yes

No

If yes, how long should enforcement action be put on hold?

1 year

2 years

3 years

4 years

5 years

} SEE COMMENTS OVERLEAF

Please add any further comments:

Enforcement action should be put on hold for four months after off street parking schemes are installed and the 6 metres rule catered for.

In response to residents, money should be spent on repairing "corners" of the green and recreational areas where they have been damaged by vehicles. They should then be protected to prevent a recurrence.

Finally I would not support any parking schemes which take land from playing areas such as Western Av

and Centre Drive in Epping

Name: Councillor BRIAN ROLFE

PLEASE SEND YOUR RESPONSES BY 9 JUNE 2008 TO:

**Adrian Hendry
Democratic Services
Civic Offices
Epping**

THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART IN THE CONSULTATION

Report to the Housing Scrutiny Panel

Date of Report: 3 July 2008

Portfolio: Housing – Councillor D Stallan

Author: Roger Wilson extension 4419

Committee Secretary: Adrian Hendry, ext.4246

Subject: Review of Epping Forest Careline



Recommendation/Decision:

The Housing Scrutiny Panel is asked to consider the attached report and make its comments to the Housing Portfolio Holder on the options for the future delivery of the Epping Forest Careline service.

Background Report:

1. Following the completion of the Best Value Service Review of Housing Services in February 2004, the Member Service Review Panel which was set up to oversee the Review agreed that the Careline Service provided a good service and, after considering a number of options for its future, it should be retained and reviewed again in 2007. The Review has been delayed whilst consideration was being given corporately to the possible introduction of a Customer Contact Centre. Since this is not being actively pursued, the Careline review has now been undertaken.
2. The review of the Careline service forms part of the Housing Scrutiny Panel's Work Programme. The report was due to be considered by the Panel at its last meeting. The report has been delayed as the Corporate Executive Forum (CEF) agreed that more time should be taken on the formal consultation exercises with Essex County Council, staff and UNISON prior to the report being submitted to the Panel.
3. The Panel is asked to consider the attached report and make its comments to the Housing Portfolio Holder on the options for the future delivery of the service.

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Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C/nnn/2008.

Date of meeting: 1 September 2008



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Housing – Councillor D Stallan

Subject: Review of Epping Forest Careline

Officer contact for further information: Name Roger Wilson extension 4419

Democratic Services Officer: Name Gary Woodhall extension 4470

This report has been considered and endorsed by the Housing Scrutiny Panel

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- 1. That in accordance with Option Three in the report, the Careline Service continues to be provided locally by the Council but be expanded to include the following:**
 - (a) Exploring the potential to monitor alarms for other authorities and housing associations;**
 - (b) Extending the routine repairs reporting service for tenants from 5pm to 8pm on each working day;**
 - (c) To periodically monitor existing Council-owned CCTV systems through website access; and**
 - (d) To monitor the whereabouts of the Council's lone workers on a 24-hour basis; and**

- 2. To extend the Careline premises into the ground floor of the vacant adjacent former Scheme Manager's accommodation converting the first floor into a one-bedroom flat which will be incorporated into the Council's sheltered housing scheme Parsonage Court, Loughton.**

Report:

1. Following the completion of the Best Value Service Review of Housing Services in February 2004, the Member Service Review Panel which was set up to oversee the Review agreed that the Careline Service provided a good service and, after considering a number of options for its future, it should be retained and reviewed again in 2007. The Review has been delayed whilst consideration was being given corporately to the possible introduction of a Customer Contact Centre, which may have incorporated the Careline service. Since this is not being actively pursued, the Careline review has now been undertaken.

2. The Council's Careline Centre is based at Parsonage Court, Loughton. The Careline Service offers a twenty-four hour, 365 days per year, emergency alarm service to older and disabled people living within the District. The Service is also offered to other vulnerable groups including victims of domestic violence and younger people with disabilities.

3. In addition to emergency alarms, Careline provides many other important services which include the following:

- Monitoring of smoke detection systems
- Short-term alarm provision for people who require the service for a brief period
- Use of call history to monitor calls received
- Monitoring and supporting Scheme Managers who are on/off site
- Monitoring dispersed alarm installation times
- Monitoring alarm manufacturer's response to repair requests
- Monitoring battery replacement deadlines
- Monitoring of systems of other housing providers
- Monitoring testing of all alarm systems, including weekly telephone line checks

4. Users of the service are connected via the telephone network. The Council's own sheltered housing schemes and other designated dwellings for older people on housing estates have a hard-wired system installed in their properties with a speech module mounted on the wall and a pull cord in each of the rooms. A total of 2,500 properties, representing approximately 3,000 people, are linked into the service.

5. In addition to providing an essential emergency alarm service to vulnerable local residents, the Careline Centre gives valuable support to Scheme Managers. In the Scheme Manager's absence, Careline contact residents over the alarm system at varying frequencies based on their level of risk. Scheme Managers pass information about their schemes to Careline staff when going off duty, and are updated on any incidents when they return. Two full-time Housing Assistants are based at Careline and visit residents at the schemes in the absence of the Scheme Manager, test alarm equipment, and install dispersed alarms. The Supporting People Co-ordinator is also based there.

Private Sector Installations

6. Around 1,250 of the connections are private sector dwellings, which are connected via a dispersed alarm, which has an associated neck worn radio trigger. The user pays an annual rental to the Council for the service with the Council receiving a total income of around £136,000 per annum. Alternatively, provided the user meets the eligibility criteria, the system can be fully funded by Social Care.

Telecare Services

7. Telecare is a relatively new concept, introduced since the last review, and is an important enhancement to what the Careline Service already offers. A wide range of sensors are now available that can be linked into a dispersed alarm which, when activated, automatically send a call through to Careline eliminating the need to press a button or pull a cord. The Council works in partnership with Essex County Council who provides the equipment free of charge to the Council and funds the first 12 weeks rental for the user. Some examples of Telecare sensors include:

- . Smoke detectors which raise an instant call if it detects smoke.
- . Flood detector which provides an early warning of a potential flood situation.
- . Carbon monoxide detector warns of dangerous CO levels within a property.
- . Fall detectors automatically detect a serious fall and raise an alert.
- . Pill dispensers automatically call the monitoring centre if medication is not taken.
- . Pressure mats monitor inactivity dependent on individual needs.
- . Bed occupancy sensors warn that a user has left their bed and not returned.
- . Epilepsy sensor warns of an epileptic attack whilst in bed.

8. Telecare sensors offer a comprehensive way of managing the risks to a person's health and home environment 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, enabling people to live independently for as long as possible and brings additional security and peace of mind to new and existing service users. In addition to Telecare, Telehealth allows patients with long term medical conditions to monitor their own vital signs over the system although this would need to be explored further with the health service and may be beyond what Careline can currently provide.

9. Since the Review in 2004, the Council has worked very hard promoting and expanding the service, with Telecare itself generating additional revenue. As more people become aware of the benefits of Telecare and purchase these products revenue will increase further.

10. The Council has introduced many further initiatives which include the following:

- A Disaster Recovery Plan which is an essential back up system. In the event of a major incident at the Careline Centre, all calls can be diverted and handled at the equipment manufacturer's own control centre in Yorkshire where clients' information is securely stored and is regularly updated should this alternative system be needed.
- Careline has an ongoing test programme ensuring all systems are working. This includes testing for any faults with the equipment itself, or the telephone line, which provides the link for the scheme.
- The Council has a comprehensive service agreement with the manufacturer. In order to ensure value for money, the Council is a (founder) member of the Essex Service Agreement Consortium, which ensures maximum discounts to providers.
- Following the installation of a dispersed alarm system, the client's next of kin is notified in writing. Various advice is given about Careline including, British Telecom Protected Services Scheme (whereby telephone line faults will be repaired within 4 hours), and testing of the system, etc.
- Client records are updated regularly, backed up on disc and stored away from the Careline Centre with hard copies being filed at the Centre.
- The Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services) gives presentations to local groups, and other agencies, promoting the service. In addition, leaflets and posters are placed at the Council's Information Points, Libraries, and Citizens Advice Bureaus, etc. The service is advertised in the local press, and the Council's tenants' magazine "Housing News". When an enquiry is received about the service, an application pack is sent out including, an application form, leaflet and terms and conditions.
- The Council pledges to install dispersed alarms for any new private client within 2 working days of receiving the application. This target is regularly achieved.
- Careline works in partnership with other agencies like the Police who promote its use when assisting victims of domestic violence and bogus callers etc.

- All conversations which take place over the alarm service are tape-recorded. This is an important safeguard and enables the Council to investigate any complaints made about the service.
- There are two full time Housing Assistants based at the Careline Centre who undertake a wide range of duties. These include visiting tenants in the absence of the Scheme Manager, installing and testing equipment, and undertaking detailed assessments for Telecare equipment and of those wishing to move into older people's accommodation.
- Careline monitors fire alarms within the sheltered housing schemes when the Scheme Manager is off duty
- When the Scheme Manager is absent for long periods due to annual leave, sickness, or when there is a vacant Post, Careline offer additional services to residents. All those residents who are nominated as "high risk" are called and accounted for every day.
- Epping Forest District Council is the founder member of the Essex Emergency Communications User Group, which was set up in 1984. This is an important means of liaising with other alarm service providers throughout Essex.
- Careline alarms are installed at Council offices to enhance staff safety, enabling lone-working staff to summon assistance in the event of an emergency or potential assault. The locations include the Council's homeless persons hostel Norway House, North Weald and all Information Centres. Various passenger lifts are monitored by Careline including those at sheltered housing schemes and on the Limes Farm housing estate, Chigwell.
- The Council is undertaking a pilot scheme with Social Care where they will visit Careline users when the numbers of calls received from them have increased to identify if they would benefit from any care or support services to reduce the need for hospital admission.

11. There appear to be the following three options for the future delivery of the Careline service:

Option One - The Council Continues to provide the existing Local Service

12. The advantages of continuing to provide the service locally are considered to be as follows:

- The Council has greater control over the management of the service, including ensuring procedures are followed for issues like keeping relatives up to date with incidents
- The STATUS tenant satisfaction survey found that over half of the Council's tenants are over 60 years old and 1 in 3 is over 75. It is therefore an advantage to have a local service to meet the future needs of an ageing population
- Users become known to staff as the same staff who visit will also speak to them regularly on the system.
- Easier for outside agencies to liaise with a local service when dealing with victims of domestic violence, bogus callers or users requiring Telecare sensors.
- Scheme Managers have a local service which supports them in their work

- The Service can initiate the call-out of rest centre staff in the event of a civil emergency, in accordance with the Housing Emergency Plan

13. Careline is staffed by four full time and three part time Careline Operators (5.5 FTE in total) who work to a twenty-four hour, four-week rota. Enhanced payments are made for bank holiday and night working.

14. The following table sets out the costs of the Careline service based upon 2006/2007 actual out-turn which is fully funded by Essex County Council's Supporting People grant:

Item of expenditure	Cost per annum (£)
Management of the service including proportion of Housing Manager & Assistant Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services) and some senior management costs	38,000
Careline staff monitoring the centre including overtime costs (5.5 FTE) and Housing Assistants (2 FTE) undertaking Careline duties	177,000
Cost of premises	6,000
Careline equipment budget	19,000
Service contract costs	58,000
Disaster recovery plan	4,700
Telephone lines etc.	30,000
Sub Total	332,700
Less Income for dispersed alarms	136,000
Less Supporting People Grant	196,700
Total Cost to the Council	Nil

Careline Premises

15. The Careline centre is located at the Council's sheltered housing scheme at Parsonage Court in Loughton. The premises is a converted three bedroom house which was originally built to accommodate the Deputy Scheme Manager, this role was phased out at all schemes with the savings being used to fund Careline when it was introduced. If the Council continued to provide the existing local Careline service, as office space is limited, it will be necessary to extend the current accommodation into the adjacent house which was originally built to accommodate the Scheme Manager who no longer lives on-site. It is proposed to extend the Careline centre into the ground floor of the adjacent house using the first floor for an additional older persons flat which would be incorporated into the sheltered housing scheme. The cost of the Careline extension is around £55,000 with the flat conversion being around £55,000. The new flat on the first floor of the adjacent house would bring additional income of £3,200 per annum to the HRA.

Option Two - Monitor the Service Through Another Provider

16. Following a survey of members of the Essex Communications User Group it was discovered that of fifteen local authority and housing associations, eleven have their own control centre, and one switches the service to another provider overnight. The remaining three link into neighbouring authorities' centres.

17. As an example, Basildon District Council's Careline centre offers a monitoring service to other authorities. To offer a basic monitoring service of the Council's 2,500 properties currently linked into Careline on a 24-hour basis, Basildon District Council have indicated they would charge approximately £65,000 per annum. Officers have also contacted a well established external provider "Invicta" (based in Kent), who stated that they would charge around £37,000 for the same service offered by Basildon District Council, although this would be subject to the outcome of any tendering exercise.

18. Although these charges are less than the Council's current costs, there is no guarantee that these will remain at this level in future years. Under this option, there is a danger that the Council could close the Careline Centre and then be vulnerable to having no alternative but to accept unreasonable increases in monitoring charges at a later date. Although this could be overcome by approaching other providers, this would involve a further time consuming and costly tendering exercise. Furthermore, if it was decided to out source the service under this option, it could prove difficult running the Careline centre leading up to the closure/transfer, as staff would be de-motivated by the process knowing they could become redundant.

19. The following table sets out a cost analysis of providing the Careline service externally based upon 2006/2007 actual out-turn costs and the lower indicative monitoring cost:

Item of expenditure	Cost (£) per annum
Estimated cost of monitoring through another service provider, including calling risks, testing telephone lines etc.	37,000
Managing the service including proportion of Housing Manager and Assistant Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services) and some senior management time	38,000
Mobile Careline Staff (3.FTE)	71,000
Equipment - telephone lines etc.	25,000
Service contract not including Careline control equipment and disaster recovery	43,000
Equipment Budget	19,000
Sub Total	233,000
Less income from dispersed alarms	136,000
Less Supporting People Grant	97,000
Total Cost to the Council	Nil

Supporting People Funding

20. Importantly, the full net cost of the Careline service (excluding income from clients) is funded through the Supporting People Grant received by the Council from Essex County Council's Supporting People Commissioning Body. Therefore, any saving made from externalising the service would be a saving to the County Council. It should be noted that, Essex County Council have advised that it is intending to undertake a value for money exercise commencing September 2008 (similar to that already carried out for floating support services) exploring themselves if savings could be made with emergency alarm services across the County.

21. In comparison with Option One, where the Council continues to manage the service, there is a potential saving of around £99,700 per annum to Essex County Council, although this figure could vary according to the outcome of any tendering exercise. This is due mainly to the reduction in costs of Careline staff who monitor the centre, managing the service, service contract costs for the call answering equipment, the disaster recovery plan and the reduction in the cost of telephone lines.

22. The table includes provision of a Housing Manager and Assistant Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services) and 3 FTE Mobile Careline staff. If this Option was agreed, although an external provider would be monitoring the service, the Council would still need to employ these staff to carry out the following functions:

- Undertaking the client role in managing the new service provider
- Continuing to manage the rest of Older Peoples Services
- Performance monitoring
- Partnership working with Social Care, Police etc
- Calling around 250 residents (in the absence of the Scheme Manager) on a weekly basis who are nominated as "at risk"
- Visiting users to update information
- Providing cover at sheltered schemes in the Scheme Manager's absence
- Installing and removing dispersed alarms
- Undertaking Telecare assessments and installing sensors
- Undertaking battery changes and testing equipment
- Presentations to local groups and promoting the service generally
- Undertaking general administration

23. If the service was externalised the Council would still be able to offer alarms to people in the private sector and Telecare services monitored by the new provider with no reduction in income.

24. The Director of Corporate Support Services advises that if the service was outsourced, existing staff (who spend more than 50% of their time on Careline duties) would transfer to the monitoring authority or organisation under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (TUPE) regulations. Should their new employer not require their services then around £25,000 redundancy costs would almost certainly be added in the first year's monitoring charge. This could be reduced should it be possible to re-deploy staff. This figure is based on 4.5 FTE's transferring.

25. When taking into account the average cost of redundancy, based on a three-year pay back period, the saving to Essex County Council between Options One and Option Two, reduces from around £99,700 to £91,400 per annum for the first three years.

Careline Premises

26. If Careline was to be externalised then it would free up one 3 bedroom house originally built to accommodate the Scheme Manager who no longer lives on site, which could be converted into 2 one bedroom flats at a cost of around £110,000, and would be incorporated into the Parsonage Court sheltered housing scheme in Loughton. Based upon 2007/2008 rent levels the 2 new flats would produce further rental income to the Council of around £6,400 per annum. However, under the Government's subsidy rules, the Council will not receive any additional rental income for any additional properties created, therefore the income to the Council would reduce to £3,200 per annum with the income received on the additional flat being reclaimed by the Government. The existing Careline premises being a converted 3 bedroom house would need to be used to accommodate those staff retained unless accommodation can be provided elsewhere.

Option Three – The Council continues to provide an expanded service

27. This option is to retain the existing service, but to expand the service to provide additional facilities and services at no extra costs.

28. There is potential to monitor alarms for other authorities and housing associations, although the increased workload may require additional full-time Careline Operators to be employed. Indeed, when Essex County Council undertakes its value for money exercise in the future that may result in the reduction of the number of control centres in Essex, there would be much more potential for the Council's Careline Centre to monitor alarms for other authorities. Monitoring alarms for other organisations would produce further income reducing the funding gap. It has been assessed that, based on the potential income obtained by other providers, and the cost of additional staff resources, the funding gap between the cost of the Council retaining the service (Option 1) and the cost of outsourcing (Option 2) could be completely closed, if around 5,000 connections could be made to the Council's Careline Centre by other councils and housing associations.

29. Currently, tenants can only report routine repairs up to 5pm, if the Careline service was retained then there is potential to extend the Council's Repairs Reporting Service which could be managed by Careline up to 8pm on each working day without any additional costs being incurred. This would result in a much improved service particularly to those tenants who work and have difficulty contacting the Council during the daytime.

30. With the numbers of CCTV systems being installed throughout the District, due to improved technology, Careline could periodically monitor estates through website access within the centre. This would improve the Council's response to incidents of anti-social behaviour creating a safer environment for local communities.

31. The Council could consider monitoring the whereabouts of lone workers corporately on a 24-hour basis, ensuring a safer working environment for staff.

32. If the service was retained in accordance with this option, the enhancements could be achieved with all of the advantages of continuing to provide a local service at the same costs set out in Option One. The loss of any potential savings to Essex County Council as set out in paragraph 21 and 25 would be justified due to the planned service enhancements which would not be achievable under Option Two. This has been discussed with Essex County Council who are supportive of this approach.

Careline Premises

33. If the Careline service was expanded further, there would be a need for additional office space. Therefore, it will be necessary to extend the current accommodation into the adjacent house which was originally built to accommodate the Scheme Manager who no longer lives on-site. It is proposed to extend the Careline centre into the ground floor of the adjacent house using the first floor for an additional older persons flat which would be incorporated into the sheltered housing scheme. The cost of the Careline extension is around £55,000 with the flat conversion being around £55,000. The new flat on the first floor of the adjacent house would bring additional income of £3,200 per annum to the HRA.

Conclusion

34. It is considered that retaining and expanding the Careline service in accordance with Option three is the most appropriate Option and would bring the following advantages which are in addition to those set out in the recommendations:

- Any saving made by externalising the service would not be of any benefit to the Council as Essex County Council's Supporting People Grant would be reduced accordingly
- Essex County Council would prefer to continue funding at the same level recommending that the Council retains and expands the service as it will provide a better service to residents.
- Essex County Council has asked that the Council retains and expands the service until they undertake their own Essex-wide review of emergency alarm monitoring centres
- If the service were to be retained, and following their review, Essex County Council decide to reduce the number of emergency alarm centres in Essex, the Council's Careline centre could tender to monitor other providers alarms
- If the Council were to externalise the service, then under the contract with Essex County Council they will require that any agreement with any external provider be only short-term to ensure that appropriate changes can be made following the Essex-wide review. A short-term contract with an external provider would leave the Council vulnerable.
- The Careline service can be expanded offering a better service to residents without any additional costs being incurred by the Council

Statement in Support of Recommended Action:

35. Continuing to provide the Careline 24-hour emergency alarm service to older and vulnerable people locally will enable the Council to make a number of service improvements at no extra cost and would continue to provide valuable support to Scheme Managers.

Other Options for Action:

36. As set out in the report.

Consultation Undertaken:

The Tenants and Leaseholders Federation

37. The Tenants and Leaseholders Federation were consulted at their meeting on 20 May 2008 and agreed with the recommendations.

Careline Staff

38. Careline staff were consulted at their meeting on 10 April 2008 and given a deadline of 1 June 2008 to respond. Generally, all staff agreed with the recommendations. However, they have some concerns about being able to monitor CCTV systems when dealing with emergency calls from service users must be their priority. It has been explained that, as set out in paragraph 30 in the report, Careline would “periodically” monitor estates through website access within the centre. As has always been the case, emergency alarm calls from service users would be the priority. In addition, staff have raised some concerns about repairs reporting out of hours being managed by Careline up to 8pm. They believe this could present a problem as between 5 & 6pm is a busy period with Scheme Managers calling through to the centre when switching off-site. It will be explained that when the repairs reporting service is extended, emergency calls from alarm service users will remain the priority. If Careline staff are unable to take any repairs calls, an answering service will be available explaining to the caller that an emergency call is being taken and their call will be returned soon after.

UNISON

39. UNISON have been consulted on the report and state that they would vehemently oppose any attempt to outsource the service.

Essex County Council Supporting People Team

40. Essex County Council agree with the recommendations. They agree that if the Careline centre was retained and enhanced it would provide a better service to residents. The Supporting People Team undertaking their own review of community alarm providers in Essex commencing later this year in partnership with Adult Social Care. They would prefer that the Council’s Careline service was reviewed at the same time as their own review. The findings of the Council’s review will feed into the County’s Essex-wide review and will assist them in their work. If the Council decided to externalise the Careline service, then under the Supporting People contract they will only allow the Council to enter into a short-term contract with any external provider pending the outcome of their review. They would not encourage this as it would leave the Council’s service vulnerable and subject to changing again in the future. Essex County Council are happy to continue with the same level of funding which they believe is more justified if the service was expanded. If any savings were made as a result of any externalisation, then Essex County Council would reduce the Supporting People Grant accordingly.

Housing Scrutiny Panel

41. The Housing Scrutiny Panel considered and endorsed the report at its meeting on 3 July 2008.

Resource Implications:

Budget Provision: Retain the Careline Service within existing resources. £110,000 Capital costs of extending Careline and providing one additional flat in the former Scheme Manager accommodation. The additional flat will provide £3,200 per annum additional income to the HRA.

Personnel: 4.5 FTE Careline staff at risk if service externalised

Land:

Council Plan 2006-10/BVPP Reference:

Relevant Statutory Powers: Housing Act 1985

Background Papers: ...

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications:

Key Decision Reference (if required):

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Report to Housing Scrutiny Panel

Date of meeting: 3 July 2008

Portfolio: Housing – Councillor D Stallan

Officer contact for further information: Roger Wilson ext. 4419
Committee Secretary: Adrian Hendry

Subject: Choice Based Lettings – 6 month Review



Recommendations/Decisions Required:

That the Housing Scrutiny Panel reviews the progress made on the Choice Based Lettings Scheme since its implementation on 19 November 2007.

Report

Background

1. On 19 November 2007, Housing introduced its new Choice Based Lettings Scheme, which was necessary to meet the requirements of Government that such a scheme be in place by 2010 at the latest. The implementation of the scheme proved very successful, with the Council being in a position to go live in the first phase. Staff worked closely with the external Choice Based Lettings Agency, Locata, to ensure that the first editions of the free-sheets and Scheme User Guides were produced to a high standard and the Website was fully operational.

2. Under the scheme, all vacant social rented properties are now advertised to applicants on the Housing Register in a two-weekly publication, website, and other media giving details of location, type, rent, service charge, council tax band and landlord of the available accommodation. Applicants would apply for a property by “expressing an interest” in up to a maximum of three properties for which they have an assessed need, either in person, by post, telephone, text, email or Internet.

3. At the end of the two weekly cycle, the Council analyses the “expressions of interests” received and allocates each property following a prioritisation and selection process in accordance with its own Allocations Scheme. In general terms, the property is offered to the applicant in the highest band, who has been registered the longest, who had “expressed an interest” for the specific vacancy. The results of the “expressions of interest” on each property advertised is then published in the next periodic publication, setting out the number received on each property, as well as the Band and registration date of the successful applicant. This helps applicants to see how long the successful applicant has been waiting and gives greater transparency in the allocation of accommodation, as each applicant would be able to clearly understand how the scheme works.

4. The Council is working in partnership with the following five authorities:

- Brentwood Borough Council
- Chelmsford Borough Council
- Broxbourne District Council
- Uttlesford District Council
- East Herts District Council

5. Two other partner authorities, being Uttlesford District Council and Brentwood Borough Council, also implemented their schemes in the first phase on 19 November 2007. We were joined by two of the remaining three councils in the second phase in March 2008. Broxbourne District Council is expected to “go live” in July 2008.

Information Bulletin – Analysis of Expressions of Interest

6. An Information Bulletin for the period 19 November 2007 to 19 May 2008 is attached as Appendix One to the report.

7. As can be seen, 252 properties have been allocated during the period. Some properties are advertised on more than one occasion as they are difficult to let (particularly those designated for older persons’ use) which has resulted in 469 advertisements being placed in the free-sheets. With 15,433 expressions of interest being made, this is an average of around 33 expressions of interest each time a property is advertised. Most properties, apart from the difficult to let older persons properties referred to, attract in excess of 100 expressions of interest. Almost 86% of applicants expressing an interest in properties did so over the Internet. The Information Bulletin also shows the number of expressions of interest made by applicants in each priority Band. Around 36% of Applicants participated in the scheme during the first 6 months.

8. At its meeting on 22 January 2008, the Panel agreed that a survey be undertaken of all applicants on the Housing Register on their views on the new Scheme. Two surveys have been undertaken. Firstly, a questionnaire has been sent to all those who have participated in the HomeOption Scheme and a separate survey form sent to all those that have yet to express and interest in any property. The results have raised a number of issues as follows:

Survey of Applicants who have not Participated in the HomeOptions Scheme

9. Around 2,660 survey questionnaires were sent to those who had not participated in the scheme, with responses being received from 726 applicants (27%). A copy of the results and a list of comments received to some of the questions are attached at Appendix Two.

10. It is of some concern that 220 applicants stated that they were not aware of the HomeOption Scheme. Based on this sample, this infers that there is potential for around 800 applicants (20% of all applicants on the Housing Register) not being aware of the Scheme. The survey also shows that a large number of applicants have not kept their Scheme User Guide, do not know their housing application registration number, have not seen one of the free-sheets and have not looked at the website.

11. One of the main reasons for undertaking a separate survey of those not participating was to explore if there were any vulnerable people who may be having difficulty using the Scheme. All those applicants who have stated their housing reference number on the survey form (68 applicants) will be contacted and be given every assistance in participating in the Scheme. Furthermore, a letter will be sent to all those who have not participated to date offering assistance and explaining again about the Scheme. In addition, a summary leaflet of the Scheme User Guide will be produced with an associated poster which will be placed in public areas around the District, and an item will be placed in the tenants magazine Housing News which is sent to all tenants and applicants setting out the results of the survey, giving details of how they can get assistance in participating in the Scheme.

12. The Panel is reminded that a great deal of effort has been made in making provisions for vulnerable people who may have difficulty in using the Scheme. All Scheme Managers have been given lists of all older residents who are on the Housing Register. When visiting

these residents, they are ensuring they fully understand how to participate in the Choice Based Lettings Scheme. In addition, two events were arranged for external agencies that support vulnerable people, so they had a full understanding of the scheme. When any new applicant joins the Housing Register, they are given an information pack which gives detail of the scheme and how assistance can be obtained.

Survey of Applicants who have Participated in the HomeOptions Scheme

13. Around 1,140 survey questionnaires were sent to those who have participated in the scheme, with responses being received from 340 applicants (30%). A copy of the results and a list of comments received to some of the questions are attached at Appendix Three.

14. As can be seen, 97.9% stated that the Scheme User Guide was easy to follow, with 96.1% saying that they had enough information about the HomeOption Scheme. Generally, the survey results show that those participating in the HomeOption scheme found it easy to use and understood how it works.

15. The Housing Scrutiny Panel is asked to review progress made on the Choice Based Lettings Scheme since its implementation on 19 November 2007.

Consultation

16. No consultation undertaken. The Tenants and Leaseholders Federation will be provided with the report for information at their next meeting on 22 July 2008.

Resource implications:

Budget provision: £40,000 per annum

Personnel: Within existing resources

Land: None

Community Plan/BVPP reference: N/A

Relevant statutory powers: Housing Act 1985 and 1996

Background papers: Cabinet, Portfolio Holder reports, Scheme User Guides and Free-sheets on request

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications: N/A

Key Decision reference: N/A

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APPENDIX ONE

HomeOption – Information Bulletin

(19 November 2007 – 19 May 2008 HomeOptions Freesheet Editions 1 – 13)

Number of properties allocated	252
Number of advertisements	469
Advertisements by property type	Flat 350 House 50 Maisonette 26 Bungalow 43
Number of expressions of interest during the period	15,433
Percentage of applicants participating in the scheme	35.9%
Method of expressing an interest	Internet 85.32% Coupon 4.43% Phone 6.87% Text 2.01% Staff Help 1.37%

Expressions of Interest by Priority Band		
Band	Expressions of Interest	Number of Applicants At 19 May 2008
One	555	186
Two	16	2
Three	4,150	483
Four	5,234	1,347
Five	3,216	765
Six	2,262	1,149
Total	15,433	3,932

HomeOption Non-users survey

Literal responses

Q6 I have not expressed an interest in any vacant properties because (other reasons):

- I don't understand it - can you do it for me - I'm only interested in a 2-bed bungalow
- I did not receive details of the Home Option scheme
- Because I have not received any letter about this scheme. But would be very interested to do so.
- I do not know where to receive information
- I will not require a property until I get married
- I do not have a computer or the internet
- Have only been on the housing list for 1 year and don't think I stand much chance yet. After having heart attack would prefer local area (Epping) as maily around.
- Don't this we could apply as we are at present in band 6. Also I note we have been listed as needing 1 bedroom. We need 2 as we do not live as man and wife (see notes held by yourselves).
- Lost my ref number. Have now been sent number.
- Due to working in Waltham Abbey and do not drive and have difficulty walking I can only take a property in Waltham Abbey
- Because a housing worker told me I'm wasting time and will be waiting forever
- Over 65 and registered disabled. Wife employed with tied accommodation. We feel we are not eligible as yet to apply for housing.
- In full time education at university so money very limited
- Have only had access to internet in last month as my computer went wrong
- I have not been made aware of the scheme
- haven't received a user guide
- The website don't work so it took some time to understand how to use the postcards.
- I have taken final year exams which have now finished. Will start looking now.
- I work full time and until recently had no access to internet
- I want a Bungalow in Shelley.
- No properties are in the area I need.
- Because of bad health I was unable to get into Housing Office. I am now paying £10 to have one posted Most of the properties were for 60+
- I am not going to bother
- I now have internet access and will try.
- At present I live in a tied house that is part of my job. I will need re-housing when I retire in a few years time
- I now have internet so will try.
- Book sent
- I was informed that there were limited vacant properties for my needs.
- In prison until September.
- I didn't know about it.
- Where is a pick up point?
- I am Scheme Manager but want to stay on the register for a property in the future.
- I was not aware of Home Options
- I now have internet access
- My landlady is trying to evict me. It has not yet gone to Court.
- I have bought a property.
- I am not very good at reading
- I lost husband and did not feel ready to move on. I will express an interest in the future if I see something of interest.
- Having only been on the register I did not think I qualified.
- My application is for a place to stay if my mothers dies.
- I am in private accommodation for 2-years.
- I don't know where to get the guide sheet from.
- I am in adequate private rented and do not qualify on the points system.

- I am Scheme Manager in tied accommodation. Not ready to move yet.
- We live in a service cottage.
- Only mobility level properties are suitable as I am a full time wheelchair user.
- I am currently in Band 6 and have no chance of obtaining a property for 7-years
- My Daughter would like all info sent to her. Mrs A Barnes, 19 Emberson Way, North Weald CM16 6DL
- I am in band 4 and don't feel I have much chance.
- As I was pregnant I was told if I waited until I had the baby I could bid for a 3 bed instead of a 2-bed.
- I didn't know there was a website.
- I have been to Waltham Abbey Town Hall a couple of times but there were no sheets available.
- As I have only just gone on the list I didn't think I could apply.
- I have bought a house.
- I don't know where a pick up point is.
- I am a Scheme Manager.
- I want to be close to my son as he could take care of me. The new housing in Abbess Roding would suit me.
- Many property were Warden properties.
- I have not received any vacant properties
- I live in a tied cottage but wish to stay on the register for the future.
- I didn't know any were available.
- Do not need a property at present but will in the future
- I have not looked at any vacant properties yet.
- We live in a tied cottage. Have been on the register since 1974 but may need help in the future
- I don't know the web address. I need information.
- Nacro have not nominated me for a move on yet.
- Do not know about it
- Have not received any properties
- I have not been actively looking for a property because I am happy where I am. but I still want to stay on the council register in case (as a back up) in case I become homeless in an emergency.
- Initially did not understand how scheme worked. Have now gone to website and will now take part. So far no properties have been suitable.
- As I am in band six I haven't enough points. Although I have been on the housing list for ten years.
- I am awaiting confirmation from social services regarding my grandchildren whom are now living with me. I did send you a copy of letter, so cannot search vacant properties at the moment.
- I was told by the Council my chances of being moved are poor.
- I was not aware of the facility
- I didn't know about the scheme
- Last letter said I'll be waiting years not months so not looking yet
- All in the areas I picked but all Loughton/Chigwell way which is too far out for me.
- My support worker sometimes accesses the internet for me
- Awkward to get to office for freesheet. Have sent for it to be posted.
- I had forgotten all about it.
- I was under the impression that I was not eligible as I live outside the area.
- I was not aware that I could go to Debden to collect them.
- Too big or too small in the area I need to live.
- Couldn't access website properly. Not sure where to pick up the freesheet.
- No properties go to Band 6.
- Currently on remand.
- I was unaware of it
- Need more info please
- I live in private rented. Want to stay on the register in case I get evicted.
- I live in a tied house and may not require accommodation for 5-6 years.

- It is too expensive on my mobile and I have no landline. Computers at the library are too busy
- Have not got round to it.
- I did not think I had enough points/high enough band to be considered.
- I have not received the pack
- I have a dog
- Housing wrote to me telling me it could be years before I get accommodation.
- I did not know the web address. Will use it now.
- I don't know about home options.
- I've been told that I haven't got a chance.
- I have a new partner and we now live together.
- As I was in band 4 I didn't think I would be offered a property
- I was told that as I am in band 6, living in private rented property I would not be classed as a priority.
- I am in band 4 but see that only people up to band 3 are allocated properties.
- Family problems
- I have no intention of leaving my current address but want to stay on the register.
- I am not aware of this.
- I live in Burton on Trent and have no car.
- I have been on the register for over 7 yrs and was told that I put house only. I live in private rented but still want to stay on the list.
- I have health problems and need a flat or bungalow in Theydon Bois.
- I was not aware of the list.
- Find the internet difficult and cannot afford £10 for the postal service.
- I have only been on the waiting list 2-weeks but I think the procedure to get a property is excellent
- I anticipated a waiting time of 10 - 15 years. I am not yet ready to move.
- No vehicle
- I urgently need an adapted bungalow to meet my disability needs
- I was happy with the way things were before
- I didn't realise it was running already. Now I am aware I am going to collect a freesheet.
- Most properties are for 60+ and are not in the area on my application.
- I didn't know about it. No information was sent to me.
- I am serving with British forces in Afghanistan. I applied for housing on my release. I will be discharged in September.
- I have to use Loughton library computers and can't print freesheet from there.
- I have been online once but it said comeback when a new set of properties were listed but I haven't been able to.
- Same as Q1, Q2 and Q4.
- I haven't had enough information. Where is my pick-up point for the freesheet. I do not understand any of this new scheme. How do I know which properties are vacant?
- I do not wish to move at present. It will only be for health reasons if I apply for housing.
- Because we have not received any notification about vacant lettings.
- Need specific help. Bob Lear Social Worker looking into things for help.
- I have not had any vacant properties sent through the post to me from the Council.
- I am currently looking after my disabled father.
- Did not know about the scheme
- I wasn't sure if I could express an interest yet!
- To be honest I only looked once and there wasn't anything suitable at the time. I then misplaced the information.
- I thought the council contacted me when a suitable property became available.
- We have a grandson living with us and we will not be moving until he has a place. He is on the council list. and is applying.
- I have been told not to bother by Epping council because I do not live in the district. So my bid will never get looked at.
- Was unaware there were vacant properties

- I am suitably housed at present. Please keep my name on the list in case my situation changes in the future.
- I have not received the booklet
- I was offered a flat just before the home options scheme came into operation and I accepted it
- At the moment my partner is very ill and I haven't had a lot of time as he has been in hospital
- We only registered on 29/4/08. We looked on the web and went to see No 54 Coronation Hill but the bedroom was too small for us.
- I want to make sure I bid for the right one. Do we get a second chance if we turn one down? The one's that I have liked I don't think I would stand a chance with.
- Not sure if I am eligible to bid as I am in band 6
- I haven't received any details. Didn't know it existed
- Have been offered one property and it was not suitable
- I haven't been aware that I could access information from the internet
- I work late on Friday when the freesheets are issued
- Not many two bed flats on freesheet and has to be near shops
- Based on the banding we have been given and the availability there isn't any point!
- My wife had an accident Nov 2007 and has not fully recovered so does not want to move at present
- Please see attached letter
- Still waiting for section 21 from Epping Council. Been in Brook Haven for 10 months. Please help.
- Not needed as yet
- Because I never received any information regarding the scheme
- I didn't know about the above. I've no phone. I am interested. I've been in hospital for some time but ok now.
- Haven't had time as we both work 7 days a week
- Did not know about it
- Not got website address and registration no. Please send me them
- I sent form back to you but you did not send me the information like you said you would
- 89, limited eyesight, can only walk 50/100 yards, can't use the web/ mobile phone etc.
- I now is interesting
- Had a stroke. Husband not any good with administrative matters.
- I have not received information
- Because there is high demand there seems little chance.
- I just recently had a baby. I have just got access to the internet
- I am in Nacro Scheme. Thought I couldn't apply until I move on.
- I don't want to move at the moment.
- I never received a user guide
- I didn't think I was eligible yet as I have only been on the list for 12 months and am not yet 60.
- I have no internet.
- Not aware of the scheme.
- Not aware of the scheme.
- I can't afford a place at the moment but would like to stay on the register.
- Not sure I can afford to rent.
- I have lost my bidding number. Have been told I am unlikely to get a property.
- I know nothing about this scheme.
- I have not been informed of it.
- I don't know what this is.
- I am still waiting to find out where I am on the register. I was reassessed last June. I have been ill and not able to do anything about housing yet.
- I am uncertain if I qualify for housing with my condition.
- I understand I have little chance so I have not pursued it.
- Insufficient funds.

- I am in private rented. On the list in case I get evicted.
- No properties in Epping or I missed the deadline.
- We are now being made bankrupt so will be seeking properties.
- We only have a few points so don't think it worthwhile applying.
- Have only just been given this form
- I am considering combining my application with my brother.
- I didn't know about the scheme.
- Didn't know how to do the form.
- I have a dog.
- I was not aware of the freesheet.
- I was not aware that my application was activated.
- Too complicated and I don't have a computer or mobile
- Released from prison 23rd May.
- Didn't think I qualified as only applied Dec 07,
- I need a Polish translator and access to internet as library is limited to 1-hour
- I have only been on the list a short while.
- Cannot find my registration number
- Seemed very complicated. Limited energy due to CFS
- Have expressed an interest in 2 properties. Have been told not to write about empty properties as all allocated.
- They were both smaller than the properties we are in now
- I cannot drive and don't know where the properties are
- None in areas chosen
- Haven't received pack
- No Computer
- Disabilities, need a garden and disabled house
- Need to live in Abridge. Wants 1 or 2 bed bungalow
- I can't log into website with my reference number.
- Only a bungalow considered because of health.
- I am 91.
- I would like copies of the scheme
- I have little chance.
- The user guide is complicated. I live in private rented and want to stay on the register to safeguard myself.
- I have not received any info.
- I was not aware of the scheme
- I am only interested in Parsonage Court
- I work and need freesheets sent to me.
- I have no knowledge of the scheme.
- I need a property near West Hatch High School.
- I had a bad fall and had to stay with family
- We are in band 6 and told we have little chance.
- I live in a tied cottage
- Received initial info in November. Do not have a computer. Where do we look for prospective properties.
- I have not got the instruction guide
- I had not realised that bidding was now in effect.
- At present I am not looking due to ill health. I have not received any info.
- I did not receive the pack
- Can't get to pick up point. Don't understand how it works.
- I have not received any info.
- I have lost my number. Have no computer.
- At University full time. I live at home
- Renting privately at the moment
- Do not need housing at this time but may in the future.
- We want two bedroom flat.
- Not aware of this scheme
- I had just moved/

- I have had no details sent to me
- I do not know what Home Options is.
- I didn't think I would be eligible.
- I have not seen any property sheets.
- I did not get the guide so don't know what to do.
- I only just received it. Am concerned as to what band 6 means.
- I have lost my reference number so cannot access the web. I don't think I stand much chance.
- I haven't received any offers.
- I want to live near daughter. Not sure about this scheme. I thought you would offer me a property.
- I was told we stood no chance as we lived out of the area.
- I am in prison
- I want a flat at Buckhurst Court
- When I go to collect the free sheet there are never any left.
- Unable to get internet. I have moved in with my mother.
- I did not know about this.
- I don't know how Home Options works.
- I could not log onto the website
- I don't understand the whole thing.
- I don't know how to use the Home Options Scheme
- Not enough bedrooms and in the wrong area.
- I have only just gone on the register and though I would not have a chance.
- I don't understand it.
- I have been in hospital. Have not received any info..
- I have never received any info.
- Because I am in grade 3 and classed as intentionally homeless I thought I had no chance.
- I did not receive the first letter.
- They are all flats and I am disabled and need to be near my family.
- I don't know what to do. Have no computer.
- I have just recently hears about it and will now show an interest.
- My circumstances have changed
- I did not receive user guide.
- I am not ready to move yet. I am a SA Manager Resident May 09.
- I am disabled an have no access to internet
- I am still in a rented? property
- Renting private OK where I am at the moment.
- I have recently had spinal surgery and need a property that suits my disabilities
- I don't think I stand a chance
- I require 1 bed bungalow only.
- I have learning difficulties.
- only been in new flat 5 months.
- I am in a low band and don't feel I have much chance. I live in rented accommodation
- I didn't think I had enough points to be able to apply. I have been on list 11 years and have no hope
- I have autism and my mother looks after me. I am not ready to leave home.
- Didn't think I could before my tenancy was up
- Not aware of Home Options. Interested as we are both on disable benefits.
- Wasn't aware of such a scheme. Would be very interested.
- Have mislaid the package. Very interested in HomeOption. Forgot about it. Grateful for any help.
- Not aware of the scheme
- I haven't been shown none
- Waiting for bungalow, issues with banding (illegible)
- Misunderstood the letter in November. Would like to be considered for vacant properties
- Letter enclosed

- Living with daughter also registered for housing. Daughter has bid several times and got nowhere near being offered a suitable property.
- Need a property close to son
- Please send mutual exchange forms
- Would like details kept on Housing Register
- Have seen empty properties (Oakwood Hill) would like one of these to be near family due to ill health
- Have not seen a freesheet
- Worried, band problems, seem unfair after reassessment in 2007. Less likely to be housed.
- Was interested in Hastoe Matching Tye but price went up by 50k. Didn't take up offer.
- Ill and disabled. Difficult to get to pick up point
- Need Ongar or near to son
- I did not know about the scheme
- Much too complicated
- Need 2 bedrooms only offered 1. Waiting for a medical form
- Now too disabled to be able to move
- I am 74
- Currently in tied accommodation. Cannot move until job ceases
- Live in Stevenage and do not know area. Would like to be able to phone someone for advice
- I am non secure
- Never heard of home option
- Do not understand instructions
- Thought i couldn't apply cos in band 4
- Didn't know about scheme. Housing are not very helpful
- Don't have a reg no to get online.
- Not seen any
- Low expectations in band 5
- Haven't received any info. 1st time i have heard of scheme
- Never received any notification about scheme
- I have not received any property information since i applied
- Don't know where to find details of vacant properties
- Didn't know about the scheme
- Don't know about scheme
- Only have 17 points. Want bungalow
- Waiting for frank brettton hse
- Don't want to move at the moment
- Can't afford to have freesheet sent to me
- Never heard of scheme or had any info
- Not looking at present. Takes 5 years to get a flat
- No user guide yet but intend to use home option
- Lack of funds
- Both registered disabled but you won't give us a 2-bed so whats the use?
- I assumed i would be notified if there was any vacant properties
- Only on scheme since march
- Wife has passed away. Lost interest in moving home.
- I did express an interest by post but not sure if I did it correct.
- Have not received user guide. Haven't seen any properties to choose from.
- Don't know what I need to do or how to get a freesheet.
- Not in area to get any access to information or really know how the scheme works
- Did not know we could look at properties. Waiting our turn as were told we had a 5 year wait.
- Don't have computer. Would like a bungalow on the seaside and county scheme. Have been trying for 7 years. Hard to manage stairs.
- I haven't received Home Option Package
- I am wheelchair bound. Live on 2nd floor. Looking for a place at Buckhurt Court.

- I don't want Home Options
- I don't know about Home Option
- I was not aware of the scheme.
- I have applied for sheltered housing only.
- I didn't know about the scheme
- I have expressed an interest in 2 bed bungalows in Waltham Abbey but had no response.
- Can't always use the internet. I am pregnant so can't get to pick up the sheets.
- I have never received information.
- At the moment I am a carer for my parents and live with them.
- I don't understand. It is too confusing.
- I hvae expressed an interest a few times but was told I was not anywhere near the top of the list.
- I don't know about this. Can you send me a list.
- I wasn't aware that this option existed please send me details
- I am at present in sheltered accommodation which is rented. I am on the register as a safeguard.
- Properties are too expensive - I can't afford the mortgage
- I didn't know about it.
- Never received any documents
- I was not aware of home option
- I am a 67yr old Pensioner with disability of curved spine. I can't use Computer. I have waited a year to find a home in your district. Could you help me please?
- I am unaware of home options and user guide
- Because we have recently been given a higher priority we assumed that we would be offered something automatically. Please send new guide book.
- I do not have enough points
- At this time we are happy living at this address. The Housing Register is if we need rehousing in the future due to ill health or infirmity
- We will swap with someone later
- Have not found anything suitable yet
- Home options arrived too late
- I don't have the correct login number : from our files, we have never been allocated a login number
- Too late for last one, next one 16.5
- Being our age we are looking for our last move. Would move to tomorrow for right place
- I thought I had to be on the waiting list for so long before I could look at properties
- Please could I be sent the catalogue this would be a lot better for me. thank you
- Was not aware of home option never seen the sheets. I would be interested once I got the information
- Please read letter attached
- Not sent no information, first I have heard of it
- In prison
- I am 87 and can cope at the moment where I am
- I have been on the register less than a year
- Have lost application forms
- I am living at my brothers at the moment but will look at the website.
- I am training in Istanbul and will return to UK in June.
- I will be 60 next year and want a 1 bed bungalow.
- I haven't received any information
- I am with NACRO. They will let me know when I am ready to move on.
- Moving closer to parents to help them
- I was told I was low priority and presumed there was no point.
- I am currently in prison
- As I am in band 7 I didn't think there was much point. Currently sleeping in a lounge.
- Did not know anything about it
- Personal problems which have now been resolved.

- I am trying to move to the Isle of Wight as I need help and they are my only living relative.
- My bid will never be successful.
- My son is 15 and daughter 8 sharing a room but we are in band 4 and have no chance of getting a 3 bed house in our area so what's the point.
- I am only bidding for Frank Bretton House as I am old and need it.
- It is difficult with no computer. It was better when the list was in the office
- I am a carer for my disabled mother.

Q7 I would like the following help (other):

- I have no internet would you tick what I need. A 2 bed disabled bungalow (his letter has been passed to Housing Options)
 - Lower band as I've lived in Epping for 3 years now
 - Has already arranged help from a member of staff to apply online
 - What are postal coupons and how are they used?
 - If there were properties in Ongar
 - Photographs of ALL the properties (on the net)
 - A more detailed user guide
 - Freesheets to be available at Town Hall or posted to me.
 - I have not seen any postal coupons and not sure what they are.
 - Someone to send me list of properties.
 - Will need help when we are ready to move
 - I live in private rented. Been on the list 10 years but have not bid as I believe I have no chance.
 - My mother is partially sighted and registered blind and is therefore unable to collect a freesheet. I deal with her correspondence and I will use HomeOption for her.
 - Confirmation from Welfare Services that a support package is available.
 - I will start looking now
 - Freesheet available at Manford Way Library
 - Easier website to view properties
 - More available properties
 - Have trouble reading.
 - More information on what bands would be eligible for homes
 - A wider area choice
 - I need help with the cost of moving not the rent payments.
 - Any help would be appreciated.
 - To know where I can collect freesheets from.
 - Better access to freesheets.
 - To send me information on it asap.
 - If the freesheets were available to be received by post.
 - Ability to print freesheet. Ability to express interest anytime not from a specific date. Permanent employment.
 - Information ref the scheme.
 - Send details of vacant properties please.
 - Ground floor flat or bungalow
 - I do not understand any of this. I have been on the list for years and never had an offer. Other people seem to get preferential treatment.
 - To be treated the same as the people of Epping.
 - Vacant properties in Ongar
 - Pictures of properties
 - I would like to stay on the home option scheme until something suitable comes up
 - Explanation of what postal coupons are and how to use them
 - My interest is to move to Debden, Loughton or Waltham Abbey. My daughter may be able to find employment
 - Response to my letter
 - Please help to push Epping Council to give me section 21 so I can start bidding.
- Thanks

- Ill health
- Small garden. I'd like to stay in Essex. Would change mind about Cornwall. Waltham Abbey or nearby.
- Please send me website address and registration number
- User guide in plainer more understandable English please
- Just rehouse me I have been waiting long enough
- Contact my daughter with any available sheltered accommodation offers. J Spelman 20 Cullings Ct EN9 3ED
- Please amend my application to include my medical problems.
- What band am I in?
- I would like some help explaining this to me.
- To receive the Home Option Scheme.
- To know what band I am in
- Free postal
- To update you on our situation.
- I would like the free sheet sent to me.
- I finish work at 9pm and pick up points are closed.
- Polish speaking translator
- On the list for sheltered housing. No vacancies yet.
- You said we were only able to have a warden control place so wouldn't be viable
- would like a postal freesheet.
- Location pick up points
- Free postal sheet
- Talk to someone who can tell me what to do
- Want information. Badly need a place with no stairs.
- I don't speak or understand good English.
- If you get a (?) bungalow I can see it anytime (illegible)
- Any help would be wonderful
- More realistic prices
- Would like freesheets
- A regular update on areas where properties are vacant
- More postal advice
- Lost my number
- Properties on line for longer to view them
- Details of vacant properties through the post
- Send to Anita Yerran c/o 10 Wheelers, Epping CM16 5AL
- Would like a reg no
- Would like someone to appoint me with some direction to houses available.
- What properties we can look at.
- Would like postal sheets and ask for a neighbours help.
- Website
- Don't have internet so would like sheets posted.
- The freesheets have stopped coming to Sheering News + PO. If this is permanent I need to know where to get them from.
- Please could you send me a homeoption scheme user guide
- Our wish is to be near my son in Theydon Grove Epping due to bad health so he can be at hand to help us
- We need to look again at what we have to do to show an interest. We do not have email or internet use.
- Nothing at this time
- Would like North Weald if possible please
- A login number so that we can view what might be available
- I get panic attacks when talking or on phone or forms
- Knowing what I would be eligible for
- Would like more information where the properties are
- Leaflet or catalogue to my home.
- Please send pack
- All the details sent to me

- More suitable properties in my area of interest.
- Postal freesheets as I work nights.
- Please carry on sending me info.
- Would like freesheet posted.
- Please send info by post.

Q10a is English your first language? If no please specify:

- Italian
- Italian
- Twi - Ghana
- Portuguese
- Several disabilities
- Kimyarwanga
- Italian
- Indonesian
- Sri Lankan
- Lithuanian
- Polish
- Lithuanian
- Greek
- Urdu
- Serbo-croat
- Polish
- Deri (Afghanistan)
- Zambian
- Arabic
- Maltese
- Polish
- Yoruba
- French
- Turkish
- Gujarati

Q13 Other impairment or disability

- Heart attack in 2006 and hip arthritis
- Polycythaema. Mrs Andrews has arthritis.
- Mr Smith skin cancer. Mrs Smith bowel cancer.
- B12 deficiency and asthma, anaemia
- Severe depression. Back, neck and shoulder problems.
- Arthritis
- Asthma, Lupus, Osteoarthritis
- I have a complete trachial plexus of the right arm.
- I have stable angina.
- My wife has Alzhiemers
- Angina
- Asthma, Arthritis in hands
- Arthritis
- Rhematoid Arthritis. Depression
- Very poor short term memory
- Heart problems.
- Difficult to walk.
- Asthma, Osteoarthritis. Angina
- Difficulty breathing
- My husband has Parkinsons & I have hip replacements
- Heart disease
- Learning disability - more severe than a difficulty!

- Osteoarthritis
- Depression, metal plates in right leg due to falling
- Arthritis
- Depression etc.
- Muscle Paralysis
- Asthma, sever eczema
- Diabetes, Heart Problem, Breathing difficulties back problems.
- Asthma
- Insulin dependant diabetic
- Downs Syndrome
- Lower back and joint pain, depression, panic attacks.
- Back problems and joint pain. Difficulty climbing stairs
- Hypermobility (joints come out of place)
- Asthma
- Epilepsy
- Arthritis and Asthma
- Agraphopia. Multiple disability.
- Drop foot/compartment syndrome. Have to wear a support to walk properly. Sometimes with walking stick
- I don't but my son has autism.
- Cervical spondylosis. Arthritic knees and joints.
- Diabetes
- Glaucoma
- Although reasonably fit apart from rheumatoid arthritis I have COPD
- Epilepsy
- Difficulty climbing stairs
- I am a carer for my dad who has motor neurones disease
- Severe osteo arthritis.
- Husband has disability
- Sciatica in legs. Problem with stairs.
- Under the hospital. Also have a B/B for back pain and leg pain.
- Serious back problem. A withered coxyx.
- Asthma. Atrial fibula. Osteo arthritis.
- Osteo arthritis in both knees and back, nack, arms and hip. Registered disabled.
- Partner is disabled
- My wife has asthma
- Rheumatois arthritis but still able to work. Got to a have small operation on knee in June
- Arthritis. Difficulty with stairs
- Parkinsons Disease and a limp
- Arthritis
- Amputation of all toes and 1/4 of both feet
- Knee joints problems which has now aggravated hips and ankles
- Heart problems. Walking problems. On 40 tablets a day
- Heart condition, limited walking
- COPD heart attack. Pulmanory embolism. Bronchiectasis.
- Oat and Detox (alcohol)
- Ostoarthritis
- Some hearing loss.
- Mobility impaired. Hard of hearing
- I am suffering from nervous mental illness
- Multiple scleriosis
- I have Chrohns disease and ITP (a blood condition)
- Spinal problems.
- I am my mums care and need to be close to her.
- Emphysema, Bronchitis, COAD, IBS
- Eperlepsy, Back problems, Diabetic, High blood pressure.
- Mobility problems.

- Rheumatoid & osteo arthritis.
- Heart problems, arthritis
- Arthritis
- two hip replacements and walking difficulty. Arthritis
- Emphehsyma.
- Rheumatoid Arthritis
- Carer for wheelchair bound wife
- Arthritis and dropped foot
- CFS/ME
- Osteo arthritis and scoliosis of spine
- Chrones Disease, heart disease, arthritis.
- Astma
- Asthma
- Dizzy spells and blackouts
- I have a terminal illness. Harmatoma of the brain stem.
- Arthritis
- Suffered Cerebral Haemorrhage.
- Back problems
- Arthritis, Diabetis
- Heart and back problems
- Under active thyroid
- Walking and eyes
- Asthma, walking problems, arthritis, depression, heart failure.
- Difficulty walking, arthritis
- Brittle bones mobility problems.
- Arthritis
- Amputee, Heart disease and wheelchair bound
- Rheumatoid and osteoarthritis
- Chronic lung disease
- Wife: angina, macular degeneration, arthritis. Self arthritis, hiatus hernia, blood pressure
- Depression
- Meniers disease. Vertigo and diabetes
- Arthritis
- Weak heart.
- Diabetes, high blood pressure
- Walking difficulties. Arthritis. Eye problems. IBS
- Arthritis. Heart problems. Diabetis
- Arthritis
- Bleed to brain. 3 strokes affecting balance
- Replacement hips and knee
- COPD Osteoperosis. Diabetes
- Hypertension. Angina. Pectoris
- Osteoperosis. Arthritis of spine
- Osteoperosis of spine
- Diabetes
- Disabled daughter living with me
- Angina. Arthritis
- Back and joint problems
- Very bad back
- Angina lymph cancer
- Rheumatoid arthritis in knees. Slipped disc
- Heart problems. Wife has MS
- Stroke
- Asthma. Impaired kidneys. Perforated eardrum
- O.C.D and fear of going out
- Arthritis. Angina. Fibrosis of lungs
- Neuropathy in legs

- Prostate cancer. Thrombosis
- Stroke
- Anxiety and depression
- Both shoulder joints replaced
- COPD
- Osteoporosis and spondylosis.
- Balance difficulties paing in feet arthritis
- tenant: osteoporosis arthritis no stairs, husband: diabetis, really bad heart and legs
- Heart bypass. Knee and hip replacement.
- osteoarthritis (both)
- slight learning difficulties.
- My husband has various health problems and is partially sighted.
- Osteoporosis and back problems, memory loss.
- Asthma, Stress, incontinence.
- Spinal stenosis and PMR
- I have a curved spine, discomfort of walking too far or sitting in one position.
- Bronchitis and emphysema
- Asthmatic, blood pressure, collesterol
- Mrs Richards has angina
- None
- Wife - Arthritis, pernicious anemia, myself - glaucoma
- Back, asbestos on lung, disc disorder
- Arthritis, can't straighten right arm from elbow
- Not applicable
- Disabled. CoPD, osteoarthritis in both knees
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
- Parkinsons
- Spasmtic dysphonia
- Weak down left hand side of body
- Diabetic and heart stents
- Severe Virtigo.
- Wife diabetic. failing sight, asthma, blood pressure
- Epileptic, Back pain following accident.

HomeOption Non Users Survey

Q1 Are you aware of HomeOption, our choice based lettings scheme?
Tick one box only
 Yes 490
 No 220

Q2 Have you received and kept your HomeOption scheme user guide?
 Yes 373
 No 330

Q3 Do you know your housing application registration number?
 Yes 476
 No 231

Q4 Have you seen one of the HomeOption freesheets?
 Yes 215
 No 490

Q5 Have you looked at the HomeOption website?
 Yes 150
 No 560

If you have not expressed an interest in a vacant property, please tell us why.

Q6 I have not expressed an interest in any vacant properties because:
Tick all the boxes that apply
 None of the properties were suitable... 147
 I can't get to a pick-up point to collect a freesheet 189
 I have no access to the internet..... 330
 I have no mobile phone..... 98
 I don't know how to send text on my mobile phone..... 109
 I can't understand the instructions in the user guide 112
Other reasons, please specify
 397

Please tell us what would help you to express an interest in available properties.

Q7 I would like the following help:
 More postal coupons..... 198
 Another HomeOption scheme user guide..... 296
 Help from a member of staff 180
Other
 99

Q8 Do you want your application to stay on the Housing Register?
 Yes 69
 No 6
 12

If you don't want to stay on the Housing Register, please give us your contact details on the back of this form

Epping Forest District Council undertakes that it will treat any personal information (that is data from which you can be identified, such as your name, address, email address) that you provide to us, or that we obtain from you, in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Housing is gathering information from homeseekers in order to review the HomeOption choice based lettings scheme. Any personal information you give will not be shared with a third party and will only be used by the Housing Options Team at Epping Forest District Council.

By giving personal information you are giving the Council consent to process this data.

Background information

Your answers to these questions will help us to see if there are differences between the views of different tenants

Your Age
 Up to 25..... 78
 26 - 34 95
 35 - 44 112
 45 - 54 115
 55 - 64 112
 65 - 74 113
 75+ 82
Please enter your home postcode
 592

Is English your first language?
 Yes 66
 No 5
 23
If no, please specify
 28

Your gender
 Male..... 283
 Female 372

Do you consider yourself to have an impairment or to be disabled?

Prefer not to say.....	22
No disability.....	254
I am blind or visually impaired	16
I have a learning difficulty	27
I use a walking stick or wheelchair	89
I use a hearing aid or communicate using BSL.....	17
I have experience of mental health distress.....	62

Other impairment or disability, please specify

168

Optional information. Please give your contact details if you have asked for help from a member of staff, or if you want your application to be removed from the Housing Register. Otherwise there is no need to give us this information.

Name 28

Housing reference number 68

Address:
House or flat number and street name 24

Town or village 23

Contact telephone number 20

Other phone number (mobile) 8

Email address 8

Thank you for your help. Please return this questionnaire in the envelope provided.

HomeOption Users Survey

Literal responses:

Q1a Did you find HomeOption user guide easy to follow?

- Both - I find the bandings difficult to understand
- I had no information about it
- What is available is easy. Where can I get a complete set of rules and regulations
- It was easier to go onto the internet site
- Not good with computers
- Not familiar with PC
- But it wasn't explained at first that I had to get them EFDC said it would be sent.
- I am having your office bid for us
- Not at first but then I did

Q2a Did you get enough information about the HomeOption scheme?

- Both
- How does it affect my situation and ability to bid if I now live in a temporary accommodation
- Some idea of how long we'd be waiting for a home.
- More information
- I research the facts
- What does not in first 20 mean etc
- I would have liked the welcome pack
- If you explained everything in more detail
- More pictures of properties
- I don't know how the coupon works. I live in a 2 bed with 4 children
- I didn't really understand it straight away
- Would be better if a picture is attached to the property being advertised in the home option magazine

Q4a Was the website easy to use?

- Sometimes accessing the website at the local library is slow and sometimes difficult to access.
- No Information
- But it doesn't say if you've had a chance
- I don't have a computer
- No computer
- Would have liked an acknowledgement
- Not at first, instructions not very clear
- Would be easier to log in if your log in details were not in 2 formats ie date/month of birth
- Why can't you get the PDF file why logged in?
- My granddaughter used it for me.
- My mother did it for me as I don't have a computer
- The properties were sometimes hard to find
- On occasion appears may not be any properties available but no explanations to indicate if this is the case. 'Cycle' dates unclear and appear random.
- Had to scroll down at length, other authorities before I got to Epping Council;
- No not on website
- Slow to lead up.
- No confirmation that my expression had gone through.
- Could not bring up information
- I could not quite understand this system
- But I can't download free sheet, I think it is my computer
- My grandchildren did it for me.

Q5a Did the website give enough feedback on properties that had been let previously

- I am in Band 5 and I don't understand why no-one is offered homes in this band.
- Its not too bad but I would like to see exactly where I came in the banding.
- More general information
- If a flat or maiaonette please say whether upstairs or down.
- I could not find my place in the bid
- If you are not in the first 20 it would be good to know whether you are 21 or 40 to see whether you ever move up the list.
- More info on available properties and banding
- Most of properties don't get updated quick, sometimes up to 5 weeks after closing
- Not bandings
- Knowing exactly where I came on the list for a property after bidding.
- Telling us how long that person's been on the waiting list for.
- How may get to view?
- View of the property and the inside.
- I would like to be informed sooner instead of having to wait for next freesheet.
- It shows how many people not their bandings. It shows banding the property is aimed at.
- Feedback is taking too long
- Status of application would be useful
- It's very frustrating as often I am in the top 11 or top 5 and don't know how long more I have to wait
- How far down the viewing list you are
- But why does the number of people expressing an interest differ to home option magazine?
- Specified the length
- Conflicts with feedback in free sheet
- Not really sure how it all works, but think this is down to my lack of PC experience
- Actual number you were on the list and date let
- It should give more detail on where you came on bids
- Exact number I had been ranked at.
- Date they registered and why I have not been successful
- When I could get information up
- But it does take a bit of time to give updates on let properties
- Where you are in the queue of people making expression
- But not specific enough about your bid or your position
- Need to show family size and whether they are originally from Epping and work here
- The results are not showing up very quick
- Some properties do not update for 4 or more weeks which leaves you waiting and hoping
- Size of bed rooms i.e. 3 bed- are they double or single
- I don't understand the banding etc and ranking
- But takes month + to find out who got the property
- No indication of bandings
- letting me know the band they let the property to
- Takes to long to show feedback and doesn't always have right amount showed interest
- Did not always say how many or the bandings

Q7a Was it easy to express your interest by telephone?

- No Info
- Website computer use only
- I done it wrong.
- The system could not recognise my password. I tried several times and gave up.
- Would like to know position in queue by telephone bidding
- Its easier and quicker to text
- Very confusing

- I only use the web site
- Website
- Its better on line
- It often says to call back it takes a long time to get through and didn't recognise my request
- Not always working
- Don't know not tried

Q9a Was it easy to text your expression of interest?

- No Info
- I don't know how to text property.
- Did not know about it
- Each time I have sent a text it has not been accepted. I appreciate the text sent back informing me of this.
- It is confusing by text because you don't get the feedback.
- It kept saying you have put wrong number in and text not successful

Q11a Was it easy to express your interest by coupon?

- No Coupon
- I phoned for more coupons and by post and got nothing.
- It's easier for me by phone.
- Took too long to get more coupons
- Coupon got lost
- Should be in every local library to make it easy to access website
- I haven't used it yet I use the website
- Not know how to use it

Q14a Where else do you think we should display the freesheets?

- We ordered ours
- Tysea Hill Shop please
- My home address is: Flat 9 Stag Heights, Buckhurst Hill
- Roydon
- N/A I have not tried
- At the front desk
- I could only get them from Debden or Loughton and I do not drive.
- More supermarkets in the area
- We have them delivered
- As I have severe back disability I found it very hard
- Loughton Library didn't know when the next freesheet would be delivered
- I live too far from the Town Hall due to arthritis. Have to rely on other people, too late to bid.
- I was hoping to get them posted to me
- Borough facilities eg leisure centres
- Libraries (including mobile ones). Post Offices and rural shops.
- Don't know as I don't live in the area
- No where available in E17
- Don't get freesheets. I just look on the website
- Paid £10 to have it sent to me
- Didn't know there was one
- In Waltham Forest Libraries
- Local newsagents
- None left
- Did not know
- Tesco's
- Paid to have them sent to me
- I haven't seen a free sheet yet maybe Debden Council Office would be helpful
- Have not used

- Library at reception desk EFDC
- Local newsagents
- Free sheet available on website
- EFDC at housing have to wait I get mine at Debden great service
- I don't know what freshet is?
- Never used it
- Due to May Bank Holiday the free sheet could not be collected when it was issued.
- Sometimes run out in Library
- Its easy to get but never has any free sheets
- I have them delivered by post
- Did not know about the free sheets, until now
- Post Office

Q16a Did you find the freesheet easy to use?

- No Info
- Not many pictures of said properties
- Often a long wait to obtain one
- Picture of property would be good on all adverts

Q17a Did the freesheet give enough feedback on properties let previously?

- Not sure
- maybe why people in lower bandings get places could be explained.
- It was the first issue
- As previously stated number always differ to website.
- Confusing
- Date of letting
- not enough information on properties let and to whom
- It would help to know that the property that you have expressed in was still on offer to someone else
- Please see attached sheet
- Was difficult to understand which each number represented

Q21 Comments on HomeOption or suggestions for improvement:

- I would like more information on my position of where I am on the list and maybe a timescale of how long in years/months band or rank. When it says not in first 20 its not a lot of information - people don't know where they stand.
- Tenants in Ongar should get first priority of properties in Ongar - not people elsewhere. I have been waiting nearly 2 years with 2 children in an extremely overcrowded environment and I think it is disgraceful.
- I don't seem to be able to get a chance for a property as the chances are so high I think there are so many in a higher banding. Women's Aid wrote to you on my behalf but it seems I have a long wait. I am under the doctor for bad nerves.
- Would be good to know where you come on the home option scheme.
- If only the website could show more details on the houses flats (photographs). Otherwise the scheme is fantastic.
- I think Home Option is a good way to get to see the properties and gives you more choice on the right properties.
- I think you need to look at how long people have been waiting then just what band they are.
- Obtained Freesheet by post
- So far this hasn't affected me in any way. I would like to have clear t&c explaining why I am not allowed to bid while in Norway House; how long for etc.
- The decision for some properties to be let can take quite a while considering newer properties have been let.
- Not enough properties advertised e.g. bungalows and properties for pets.
- How do you know if you are in with a chance of being offered that property.
- It is not a fair scheme. My life is at risk and I am trying to move out of my borough. I

am in band 5 that's all I will ever be despite my circumstances. There will never be a chance for me as the go to B1 and B3. It needs to be more fair.

- Properties which appear as shortlisting on the site for longer periods of time should be withdrawn.
- To send us who got the homes you had chosen but we did not get this time
- Not sure what properties I qualify for. Too many 60+
- People who have been on the list for years dont always get properties.
- It is a shame that people living out of the area always remain in band 5 even though they may be over 60 or have medical problems.
- Satisfied generally although have realised that anyone below Band 3 like myself has virtually no chance of being housed. Dissatisfied with the level of customer service.
- I think the point system should replace banding as it was fairer to applicants.
- Don't like the banding system as it seems unfair. Prefer points.
- Homes should be based on how long you have been on the list rather than bands.
- I work full time and only use Internet when I visit my daughter. Don't know where to get the fact sheet other than council offices.
- I ordered more coupons three times, twice by phone and once by post and got nothing. Please can you send me some more.
- We have found your staff very helpful and considerate. The forms are very good. We don't have a computer but my son does. The information is very good on the website.
- It would be useful to know what position you are in when bidding and how far up the list you are.
- More 2-bed properties
- Home Options letting scheme is very informative
- Would like to know what number in the queue I am when I ring for Home Option.
- Worried about coupons. Ticked the box requesting more and phones but they never come. Have tried getting the council/home option team on the phone to no avail. I have no computer
- HomeOption is fine for straightforward cases but cannot cater for people with higher needs such as dementia where early interview and assessment was needed (applied for Part 2 for mother-in-law, subsequently determined she required Part 3).
- Is it possible to sort lettings a bit quicker. Looking for ground floor accommodation.
- More Housing! Being told exactly where my application ranked. The likelihood of ever receiving a housing offer would be nice.
- It should say where you actually come in a bid or on the phone it should say your number so you would know if you had a chance or not.
- I would like information about where I stand within the context of getting housed with other people
- Very long waiting list for people with disability.
- Disagree with banding (D) and feels that disability has not been taken into account
- I think all bands should be given the chance to view a property not just bands 1 to 3 all the time.
- Banding is unfair I have a property that you will get back I think that people like me should be in a more priority band.
- I am in prison and can't give comments. Wife made expression of interest from outside (staying with family temporarily).
- Would like photos of all the properties to see what they look like from the outside.
- Show more photos of the homes which are available
- I know that I can never have the chance to live in one of these properties as I do not have enough points. This is why I do not bid any more.
- Find it helpful to see how far on the list I am when I have expressed an interest, but it only says between 11th and 20th place. It would be helpful to see exactly how far we are so we can roughly expect how long we can wait.
- Need to see sizes of rooms shown on the web, such as large or single, so far I am happy.
- Have been on the housing list for almost 3 years, my daughter will be 18 soon and we still don't have a home

- More info on feedback on the ranking position eg first 5 6th to 10th
- Just shocked that nobody from band 5 gets any housing!
- In band 4 with 2 children above ground level with no bath. No way of moving band as with the old scheme after each year you gained a point.
- Placing us in a band other than the one we are in (band 6) to acknowledge the fact we have been waiting for nearly 7 years.
- It would be good to occasionally allow only people on certain bands to apply to give people without priority a chance to be successful.
- We should be given an estimated waiting time for when we will get a property. Also as time goes by we should get higher priority. With this system I will never get a property/
- More info on the property, photo of property, not all ads have a photo
- Let us have a house! Please
- Home Option Scheme is very good but I feel disappointed that being in Band 4 I have no chance and therefore think I am wasting my time bidding. Other than that it is an excellent thing.
- I think since Home Option started properties are let more quickly and we are kept up to date of what is happening with our banding.
- Very good
- I am in band 4 and need a 3-4 bed property. There is not a lot of these to choose from. I did not know what time the bidding started which I found not easy to start bidding straight away.
- Giver better view of the property and a quicker answer to if you have it or not.
- We could not fault EFDC on Home Option. They are very efficient with speedy response to enquiries.
- I think Home Option is very useful and well laid out. I only wish I could qualify and will keep trying.
- I would like to know how close. 5 away or 15 away.
- How long do you have to wait on the list to get a property? I think it should be weekly.
- A photo of the property would be nice and more info on the houses/flats.
- The timescale given to allow a tenant to move from property to property or for a new tenant to take up their property could be extended.
- I don't think Home Options gives you enough choices and they only come out every 2-weeks.
- More magazines in the council offices. I always get there very early as they seem to have very little amounts
- I am living with my mother and sharing a bunk bed with my sister and a baby. I was told this system would be quicker but I have been bidding and I am getting no where near to getting a property of my own. I do not understand the point of the scheme.
- Home Option is a good idea but I feel I have gone backwards on the list for property
- I find it convenient that I can look on internet at properties because I don't live near any pick up point. Very pleased.
- The only thing I don't think is fair is that people who are entitled to 2 bedroom properties are allowed to bid on one bedrooms as it takes properties away from the likes of us.
- See Q7
- Would like inclusion of home swapping scheme
- The scheme overall is ok but i still find it unfair. That a new homeless person gets priority over those who are already housed so someone who has a flat and wants a house would not be considered as they are adequately housed as I have been a tenant 20 years.
- It would be an advantage to know how far up the list a person is to know if they are getting closer to the top. Also it would be nice to know how many points you have.
- I think the Home Option is very helpful for the people
- Make the website more easy to use and more photographs of properties available
- Think you should consider all bands feel band one will always have priority and is a waste of time if you are not on band one. What happens to those who are not on

- band one at least whether it was 5 or 10 year years you still stood a chance
- Very poor quality of print on website. Font was so fuzzy it was difficult to read. Would like info on maps/schools on advert rather than opening different window (website). Didn't know if when made expression of interest was it done correctly i.e. logged. Texts to alert me if properties suitable for me are available that week.
- Not sure if text were all considered not on bidding history as I am in band G think it is a waste of time never considered for any properties system unfair.
- Let properties to either bands its always band 1. We don't get a chance.
- It would be helpful if there was a small street map to see where exactly in the area the property is situated. The Up my street info not very useful
- More information on who and how the decisions to offer a property are made.
- I would like to know how long will it take for a person to get a place. How many points does a person need to get a flat.
- Not much option for band 4
- Needs to be a grid of the bands/length of time the person is expected to wait.
- The properties listed for me are not helpful i.e. 1,2,3, floor flats maisonettes with no lifts. I thought I'd be able to express an interest on properties I liked not ones that have been chosen for me. This needs to be improved very misleading. There are too many people bidding for same property which means it will take longer to house people.
- I feel that times when I have visited the website and go to express an interest on a property, some properties can not be viewed as there are no pictures on property.
- I am in band 3 and always express interest but am told I'm not in the top 20, but it does not specify where I am, am I close or in top 100, 200 etc, is quite annoying not having any idea.
- Quite disheartening to see most 3 bed properties let to Band 1. We are band 4 so have no chance of being re-housed. Get old single people out into 1 to 2 bed properties and free up larger homes. This would ease your housing problems.
- Because I have a high band and not that I will be hard for you to place me into a property but my situation with mental health issues, and the need for security about not being pushed here and there before I am placed into a suitable property for me. I feel that I am being left to rot in the private letting side, and my DLA money is just paying for the short comings.
- I do not feel it is fair for new residents to area to be on list. It may be easy to bid but highly unfair for people who have wasted years and lived here for years.
- Homeoption is very good but it seems like all properties go to people in Band 1. Makes me feel like I have no chance. Is it worthy my effort. I'm in Band 6
- To find out where I am in my band
- Would be nice to be able to go for more options with maybe the chance to say 1st choice and 2nd choice etc.
- I think the scheme is ok, but its a bit misleading to those in a higher band.
- Too early to comment only made one bid so far
- If you are in my band it seems that you will never be housed. Only bands 1 and 2 are catered for.
- Access to scheme is difficult, transport and computer, missed 7 chances to bid.
- I was not contacted when the house was on my band. After I made an interest in properties
- A little more information who got properties. Pictures of properties for letting would help make decision to apply
- How long does it normally take to house people. How long do you have to be on list before you get housed?
- I use the web site and find it very easy to navigate around. I can't think of anything that would improve the system.
- It would be useful to know how many are in front of you when bidding
- Its a very good scheme but it needs to be better because its take a long time to get a place.
- But would like to be moved a bit sooner with a garden for my child

- When you call for help or advice the person on one phone needs to be more helpful. I feel that we are getting less. Information than before nothing is specific to your application, you don't know where you stand.
- Pictures of properties were far too small on the web site or there were none at all, which I feel is very important to have
- With so few properties I feel it will be many years before I acquire a property maybe more information on where you are in the queue because it differs so much
- I feel I am not being considered. Length of time needs more consideration, one parent families need more consideration People who have strong connections with Epping not outsiders to be put first
- For the properties to be sent through the post free of charge
- It would help if there would be more pictures of properties more houses
- I do feel it should have stayed with the old way. I feel like I don't know what's happening or when I am going to be able to move.
- I noticed on the website that Chelmsford Council have days to view property. Perhaps this could be considered for housing tenants who are considered suitable for a property
- I have been on the register for six years now, and didn't get anywhere. I have bid on several properties and haven't even made it in to the top 20 each time. I can't see this system helping me I am in rented accommodation
- Is there a way that could improve on missing out whilst on holiday:
- I would be nice to know if my position is ever going to change i.e. will I move up a band the longer I am waiting.
- I do think the results should be shown a bit quicker seems to be taking quiet a long time
- More pictures of properties. Faster feedback on line
- Would like to know in feedback how many people are in a higher band than me or in same band, not just a number
- Being notified I was on a short list for consideration of a house I was delighted. However, having been told that the short list was 60/70 people I feel that a lot of people will be very disappointed with such a long short list.
- Need more lettings
- I have been on the transfer list for almost 2 years. I am fortunate that I have internet access to make expression of interest. I feel this would be my only chance to be successful as yet this has not happened phoning and coupons etc causes delay to bed.
- I think proposal that have been allocated should be listed. I use the PL for showing interest but all it says after is the number of people interest not if the place has been accepted
- Link to update info on line -check file on line. notify of any change
- Would like to see more photographs of properties
- Could the short listing process be a bit speedier sometimes this goes on for 12 to 13 weeks until outcome is issued on the website
- Have not been offered somewhere to live.
- A very user friendly and easy to use system
- I think you should only bid when it is your time to be re-housed because you are bidding on houses you haven't got a hope of being offered.
- You say we need 2 bed but I would prefer 3 bed as I have two daughters 21 yrs and 19yrs and on moving from a 4 bed house.
- A waste of time. I am in B4 and will never get a chance. Band 1 get all the time.
- Never get a chance in B4 a waste of time
- Satisfied for the moment
- I do not see point of this scheme as nothing seems to happen. It seems that there is always going to be someone in front of me with more points and I do not seem to get anywhere. I don't have any chance at all
- As I am aged 57 there are so many sheltered vacancies perhaps if the age was

lowered not on warden controlled, People of my age could bid for them and free up 1 bed accommodation for younger single people

- You are doing a fine job
- I need more information about the house or flat that I am bidding on. Please let me know if I am successful by letter.
- More pictures of properties would be helpful
- How long do you think it will be before accommodation will be allocated to me
- It seems to be a system that works quite well. Satisfied with it's easy access
- You should put the band which you let the property to each week so that I know what my chances are
- Would like to hear why not been chosen for a house or flat now and then when I nearly homeless
- Maybe the free sheet could be collected from the local shop Budgens Limes Farm as the housing once seems to be closed quite a bit
- People outside thee areas trying to move in a transfer have absolutely no chance
- It would be nice to know a rough time scale on how long it will take to be housed
- More properties to be shown on website to people out of bands not just in magazine i.e. bands for 2 beds also shown 3 beds
- A very fair system
- I need to move from Harlow as I am a victim of harassment and suffer with mental health. But I am still not classed as in need of homing in Epping
- In my seventh year on list. I do feel that not enough consideration is given to people who are born and bred within the district I am still in band 4
- Let people know were they can pick up more free sheet from P/O etc
- Nothing now I know how to use it. I find it easy and user friendly
- No
- Refer to Q2 and Q16

Q23A Is English your first language? Other:

- Thai
- Russian
- Polish
- Italian
- Turkish
- French
- Arabic
- Creole
- Polish
- Turkish
- Polish,
- Swahili
- Persian Farsi
- Polish

Q25a Other impairment or disability

- I have a phobia of closed in spaces
- I have chronic fatigue syndrome/ME
- Address: Miss J Abbott, 52 River Way, Loughton
- Address: 4 Holy Acre, Roydon, Essex CM19 5ER
- Treated for depression
- Back issues
- Heart problems
- Back leg and breathing problems.
- Chronic fatigue
- Multiple sclerosis.
- Airways disease
- Severe disabilities

- Kidney disability, MSK
- COPD
- Suffer with depression
- Distress of living in temporary accommodation
- Epilepsy
- Rely on crutches
- Please refer to my doctor's note High blood pressure, arthritis
- Asthma / Eczema

HomeOption users survey

	Count	NO	YES	Total	%	NO	YES	NO
	YES	NO		Total	%			
Did you find HomeOption user guide easy to follow?	329	7		336		97.9		2.1
Did you get enough information about the HomeOption scheme?	319	13		332		96.1		3.9
I made my expression of interest by:								
							453	
WEBSITE	257					56.7		
If 'Yes' was the website easy to use?	232	13		245		94.7		5.3
Did the website give enough feedback on properties that had been let previously?	200	38		238		84.0		16.0
TELEPHONE	79					17.4		
Was it easy to express your interest by telephone?	67	12		79		84.8		15.2
TEXT	63					13.9		
Was it easy to text your expression of interest?	52	11		63		82.5		17.5
COUPON	54					11.9		
Was it easy to express your interest by coupon?	45	9		54		83.3		16.7
Did you have enough coupons?	52	12		64		81.3		18.8
If you ordered more coupons, was it easy to get them?	42	10		52		80.8		19.2
Answer the following questions if you used the HomeOption freesheet facility								
Did you find it easy to get to a pick-up point to collect your freesheet?	136	28		164		82.9		17.1
Were the freesheets available when you got to the pick-up point?	135	12		147		91.8		8.2
Did you find the freesheet easy to use?	153	1		154		99.4		0.6
Did the freesheet give enough feedback on properties that had been let previously?	142	16		158		89.9		10.1
Did you ask a member of our staff for help with HomeOption?								
If you were helped by a member of staff how would you rate the response?								
Good	47					69.1		
Average	17					25.0		
Poor	4					5.9		
	68							

Overall, were you satisfied with the HomeOption choice based lettings scheme?							
Very satisfied	88	%	28.6				
Quite satisfied	127		41.2				
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	57		18.5				
Quite unsatisfied	20		6.5				
Very unsatisfied	16		5.2				
	308						
Background info							
Your age	Up to 25		%	17.6			
	26-34	93		27.7			
	35-44	87		25.9			
	45-54	34		10.1			
	56-64	35		10.4			
	65-74	19		5.7			
	75+	9		2.7			
		336					
Is English your first language?							
Yes	316	%	93.2				
No	23		6.8				
	339						
Your gender							
Male	95	%	28.4				
Female	239		71.6				
	334						
Do you consider yourself to have an impairment or to be disabled?							
Prefer not to say		15	%	6.5			
No disability		92		40.0			
Blind or visually impaired		5		2.2			
Learning difficulty		7		3.0			
Use a walking stick or wheelchair		29		12.6			
Use hearing aid or communicate with BSL		8		3.5			
Experience of mental health distress		34		14.8			
Other impairment or disability		40		17.4			
		230					