

## Scrutiny Panel Agenda



### **Housing Scrutiny Panel Monday, 9th February, 2015**

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

**Committee Room 2, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping  
on Monday, 9th February, 2015  
at 5.30 pm .**

**Glen Chipp  
Chief Executive**

**Democratic Services  
Officer**

Mark Jenkins (Directorate of Governance)  
Tel: 01992 564607 Email:  
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#### **Members:**

Councillors S Murray (Chairman), Ms G Shiell (Vice-Chairman), K Chana, Mrs R Gadsby, Mrs S Jones, Mrs J Lea, C Roberts, B Rolfe, Mrs T Thomas, H Ulkun and Mrs J H Whitehouse

**SUBSTITUTE NOMINATION DEADLINE:**

**16:30**

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**2. SUBSITUTE 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 3 - 10)**

(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. NOTES OF THE LAST PANEL MEETINGS (Pages 11 - 30)**

To agree the notes of the last two Panel meetings held on 16 and 21 October 2014 (attached).

**6. LANDLORD ACCREDITATION SCHEME**

(Director of Communities) To receive a presentation from the Private Housing Manager Technical regarding the Landlord Accreditation Scheme.

**7. PROPOSED COUNCIL RENT INCREASE AND INCREASED SCHEME MANAGEMENT AND CARELINE CHARGES - 2015/16 (Pages 31 - 40)**

(Director of Communities) To consider the attached report.

**8. HOUSING IMPROVEMENTS AND SERVICE ENHANCEMENTS FUND - 2015/16 (Pages 41 - 52)**

(Director of Communities) To consider the attached report.

**9. NEW HOUSING STRATEGY KEY ACTION PLAN 2015/16 (Pages 53 - 64)**

(Director of Communities) To consider the attached report.

**10. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2014/15 - QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE (Pages 65 - 80)**

(Director of Communities) To consider the attached report.

**11. 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.

**12. FUTURE MEETINGS**

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

## TERMS OF REFERENCE - SCRUTINY PANEL

**Title: Housing**

**Status: Scrutiny 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:**

- (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;

(9) To consider matters relating to the performance of the Council's Repairs Management Contract and to make any recommendations to the Housing Portfolio Holder or the Cabinet, as appropriate, as a result.

(10) 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

## Housing Scrutiny Standing Panel – 2014/2015

Item	Report Deadline / Priority	Scheduled Date	Progress / Comments	Programme of Future Meetings
<b>Standard (Periodic) Items</b>				<del>22 July 2014</del> <del>16<sup>th</sup> October 2014</del> <del>21 October 2014</del> <del>9 February 2015</del> 24 March 2015
(1) Performance against Housing Service Standards and Review <i>(Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)</i>	Medium	July 2014	<b>Completed</b> – July 2014	
(2) 12-Month Progress Report on Housing Strategy Action Plan 2013/14	Low	October 2014	<b>Completed</b> – October 2014	
(3) Housing Key Performance Indicators (KPI) – Quarter 1	Low	October 2014	<b>Completed</b> – October 2014	
(4) Six-Month Review of the HRA Financial Plan	Medium	October 2014	<b>Completed</b> – October 2014	
(5) Six-monthly Progress Report on Housing Business Plan Action Plan	Low	October 2014	<b>Completed</b> – October 2014	
(6) Private Sector Housing Strategy Action Plan – Annual Progress Report	Low	October 2014	<b>Completed</b> – October 2014	
(7) Annual Review of the Housing Allocations Scheme and Tenancy Policy <i>(Recommendations to Cabinet)</i>	High	October 2014	<b>Completed</b> – October 2014	

(8) Annual Diversity Report of Housing Applicants <i>(Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)</i>	Medium	October 2014	<b>Completed</b> – October 2014
(9) Housing Strategy Action Plan 2015 <i>(Recommendations to Cabinet)</i>	High	<del>October 2014</del> January 2015	<b>On Agenda for this Meeting</b> – Feb 2015
(10) Housing Key Performance Indicators (KPI) – Quarter 2	Low	January 2015	<b>On Agenda for this Meeting</b> – Feb 2015
(11) Briefing on the proposed Council rent increase for 2015/16	Low	January 2015	<b>On Agenda for this Meeting</b> – Feb 2015
(12) Proposed housing service improvements and service enhancements – 2015/16 <i>(Recommendations to Cabinet)</i>	High	January 2015	<b>On Agenda for this Meeting</b> – Feb 2015
(13) Housing Key Performance Indicators (KPI) – Quarter 3	Low	March 2015	
(14) HRA Business Plan 2015/16 <i>(Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)</i>	High	March 2015	
(15) 12-monthly Progress report on Housing Business Plan Action Plan	Low	March 2015	

**Special (Planned) Items – Including Updated Housing Service Strategies**

(16) Housing Service Strategy on the Private Rented Sector (Review and update) <i>(Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)</i>	Medium	July 2014	<b>Completed – July 2014</b>
(17) Consideration of the Government’s “Pay to Stay” Policy (DCLG Guidance on Social Housing Rents)	Medium	July 2014	<b>Completed – July 2014</b>
(18) Housing Under-occupation Officer post – 1 Year Review	Low	July 2014	<b>Completed – July 2014</b>
(19) EFDC Tenant Profile Report	Low	July 2014	<b>Completed – July 2014</b>
(20) Presentation from Family Mosaic on their Floating Support Service to vulnerable people to help prepare/sustain their tenancies	Low	October 2014	<b>Completed – October 2014</b>
(21) Housing Service Strategy on Rent Arrears (Review and update) <i>(Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)</i>	Medium	<del>July 2014</del> October 2014	<b>Completed – October 2014</b>

(22) Housing Service Strategy on Harassment (Review and update) <i>(Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)</i>	Medium	<del>October 2014</del> March 2015	<b>Deferred</b> – to March 2015 due to workload and other officer commitments
(23) Housing Service Strategy on Anti-Social Behaviour (Review and update) <i>(Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)</i>	Medium	<del>January 2015</del> March 2015	<b>Deferred</b> – to March 2015 due to workload and other officer commitments
(24) Homelessness Strategy 2015-2018	High	March 2015	
(25) Housing Service Strategy on Older Peoples Housing (Review and update) <i>(Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)</i>	Medium	March 2015	
(26) Housing Service Strategy on Housing and Estate Management (Review and update) <i>(Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)</i>	Medium	March 2015	
(27) Housing Service Strategy on Empty Properties (Review and update) <i>(Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)</i>	Medium	March 2015	
(28) Report of the Tenant Scrutiny Panel on its Service Review of Tenant Involvement	Medium	March 2015	



(29) Possible operation of operating a "Sinking Fund" for new leaseholders in new or existing flat blocks where there are no existing leaseholders	Medium	<del>October 2014</del> July 2015	<b>Deferred due to workload and other officer commitments</b> – to July 2015
(30) Housing Strategy 2015-2018	High	<del>January 2015</del> October 2015	<b>Deferred</b> – to October 2015, due to delays with the formulation of the Local Plan Preferred Options
<b>Items added after the original Work Programme was agreed</b>			
<b>Items for Future Years</b>			
Review of Housing Management Staffing Levels following the introduction of Universal Credit	Medium	2015/16	

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## EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES

<b>Committee:</b>	Housing Scrutiny Panel	<b>Date:</b>	Thursday, 16 October 2014
<b>Place:</b>	Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping	<b>Time:</b>	5.30 - 7.40 pm
<b>Members Present:</b>	S Murray (Chairman), Ms G Shiell (Vice-Chairman), Mrs R Gadsby, Mrs J Lea, Mrs J H Whitehouse and W Marshall		
<b>Other Councillors:</b>	K Angold-Stephens and D Stallan		
<b>Apologies:</b>	K Chana, C Roberts, Mrs T Thomas and H Ulkun		
<b>Officers Present:</b>	A Hall (Director of Communities), L Swan (Assistant Director (Private Sector Housing & Communities Support)), J Hunt (Assistant Housing Options Manager (Homelessness)) and M Jenkins (Democratic Services Assistant)		
<b>Also in attendance:</b>	K McLeish and A Randle - Family Mosaic		

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### **12. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)**

There were no substitutions made at the meeting.

### **13. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

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

### **14. NOTES OF THE LAST PANEL MEETING**

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the notes of the last meeting of the Panel held on 22 July 2014 be agreed.

### **15. TERMS OF REFERENCE / WORK PROGRAMME**

#### **(a) Terms of Reference**

The Panel's Terms of Reference were noted.

#### **(b) Work Programme**

The Panel's Work Programme was noted and the following advised:

##### **(i) Item 21 Housing Service Strategy on Rent Arrears**

It was confirmed that this item would be scheduled for the October 2014 Panel meeting.

**16. PRESENTATION BY ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL'S FLOATING SUPPORT PROVIDER - FAMILY MOSAIC**

The Chairman welcomed Karla McLeish, Acting Floating Support Manager and Angela Randle of Family Mosaic, who gave a presentation regarding their organisation's work.

Family Mosaic possessed around 24,000 good quality homes available for rent serving more than 45,000 people providing care and support services. They were one of the largest housing providers in London, Essex and the South East. Karla McLeish managed a team in Waltham Abbey which covered Epping Forest and Uttlesford.

Family Mosaic's services were free, they advised on:

- (a) Debts
- (b) Benefits
- (c) Budgeting
- (d) Evictions
- (e) Re-possession
- (f) Social inclusion
- (g) Assistance with forms
- (h) Mental health

The organisation accepted referrals from professional agencies and self referrals, their staff attended meetings with clients at local authorities, although they did not work with children.

Family Mosaic held drop-in sessions once a week at Epping Library and Loughton, a service they were looking to extend to Waltham Abbey and Loughton Library. Their staff met District Council Housing Manager every 6 weeks and the Homelessness Team every month. The organisation arranged trips with clients at Christmas/Halloween time and to the seaside.

Family Mosaic consisted of 11 staff 1 of whom was part time.

The Chairman thanked Family Mosaic for their presentation. They then answered questions from the Panel.

The Panel asked if Family Mosaic worked with Voluntary Action Epping Forest. Karla McLeish replied that they worked in partnership with other agencies but they were careful to avoid duplication.

Was it possible for the public to visit Family Mosaic's Waltham Abbey office? They advised that this was not possible, their staff made home visits.

Members asked what they should do if any enquiries came their way from the public regarding this area. District Council officers said they could pass on Family Mosaic

referral forms to the Panel separately. Family Mosaic distributed some of their leaflets to the Members.

The Panel asked how many people they supported per annum. Family Mosaic replied 190, with the bulk of referrals coming from local authorities. It was advised that they were funded by Essex County Council although currently budget cuts of 20% would be taking place.

The Panel expressed concern about the need to reach out to rural parts of the district, however Family Mosaic advised that the majority of the referrals were from the urbanised parts of the district. They were planning to obtain a mini bus for getting to remote areas.

## **17. PRIVATE SECTOR ACTION PLAN PROGRESS REPORT**

The Panel received a progress report regarding the Private Sector Housing Strategy 2012-2015 Action Plan from the Assistant Director (Private Sector Housing and Communities Support).

At its meeting in April 2012 the Council's Cabinet adopted the Private Sector Housing Strategy (PSHS) 2012-2015. This assessed the District's current and future private sector housing needs and set out the Council's approach to meeting these needs. The strategy included an Action Plan setting out the proposed actions that would be taken by the Council contributing towards the achievement of the housing objectives for the private sector over the 3 years of the strategy's life.

The Cabinet had agreed that Action Plan progress should be monitored on an annual basis by this Panel, the first annual report was considered in October 2013.

### **RECOMMENDED:**

- (1) That the Progress Report on the Action Plan contained within the Private Sector Housing Strategy 2012-2015 be recommended to the Housing Portfolio Holder with no further comments;
- (2) That appropriate uncompleted actions be carried forward to the Action Plan 2014/15;
- (3) That the proposed Action Plan 2014/15 be recommended to the Housing Portfolio Holder with no further comments;

## **18. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUSINESS PLAN KEY ACTION PLAN (2014/15) - 6 MONTH PROGRESS REPORT**

The Panel received a 6 month progress report regarding the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan Key Action Plan (2014/15) from the Director of Communities.

In March 2014 the Council's latest Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan (2014/15) incorporating the Repairs and Maintenance Business Plan. This set out the Council's objectives, strategies and plans as landlord in relation to the management and maintenance of its own housing stock. An important section of the HRA Business Plan was the Key Action Plan setting out the proposed actions the Council would be taking over during the year.

**RECOMMENDED:**

That the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan Key Action Plan (2014/15) 6 Month Progress Report be recommended to the Housing Portfolio Holder.

**19. HRA FINANCIAL PLAN - HALF YEARLY UPDATE**

The Panel received a report regarding the Half Yearly Update for the HRA Financial Plan from the Director of Communities.

At its meeting in March 2014, the Panel considered the draft HRA Business Plan for 2014/15 recommending its adoption to the Housing Portfolio Holder which was subsequently approved.

The Cabinet had asked the Panel to review updates to the HRA Financial Plan twice per year at its scheduled meetings in October and March.

CIH Consultancy had acted as the Council's HRA Business Planning Consultants for a number of years, they would contract with the authority until 2015. The consultancy had undertaken its six month review of the current HRA Financial Plan taking into account the Council's current financial position and policies.

**RECOMMENDED:**

That the six month review of the HRA Financial Plan 2014/15 be recommended to the Housing Portfolio Holder without further comments.

**20. HOUSING STRATEGY: 12 MONTH PROGRESS REPORT ON KEY ACTION PLAN 2013/14**

The Panel received a 12 month progress report on the Housing Strategy Key Action Plan 2013/14 from the Director of Communities.

At its meeting in September 2009, the Council's Cabinet adopted the Housing Strategy 2009-2012 which assessed the District's current and future housing needs and set out the Council's approach to meeting those needs. The strategy also included a Key Action Plan setting out the proposed actions that would be taken by the Council to contribute towards the Housing objectives.

The strategy was due to be updated in 2013 for a further three year period. However, the Housing Portfolio Holder agreed that the production of the next Housing Strategy should be deferred until the completion of the Preferred Options for the Local Plan, as much of the strategy was dependent on the Local Plan.

The Panel agreed that a new Housing Strategy Key Action Plan for 2015 should be considered by this Panel at its January 2015 meeting for recommendation to the Housing Portfolio Holder.

**RECOMMENDED:**

- (1) That the 12 month progress report on the Housing Strategy Key Action Plan 2013/14 be recommended to the Housing Portfolio Holder without further comments; and

- (2) That a new Housing Strategy Key Action Plan for 2015 be considered at the Housing Scrutiny Panel in January 2015 for recommendation to the Housing Portfolio Holder.

**21. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2014/15 - QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE**

The Panel received a report regarding Key Performance Indicators 2014/15 Quarter 1 Performance from the Director of Communities.

A range of 36 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for 2014/15 was adopted by the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee in March 2014. The KPIs were important to the improvement of the Council's services and the achievement of its key objectives, they directed improvement effort towards services and the national priorities.

As part of the Overview and Scrutiny Review undertaken in 2013/14 changes had been made to arrangements for the quarterly review of KPI performance with effect from the current municipal year. From this first quarter of the year, the existing scrutiny panels were now each responsible for the review of quarterly performance against specific KPIs within their areas of responsibility.

It was noted that performance targets in Quarters 1 and 2 had been achieved. However the Panel requested that in future the KPIs relevant to this Panel only should be submitted to meetings.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Key Performance Indicators 2014/15 Quarter 1 be noted.

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

The Chairman advised that he would provide a verbal update of the panel's work at the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**23. FUTURE MEETINGS**

The next meeting of the Panel would be on 21 October 2014.

**CHAIRMAN**

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**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL  
NOTES OF A MEETING OF HOUSING SCRUTINY PANEL  
HELD ON TUESDAY, 21 OCTOBER 2014  
IN COMMITTEE ROOM 1, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING  
AT 5.30 - 7.50 PM**

**Members Present:** S Murray (Chairman), Ms G Shiell (Vice-Chairman), K Chana, Mrs J Lea, Mrs T Thomas, Mrs J H Whitehouse and W Marshall (Tenants and Leaseholders Federation)

**Other members present:** D Stallan

**Apologies for Absence:** Mrs R Gadsby, C Roberts, B Rolfe and H Ulkun

**Officers Present** A Hall (Director of Communities), R Wilson (Assistant Director (Housing Operations)), R Wallace (Housing Options Manager), J Manning (Area Housing Manager), T Selley (Assistant Housing Options Manager (Allocations)) and M Jenkins (Democratic Services Assistant)

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

There were no substitutions made at the meeting.

**25. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

The Assistant Director (Housing Operations) declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in the following items of the agenda by virtue of son and daughter being on the Council's Housing Register in priority Band C. He advised that he would leave the meeting for these two items confirming that he had no involvement with his son and daughter's case and had declared the interest under his own registration of interests form:

- Item 8 Review of the Housing Allocations Scheme; and
- Item 9 Review of the Tenancy Policy

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

The Terms of Reference and Work Programme were noted.

**27. GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION PAPER "RIGHT TO MOVE"**

The Chairman allowed this report to be heard first at the meeting. The Panel received a report regarding a Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Consultation Paper entitled "Right to Move" from the Assistant Director (Housing Operations). The Consultation Paper was issued on 10 September 2014 with a closing date of 22 October 2014.

The Consultation Paper explained that the Government expected local authorities to ensure that their Housing Allocations Schemes, residency requirements enabling social tenants to move across local authority boundaries for work related reasons so as not to impede labour mobility. The proposed regulations would remove the

residency requirement for local authorities or housing association tenants who sought to transfer from another local authority district in England in order to be closer to their work or take up job offers, apprenticeships or work related training opportunities in order to avoid financial hardship.

The Government further proposed to ensure that authorities set aside a proportion of lets for tenants who needed to move for this purpose with a minimum expectation of 1% of lettings.

The Panel was asked to consider two questions:

**(a) Should the contents of the paper be taken into account when framing the Council's revised Housing Allocations Scheme?**

The Panel was advised that under the Council's current Housing Allocations Scheme, any Homeseeker needing to move, including existing tenants with a good tenancy record, to be nearer their place of work or related issue, were placed in Band C. This provision did not meet with the Government's expectations as a person would need to meet with the Council's 3 year Residency Criteria to be included.

Officers suggested a further exception to the Residency Criteria and paragraph be added at 14.3 (f) in the scheme as follows:

"Applicants who were seeking to move from a local authority district in England to take up a job or be closer to their work provided:

They are in or have secured either permanent employment comprising of a minimum of 24 hours each week, or an apprenticeship or full time work related training and they live either in excess of 50 miles from their current or intended place of work; and/or their return journey time on public transport is generally in excess of 3 hours. Journey times will be based upon Internet based Journey Planners."

It was suggested that the existing Band C (i) should be amended as follows, complying with the above:

"All Homeseekers (in accordance with paragraph 14.3 (g) of this Housing Allocations Scheme) who need to move to be nearer to their place of work or to take up an offer of permanent employment, an apprenticeship or full time work related training."

**(b) Does the Council wish to respond to the consultation paper?**

It was suggested that the Council respond to the consultation paper setting out the following:

- (i) The Council would welcome the Government's proposal to "spell out" in more detail the circumstances in which they would expect local authorities to apply the addition to the "hardship" reasonable preference category for those needing to move for work or work related training.
- (ii) The Council asked that it was clarified whether such preference would only apply to those in financial hardship and how such hardship was measured, particularly as there were no legal powers available to require applicants to declare their income.

(iii) The Council has concerns about setting aside a proportion of lets for this purpose and the difficulties with publishing information on the demand and lettings on any right to move quota.

(iv) There were a number of difficulties with giving priority to existing tenants for a “community contribution” in order to assist them to move within their own local authority area.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Panel’s response to the DCLG Consultation Paper “Right to Move” be returned to the Government.

**28. REVIEW OF THE HOUSING ALLOCATIONS SCHEME**

The Chairman agreed that this report should be heard as the second item on the agenda. The Panel received a report regarding the Review of the Housing Allocations Scheme from the Director of Communities.

The Government required local authorities to have a Housing Allocations Scheme for determining priorities and the procedure for selecting a person for accommodation. Government guidance allowed for authorities to decide how accommodation should be allocated based upon local priorities, provided schemes were both legal and rational.

The Council’s Cabinet asked that an item should be included in this Panel’s Work Programme for 2014/15 to undertake a 12 month review of the scheme. The Panel received a copy of the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Guidance on Social Housing Allocations for Local Authorities, to which the Panel had regard in respect of all its deliberations on proposed changes to the Housing Allocations Scheme, the District Council’s current Housing Allocations Scheme and Tenancy Policy.

**Housing Portfolio Holder’s Initial Views**

It was noted that the Housing Portfolio Holder had held informal discussions with Cabinet Members to inform his initial views on the 12 month review. It was suggested that the Panel had regard to these initial views, in order to ensure that the Panel did not put forward any proposed changes which were unlikely to be agreed by the Cabinet, These were as follows:

- (1) That the residency Criteria be increased with new applicants who had lived in the district for less than **five** continuous years immediately prior to the date of registration, not qualifying for inclusion on the Housing Register.
- (2) That all existing homeseekers, on the Housing Register, who had lived within the district for less than **4 ½** continuous years immediately prior to the date the new Housing Allocations Scheme was introduced, should be removed from the Register.
- (3) That existing homeseekers who were removed from the Register due to not meeting the Local Eligibility Criteria should be allowed to re-

register if or when they meet the new criteria, but that their registration date would be the date of re-registration.

The Portfolio Holder advised that despite the local housebuilding programme there was still a shortage of social housing. He felt that local residents with the longest connection to the district ought to be prioritised.

### **Exceptions to the Residency Criteria**

The current scheme already had some exceptions to the Residency Criteria. However the Government's Code of Guidance suggested that some other exceptions should be considered. It was officer's view, though, that the wording within the Code of Guidance was very open to interpretation, particular potential exceptions relating to applicants with a "strong association" to the District.

The Housing Portfolio Holder had therefore suggested that no exceptions should be made to the criteria for those with a "strong association" to the district as this could lead to inconsistent decision making. However, his view was that, in accordance with Government Guidance an exception should be made for existing social housing tenants who were seeking to move from another local authority in order to access work.

Officers suggested that an additional paragraph be added to the scheme regarding people who were in or had secured permanent employment comprising a minimum of 24 hours each week, an apprenticeship or full time work related training and lived in excess of 50 miles from their current or intended place of work, or their return journey time on public transport was generally in excess of 3 hours.

Officers further recommended that, should the Residency Criteria be increased to 5 years, the rules relating to those who had moved out of the district would need amending, it was suggested that those who had moved out of the district into settled accommodation for less than 3 years but had lived in the district for at least 5 years immediately before moving out should be treated as homeseekers who had lived in the district for more than 5 years.

It was noted that the Government Guidance referred to care leavers, officer felt that if the Residency Criteria was increased to 5 years, a lesser residential requirement of 3 years should be applied to those leaving care.

The Panel supported these proposals.

### **Financial Criteria aspect of the Local Eligibility Criteria**

Under the current scheme, applicants who, in the opinion of the Council, had sufficient funds including annual income, residential property equity, savings, shares or other assets, enabling them to meet their housing costs, would be ineligible to join the Housing Register.

The Housing Portfolio Holder felt that the Financial Criteria aspect of the Local Eligibility Criteria should be substantially reduced to reflect income and assets that would be required in order for any applicant to secure accommodation in the private rented sector.

Accordingly officers recommended that where gross annual household income including residential property equity, savings, shares or other assets, exceeded £76,000, they should not qualify to join the Council's Housing Register.

The Chairman was concerned that the long term effects of these proposals would change the social mix of the social housing sector.

However, the Panel supported the proposals.

### **Downsizing Incentive Payments**

It was noted that currently, any tenant of the Council was offered a payment to encourage them to downsize accommodation, where both properties were owned by the Council. The maximum payment was £2,000. The budget for downsizing payments and removal expenses for 2013/14 was £44,000. During this period 41 tenants of the Council downsized to another property owned by the Council with less bedrooms. This resulted in 54 bedrooms being released, the total amount paid in downsizing payments and other expenses was £47,500.

The Housing Portfolio Holder felt that the downsizing incentive payments should be increased. Accordingly there were three options presented to the Panel by officers:

- (a) The amount paid for removal costs could remain the same, but the incentive payments for each bedroom released by moving, could be doubled to £1,000 to a maximum payment of £3,500.
- (b) The incentive payments for each bedroom released could be doubled to £1,000 to a maximum payment of £3,500, additionally, the amount paid for removal costs could remain the same, but a standard decoration allowance payment of £500 be paid using "Homebase" vouchers, making a total payment of £1,000 for removals and re-decorations.
- (c) The incentive payments for each bedroom released could be doubled to £1,000 to a maximum payment of £3,500. The amount paid for removal costs should remain the same, but a standard decoration allowance payment of £500 could be paid by way of "Homebase" vouchers, making a total payments of £1,000 for both removals and re-decorations. Furthermore, the tenant could be offered a rent-free period of 3 months in their new smaller property.

The Panel supported officer's recommendations and endorsed Option (b) above. However, the Panel was of the view that the enhanced payments over the current arrangements should only apply to tenants who were not subject to the removal of the single room subsidy (sometimes referred to as the "bedroom tax"). It was noted that the increased incentives set out in Option Two could result in an estimated increase in budget provision of around £68,000 making a required total annual budget of £115,500.

### **Penalties for refusals of offers of accommodation**

It was noted that under the current scheme, any homeseeker who refused two offers of suitable accommodation for which they had expressed an interest within any three month period would have their application deferred for 6 months.

The Housing Portfolio Holder suggested amending this policy to a period of 12 months deferral. He felt that any homeseeker who was an existing tenant of the Council who was under-occupying and wished to move to smaller Council accommodation who refused three offers of suitable accommodation for which they had expressed an interest should have their applications deferred for 12 months. The Panel endorsed these views.

The Panel noted and supported all of the detailed, more minor proposed changes to the Housing Allocations Scheme set out in Appendix 2 to the report.

### **Hillsden v Epping Forest District Council**

It was noted that the Council was currently being challenged by way of Judicial Review in the High Court against the Council's decision to not allow a non-qualifying applicant to join the Council's Housing Register due what she considered to be her exceptional circumstances. The claimant's two main arguments were:

- (i) The scheme inferred that the discretion given to officers considering applicant's exceptional circumstances applied to both qualifying and non-qualifying persons; and
- (ii) That housing allocation schemes nationally should consider exceptional circumstances of all non-qualifying applicants following a request for a review.

It was noted that if the claimant was successful in her claim regarding (1) above, the Council would need to amend its Scheme as soon as possible. In addition, a review of the claimant's case would need to be undertaken by the Director of Communities to determine whether there were any exceptional circumstances for the claimant to be a qualifying person to join the Council's Housing Register.

It was noted that the second claim, if successful, could affect every local authority's scheme in the country as they would be required to consider any exceptional circumstances of any person not meeting with any aspect of their scheme, irrespective of how they were framed.

The Council was vigorously defending the claim and were currently awaiting the judgement.

### **Consultation and Cabinet Approval**

The Panel was advised that the amended Housing Allocations Scheme would be considered by an external legal advisor prior to statutory consultation being undertaken and final Cabinet approval. In accordance with legal advice, the consultation period was required to be at least 12 weeks, however the Council could choose a shorter period if it had good reason. Officers recommended reducing this period to 10 weeks, due to the expiry of the contract for the administration of the Choice Based Lettings Scheme being in June 2015. Locata Housing Services had advised that if they were unsuccessful under the tendering process, any changes to the scheme including homeseekers having to update their information on-line would

need to be completed by the contract's end. By reducing the consultation period this would enable a report to be submitted by the Panel in March 2015 to the Cabinet.

The target date for the revised scheme coming into force was 1 July 2014. It was suggested that the next review of the scheme should be considered by the Panel following 2 years of operation.

**RECOMMENDED:**

That the following amendments for incorporation in the Housing Allocations Scheme be recommended to the Cabinet:

- (1) That the Residency Criteria be increased to five years for new applicants;
- (2) That the Residency Criteria be increased to 4 ½ years for all existing homeseekers;
- (3) That despite having regard to the Code of Guidance no exceptions be made to the Residency Criteria regarding "strong association" with the district;
- (4) That an additional paragraph be added to the Residency Scheme for Homeseekers who wished to be nearer their place of work, take up an offer of permanent employment, an apprenticeship or full time work related training, regarding car journeys in excess of 3 hours;
- (5) That, should the residency Criteria be increased to 5 years, those who had moved out of the district into settled accommodation for less than 3 years, but had lived in the district for at least 5 years, be treated as Homeseekers who have lived in the district for more than 5 years;
- (6) That, should the Residency Criteria be increased to 5 years, a lesser residency requirement of 3 years be applied to those applicants leaving care;
- (7) That applicants for housing whose gross annual household income exceeds £76,000 be disqualified from joining the Council's Housing Register;
- (8) That the incentive payments paid to homeseekers downsizing accommodation, for each social housing bedroom released, be increased from £500 to £1,000 plus a redecoration allowance of £500;
- (9) That any homeseeker refusing two offers of suitable accommodation for which they had expressed an interest have their application deferred for a period of twelve months;
- (10) That any homeseeker who is an existing tenant of the Council who is under-occupying and wishing to move to smaller Council

accommodation who refused three offers of suitable accommodation will have their applications deferred for a period of 12 months;

(11) That following the agreed amendments being incorporated into the draft Housing Allocations Scheme, the scheme be considered by an external Legal Advisor;

(12) That any advice given by the external Legal Advisor be incorporated into the draft scheme and a consultation exercise be undertaken with the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation, Registered Providers of Housing operating in the district, local councils and partner agencies with an interest in the scheme;

(13) That the consultation period referred to above be for 10 weeks due to the timing of the renewal of the contract concerning the administration of the Choice Based Lettings Scheme;

(14) That, the target date for the revised scheme coming into force be 1 July 2014;

(15) That the next review of the scheme be considered by the Panel in 2 years; and

(16) That the Housing Scrutiny Panel submit a report on the proposed revised scheme to the April 2015 Cabinet meeting for consideration.

## **29. REVIEW OF THE TENANCY POLICY**

The Panel received a report regarding a Review of the Tenancy Policy from the Director of Communities.

Under the Localism Act 2011 registered housing providers were granted additional powers allowing for local decisions on the management of social housing. This included enabling providers of social housing with the option to use flexible tenancies for a minimum period of 5 years. Flexible tenants generally enjoyed the same rights as secure tenants, including the Right to Buy, subject to the current qualifying criteria. On expiry of the fixed term, the tenant was assessed against an agreed Assessment Criteria to determine whether a further tenancy should be granted. If another tenancy was not offered, there was a requirement to provide the tenant with advice and assistance.

The Cabinet adopted the current Tenancy Policy with effect from 1 September 2013 further agreeing that the Housing Scrutiny Panel review the success of the Pilot Scheme to grant Flexible (fixed-term) tenancies on all properties of 3 bedrooms or more, after 12 months of commencement.

### **Extending Flexible (fixed-term) Tenancies**

The Housing Portfolio Holder had held informal discussions with Cabinet Members on the 12 month review. As a result, the Portfolio Holder made a formal decision that he was minded that Flexible (fixed-term) Tenancies should continue for a fixed term



of ten years , but that the Council's Tenancy Policy should be amended with Flexible (fixed-term) Tenancies being extended to include all Council re-let properties, except sheltered accommodation.

It was noted that if Flexible (fixed-term) Tenancies were extended to include all properties, this may discourage some tenants from transferring or down sizing accommodation as they would have to enter into a new Flexible (fixed-term) Tenancy and would no longer have a Secure (Lifetime) Tenancy. Therefore, it was suggested that, in addition to Pre-Localism Act tenant protection, whereby they were granted Secure (Lifetime) Tenancies for one move only when transferring, all existing Post-Act Secure (Lifetime) Tenants should also be protected in the same way.

Following discussion on this particular issue by the Panel there was mixed feeling regarding the effects of extending flexible tenancies, the Chairman was concerned about the need to preserve mixed social housing with different income groups living next to each other. However the Panel supported extending flexible tenancies.

### **Means Testing tenants as part of the Assessment Criteria**

Under the review of the Housing Allocations Scheme, officers were recommending that where any lead applicant/s whose gross annual household income exceeded £76,000 they would not qualify to join the Council's Housing Register.

It was recommended that for consistency, there should be an additional requirement under the Assessment Criteria which determined whether at the end of the fixed-term, if a further tenancy should be granted. The additional requirement would be that, generally, a further tenancy would not be granted if the tenant/s annual household income exceeded any financial criteria adopted for admission to the Housing Register (currently proposed at £76,000) at that time. The Panel supported this recommendation.

#### **RECOMMENDED:**

- (1) That the 12 month Review of the Tenancy Policy be recommended to the Cabinet for approval with the following amendments:
  - (a) That the Council's Tenancy Policy be amended with Flexible (fixed-term) Tenancies being extended to include all re-let Council properties;
  - (b) That the Assessment Criteria used to determine whether or not a further flexible tenancy should be granted at the end of the fixed term included;
  - (c) That following the agreed amendments being incorporated, a consultation exercise be undertaken with the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation, Registered Social Landlords operating in the District, Local Councils and partner agencies with an interest in the policy;
  - (d) That following the consultation exercise, the Housing Scrutiny Panel submit a report on the amendments to the Cabinet for consideration; and

- (e) That the revised Tenancy Policy comes into force on the same date as the revised Housing Allocations Scheme.

### **30. HOME OPTION CHOICE BASED LETTINGS SCHEME - PROGRESS REPORT**

The Panel received a progress report regarding the HomeOption Choice Based Lettings Scheme from the Assistant Director (Housing Operations).

The Choice Based Lettings Scheme introduced in November 2007 was administered externally by Locata Housing Services (LHS). Under the scheme, all vacant social rented properties were advertised to applicants on the website and a two weekly Property List giving details of location, type, rent, service charge, council tax band and landlord of the available accommodation. Applicants applying for a property by expressing an interest in up to a maximum of three properties for which they had an assessed need.

At the end of the two weekly cycle, the Council analysed the expressions of interest received and allocated each property following a process in accordance with its own Housing Allocations Scheme. Generally, the property was offered to the applicant in the highest band, who was registered the longest and had expressed an interest for the specific vacancy. The results on properties advertised was published on the Council's website which helped applicants see how long the successful applicant had been waiting and gave greater transparency in the allocation of accommodation.

Between 1 September 2013 and 31 August 2014 345 properties had been allocated to homeseekers on the Housing Register. A further 49 properties were allocated direct to homeless applicants and an additional 11 to applicants leaving supported housing.

Some of the 345 properties allocated from the Housing Register had been advertised on more than one occasion, as they were difficult to let, this had resulted in 427 advertisements being placed on the website and in the Property Lists. With 24,307 expressions of interest being made, this was an average of around 70 expressions of interest from homeseekers each time a property was advertised. Most properties attracted in excess of 200 expressions of interest. Almost 97% of homeseekers expressed an interest in properties over the Internet.

Around 71% of all applicants registered on the Housing Register had participated in the scheme during the last year.

#### **Housing Register Activity Report**

The Housing Register Activity Report for the same period showed the number of lets and number of homeseekers in each of the three priority bands. It should be noted that there were 82 (23%) properties refused during the period.

As a result of the introduction of the Local Eligibility Criteria under the current Housing Allocations Scheme, the numbers of homeseekers on the Housing Register on 1 September 2013 had substantially reduced. As at 31 August 2014 there were 1,563 homeseekers on the Housing Register compared to 6,219 in June 2011. Under the revised scheme, a new Supplementary Waiting List was created enabling applicants over 60 years of age who had not met the residency criteria, or had a housing need, to bid on properties in sheltered accommodation. As at 31 August 2014 there were 210 applicants on this list.

**Support currently Provided to Vulnerable Applicants**

The Housing Allocations Team within the Housing Options Section offered a great deal of support to vulnerable applicants including the following:

- (1) A list of all vulnerable applicants was maintained.
- (2) The Relocation Support Officer provided assistance to vulnerable people to join the Housing Register.
- (3) Scheme Managers were given lists of older tenants they visited who were on the Housing Register. When visiting, they ensured the residents understood how to participate in the Choice Based Lettings Scheme.
- (4) New applicants joining the Housing Register were given an Information Pack which gave details of the scheme and how assistance could be obtained.
- (5) Articles had been included in "Housing News" on the scheme explaining that applicants could seek assistance from staff.
- (6) A letter was sent to all those not participating in the scheme for more than 6 months asking if they wished to remain on the Housing Register and if they required any assistance in the scheme.
- (7) Access to the scheme was provided electronically by way of a kiosk and a computer terminal currently provided in receptions at the Civic Offices, Area Housing Office(South) at The Broadway, Loughton and at the Limes Centre, Chigwell.
- (8) Staff were able to refer applicants to Essex County Council's floating support provider, Family Mosaic, for assistance with a range of housing related support matters.

The Panel supported the progress made with the scheme.

**RESOLVED:**

That the progress made with the HomeOption Choice Based Lettings Scheme for the period 1 September 2013 to 31 August 2014 be noted.

**31. ANNUAL REVIEW OF PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS - HOUSING APPLICANTS AND LETTINGS**

The Panel received a report regarding the Annual Review of Protected Characteristics – Housing Applicants and Lettings from the Assistant Director (Housing Operations).

In previous years, the Panel had undertaken an annual review of the ethnicity of applicants on the Housing Register and compared this with the ethnicity of those

allocated accommodation, considering any disparities and whether there should be any resultant changes to the Housing Allocations Scheme. No such disparities had yet been identified.

Following the introduction of the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty in 2011, public bodies had to consider all individuals when carrying out their day to day work. There were nine "Protected Characteristics" which had considerations as follows:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion and Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

Due to the requirements of the Act the Panel was asked to include within the annual review, a review of the Protected Characteristics of homeseekers on the Housing Register compared to those allocated accommodation. Generally, it was found that the statistics confirmed that the Protected Characteristics of homeseekers housed in Council accommodation were similar to those on the Housing Register. Therefore, it was recommended that no amendments be made to the Council's Housing Allocations Scheme.

One member of the Panel suggested that a potentially isolated group was widowers and requested that they be added to the list above. However it was noted that they were not one of the Protected Characteristics. It was agreed that housing management staff would be alert in identifying such persons and offer to signpost them to support groups.

#### **RECOMMENDED:**

That no further recommendations be made regarding amendments to the Council's Housing Allocations Scheme as there is no evidence of a significant disparity between the Protected Characteristics of applicants on the Housing Register and those allocated accommodation.

### **32. HOUSING SERVICE STRATEGY ON RENT ARREARS**

The Panel received a report regarding the Housing Service Strategy on Rent Arrears from the Assistant Director (Housing Operations).

The concept of Housing Service Strategies was originally introduced around 15 years ago. The strategies gave more detail than the Council's main Housing Strategy on the various housing services provided. In total 16 Housing Services Strategies had been produced to date.

The strategies were produced to a common format that set out how individual housing services would be delivered. They have assisted the Housing Service in achieving the Customer Service Excellence award and had been important in

meeting the minimum requirement for housing related support funding under the conditions of the contract.

**RECOMMENDED:**

That the Housing Service Strategy on Rent Arrears be recommended to the Housing Portfolio Holder for adoption.

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

The Chairman advised that he would make verbal reports on Items 8 and 9 of the agenda at the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**34. FUTURE MEETINGS**

The next meeting of the Panel was scheduled for Tuesday 20 January 2015 at 5.30p.m. in Committee Room 1.

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## **Report to Housing Scrutiny Panel**

**Date of meeting: 9 February 2015**

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

**Subject: Proposed Council Rent Increase 2015/16 and Charges to Older Tenants in Sheltered and Area Schemes**



**Officer contact for further information:**

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

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

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### **Recommendations:**

**(1) That the Summary of the proposed HRA Budget 2015/16, and associated recommendations on the Council rent increase and charges to older tenants in sheltered and area schemes for 2015/16, be noted; and**

**(2) That the Scrutiny Panel receives an oral presentation on the main issues relating to the HRA Budget 2015/16 and associated rent increase and increased charges from the Director of Communities.**

### **Report:**

1. At its meeting held on 19 January 2015, the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee considered the HRA Budget 2015/16 and a number of associated recommendations on the Council rent increase and charges to older tenants in sheltered and area schemes.

2. As a result, the Cabinet Committee agreed to make a number of recommendations to the Cabinet on these issues, which will be considered at the Cabinet meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2015.

3. It has become customary for the Housing Scrutiny Panel to be briefed each year by the Director of Communities on the key issues relating to the HRA Budget and, in particular, the proposed Council rent increase.

4. Attached as an Appendix are the following documents:

- The Cabinet Committee's recommendations to the Cabinet
- The commentary provided to the Cabinet Committee on the HRA Budget 2015/16
- The Summary of the HRA Budget 2015/16

5. At the meeting, the Director of Communities will brief members of the Scrutiny Panel on the key issues which, this year, includes a number of increased charges, and changes to the charges, made to older tenants in sheltered and area housing schemes, as a result of a significant cut in funding from Essex County Council for the provision of housing related support.

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**COMMUNITIES DIRECTORATE  
HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT  
ESTIMATES 2015/16**

HRA Budget 2015/16  
Recommendations of the Finance and Performance Cabinet Committee to the Cabinet Meeting  
(to be held on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2015)

- (1) That the Cabinet be requested to note that rent increases proposed for 2015/16 will give an average overall increase of 2.2%;
- (2) That, in respect of the Council's Careline Service and the Scheme Management Service for sheltered housing and area schemes:
- (a) The loss of £133,000 per annum Housing Related Support (HRS) funding from Essex County Council be noted;
  - (b) The charges for the Council's Careline Service be increased by £0.27 per week, for both Council tenants and private clients, with effect from 6<sup>th</sup> April 2015 and that the Cabinet's previous decision to increase the charge for private clients by £0.20 per week from 6<sup>th</sup> April 2015 be rescinded;
  - (c) Following a review of the duties undertaken by Scheme Managers, 10% of their time previously attributed to Housing Related Support be re-classified as Intensive Housing Management and charged as a Service Charge accordingly (which is eligible for housing benefit);
  - (d) The charges for the Council's Scheme Management Service (funded from Housing Related Support Charges and Intensive Housing Management Service Charges) be increased by 5% from 6<sup>th</sup> April 2015;
  - (e) The increased charges for the Careline and Scheme Management Services provided to Council tenants in receipt of housing benefit not be met through any increase in compensating Housing Related Support Credit and that, furthermore, the Housing Related Support Credit currently received by such tenants be reduced by 8% with effect from 6<sup>th</sup> April 2015;
  - (f) The intention;
    - (i) For the Careline Service to break-even; and
    - (ii) The loss in HRS funding for the Scheme Management Service to be fully recovered from April 2016;
- be noted but, as a result of spreading the required increases in charges over two years, it also be noted that the HRA will be subsidising the Careline Service and Scheme Management Service by around £58,000 during 2015/16; and
- (g) That the potential for further reductions in HRS by Essex County Council in 2015/16 and/or 2016/17 be noted.

## HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT ESTIMATES 2015/16

### Introduction

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) has been prepared in accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, as amended by the Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1993 and the Local Government Act 2003. Under this legislation the Secretary of State for the Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG) has the power to issue directives in respect of appropriate income and expenditure items.

The balance at 31 March 2014 was £2.966m, after a deficit of £0.409m in 2013/14 and a deficit is expected in 2014/15 and a small surplus in 2015/16. The major influences on these figures have been in 2014/15 increasing the Revenue Contributions to Capital, as a consequence of New Build acceleration, which may now be delayed. Council rents income has increased by £0.4m year on year and the proposal to transfer a 10% average, annually of the variable rate loan taken out on the inception of HRA self financing to a debt repayment reserve draws £3.18m from the HRA a year. Falling from 2016/17 to rise again in 2019/20.

The HRA subsidy system ceased at the end of 2011/12 when this Council was required to pay to Whitehall their notional HRA surplus, as determined by the subsidy settlement. From April 2012 the new Self Financing system, where councils will keep all rents in exchange for an allocation of housing debt came into effect. The council borrowed £185.456m in 6 tranches, 5 long term fixed rate loans maturing in 2038 and annually thereafter, and 1 shorter term variable loan maturing in March 2022.

### Thirty Year Forecast

The Council has for a number of years produced an HRA thirty year forecast, however with the advent of self financing this has taken on more prominence. The forecast is updated on a regular basis to check actual progress against the plan and where necessary make amendments. The updated forecast is presented to members twice annually.

### Five Year Forecast

An updated HRA five year forecast to the year 2019/20 will be produced once the budget has been finalised and the 30 year forecast updated.

### Management and Maintenance

Management and maintenance expenditure in 2014/15 has reduced by 4.1% (£597,000) in the probable outturn compared to the original estimates. In 2015/16 the costs have decreased by 2.4% (£341,000) compared to the original 2014/15. Please refer to the detailed page for Supervision and Management General for a detailed analysis. Increases of between 2.8% and 74% on most of the headings. The HRA will be subsidising the net loss income for 2015/16 by £58,000 associated with the loss of funding from ECC for .Housing Related Support.

### Service Enhancements

The Service Enhancements in 2015/16 are estimated at Capital £1,286,000 and Revenue £248,000. This includes £367,000 set aside for major capital projects in future years.

### Depreciation

Under IFRS, introduced for the financial year 2010/11 there is a requirement to value and depreciate significant components of assets separately. The life cycles used until 31 March 2012 were based on the decent homes standard, however from 1 April the Council's New Modern Home Standard has been used which has meant that generally components will be replaced sooner than before. The effect was to increase substantially the depreciation charge. Since then the Council has agreed with the External Auditor a revised method of calculating the depreciation charge lowering it to £13.2m in 2014/15 and £13.5m in 2015/16.

### Housing Repairs Fund

The Housing Repairs Fund balance at the start of 2014/15 was £2.753m, and is estimated to be reduced down to £0.076m by the end of 2019/20. The contribution for 2014/15 and 2015/16 has been set at £5 m, but based on current expenditure this is not sufficient to meet the demands placed on the fund. The contribution has been increased to £5.5m after 2015/16.

### Major Repairs Reserve

The Major Repairs Reserve balance as at the end of 2013/14 was £11.359m, and is predicted to reduce to £2.16m by the end of 2018/19.

### Capital Expenditure

Capital expenditure charged to revenue is based on the latest predictions of availability of funds to finance the capital programme. The contribution in 2014/15 is forecast to be £5.2m. In 2015/16 this falls to £4.9m.

### Housing Repairs Service

The Housing Repairs Service carries out a significant proportion of the repairs required to the Council's stock. The total cost of the Service is recharged to either the Housing Repairs Fund or (for capital projects) to the HRA Capital Programme. There is also a small amount of work carried out for the General Fund.

### Proposed Rent Increase

From 2003/04 rents have been set with reference to a Government formula based on property values, number of bedrooms and local earnings. The scheme was referred to as rent restructuring, and its intention is to ensure that rents for broadly similar properties should be the same, regardless of whether the landlord is the local authority or a registered social landlord.

The proposed average rent increase for 2015/16 is 2.2% (£2.10), which gives an average weekly rent for 2015/16 of around £97.54 per week.

The Council has complied with the Government's previous rent restructuring regime. The Government now has a Social Rents Policy which includes formula rents. The end of rent restructuring resulted in an estimated £40m loss of rental income over the 30 year HRA Plan. Most Social Landlords re-let vacant property at the "target rent" for the property, which the Council has also done from 5th April 2014. Estimated additional income was £50,000 in 2014/15 and in subsequent years.

#### **Interest on Receipts and Balances**

The HRA interest income has remained relatively low during 2014/15 as the bank rate has remained at 0.5% since March 2009 and the further decline of the financial markets has meant that the Council can only invest with a limited number of counterparties and for shorter durations. All these have contributed to lower yields being achieved.

#### **Interest Payable on Loans**

This is a new charge to the HRA for the servicing of debts the Council has taken to fund the CLG's Self-Financing Debt Settlement.

#### **Self-Financing Reserve**

As part of the debt portfolio taken out toward the end of 2011/12 a variable loan of £31.8m for 10 years was included. The thirty year plan demonstrates that HRA balances will have increased sufficiently for this to be repaid in 2021/22. It is however felt that a sum equivalent to an average of 10% per annum should be set aside in a Self-Financing Reserve so that this money is separately identified for this purpose. It may be necessary to amend the capital expenditure profile within the thirty year plan for this to be possible. A pattern of contributions has been agreed previously by Members, reducing to £1.25million from 2016/17 and starting to rise again from 2019/20.

#### **Minimum HRA Balance**

The agreed level of balance to be achieved is £2million, and this has been achieved in 2015/16.

#### **The Council's Careline Service and Scheme Management Service for sheltered housing and area schemes - Reduction in Housing Related Support (HRS) funding by Essex County Council**

The Council currently receives around £306,000 from Essex County Council's (ECC's) Housing Related Support (HRS) Budget towards the cost of providing the Councils Careline Service and its Scheme Management Service for older Council tenants in receipt of housing benefit living in sheltered housing or an area scheme. However, due to ECC reducing its HRS Budget by around 10% (£2 million) per annum across the County, ECC is reducing its HRS funding to this Council by £133,000 (43%) per annum from April 2015 (£52,000 for Careline and £81,000 for Scheme Management).

Since the HRA is unable to sustain such a large reduction in HRS funding in the long term, the Housing Portfolio Holder has asked the Director of Communities to undertake a review on how this lost income can be replaced, primarily through a combination of increased charges to users of the two services and, in particular, the introduction of charges for tenants in receipt of housing benefit (who do not currently pay anything for these services) - whilst spreading the impact of the required increased/new charges over a two-year period.

#### **Careline Service**

The Careline Service currently operates at a small annual deficit of around £16,000 per annum. In order for the Careline Service to break-even after accounting for this small deficit and, particularly, the loss in HRS funding, the charges made to Council tenants and private clients for Careline would need to increase by 54p per week from April 2015. However, in order to spread the required increases over a two-year period, it is proposed that Careline charges only be increased by 27p per week from April 2015, with an intention to increase charges by a similar amount in April 2016 (subject to no further reduction in HRS funding).

It should be noted that this is a higher increase for private clients than agreed by the Cabinet in December 2014, following the review of housing-related fees and charges by the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee. However, it should also be noted that this Council currently makes the lowest charges for Careline / telecare services in Essex, which will continue to be the case even after this proposed increase. Moreover, if this Council increases its charges by a further 27p per week in April 2016, it is expected that this Council's charges will still be the second lowest in Essex - even if other councils do not increase their charges over the next two years, which is considered likely.

In the past, any increase in Careline charges to Council tenants in receipt of housing benefit has been met by a corresponding increase in the Housing Related Support Credit made to tenants' rent account. However, due to the reduction in HRS funding from ECC, this is no longer possible. Therefore, such tenants will need to meet the cost of this increase themselves for the first time.

#### **Scheme Management Service at Sheltered and Area Schemes for Older People**

In order for ECC's £81,000 per annum cut in HRS funding for Scheme Management to be met from increased charges to tenants, the current Housing Related Support Charge made to older tenants in sheltered housing and area schemes would need to increase by around 30%.

However, following consideration of a number of alternative options put forward by the Director of Communities, the Housing Portfolio Holder is proposing a range of measures to mitigate the effect of increasing charges to tenants, whilst ensuring that the loss in HRS funding is fully-funded from increased charges by April 2016.

Firstly, a review has been undertaken of the amount of time that the Council's Scheme Managers spend on activities relating to "Housing Related Support" and, separately, to "Intensive Housing Management". As a result, it has been established that around 10% of their time is spent on the latter, instead of the former. Therefore, it is proposed that a new service charge be introduced to cover the costs of providing Intensive Housing Management and that the Housing Related Support Charge be reduced by an equivalent amount. Apart from a more appropriate categorisation of duties, which has no effect on tenants who are not in receipt of housing benefit and who therefore pay the charge themselves, an advantage of introducing such a change is that older tenants in receipt of housing benefit are eligible to receive housing benefit towards the cost of receiving Intensive Housing Management, but not Housing Related Support.

Secondly, it is proposed that both the Housing Related Support Charge and the Intensive Housing Management Service Charge are increased by 5% from April 2015, with an intention to increase charges by a similar amount in April 2016 (subject to no further reduction in HRS funding). Furthermore, it is proposed that tenants in receipt of housing benefit be required to meet the cost of the increase in the Housing Related Support Charge (only) themselves - by no corresponding increase being made to their Housing Related Support Credit.

Thirdly, it is proposed that the current Housing Related Support Credit received by tenants in receipt of housing benefit to meet their Housing Related Support Charge be reduced by 8% from April 2015, with an intention to reduce the Credit by a similar amount in April 2016 (subject to no further reduction in HRS funding).

**Effect of these changes on tenants and the HRA**

The effect on all tenants in sheltered housing and area schemes, and private Careline clients, of all the above proposals are summarised in the following table:

Sheltered Tenants (Scheme Management & Careline):					
	(£)	Increase (£)	Increase (%)	Increase (£)	Increase (%)
Not on HB	£12.15 p/w	£0.71 p/w	5.80%	£0.71 p/w	5.50%
On HB	Nil	£1.27 p/w	N/A	£1.27 p/w	100.00%
Area Tenants (Scheme Management & Careline):					
Not on HB	£5.54 p/w	£0.39 p/w	7.00%	£0.39 p/w	6.60%
On HB	Nil	£0.52 p/w	N/A	£0.52 p/w	100.00%
Private Careline Users	£95.30 p/a	£13 p/a	13.60%	£13 p/a	12.00%
<b>New Annual Cost</b>		<b>£108.30 p/a</b>		<b>£121.30 p/a</b>	
(*) – Subject to no further reduction in HRS funding in 2016/17					

As a result of spreading the required increases in charges over two years, the HRA will need to subsidise the Careline Service and Scheme Management Service by around £58,000 during 2015/16.

**Potential for further HRS funding reductions by Essex County Council**

All of the above proposals have been formulated to enable the Careline Service to break-even, and the loss in HRS funding for the Scheme Management Service to be fully recovered, from April 2016 – based on the current reduction in HRS funding by ECC.

However, it is quite possible that further reductions in HRS funding will be made by ECC in April 2016. If this is the case, a further review of charges will need to be made for the HRA Budget in 2016/17, which is likely to result in higher charges from April 2016 than those set out above.

Moreover, it has been noted that ECC may be seeking to reduce its County-wide HRS Budget by more than the currently-proposed £2 million per annum from April 2015, which may have a further effect on this Council's HRS funding. However, no details have been received on such a possibility at the time of preparing this HRA Budget and have therefore not been incorporated.

**HOUSING DIRECTORATE  
HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT SUMMARY**

<b>2013/14</b>		<b>2014/15</b>			<b>2015/16</b>
<i>Actual</i>	<i>Original</i>	<i>Probable</i>			<i>Original</i>
<i>£000's</i>	<i>Estimate</i>	<i>Outturn</i>			<i>Estimate</i>
<i>£000's</i>	<i>£000's</i>	<i>£000's</i>			<i>£000's</i>
				<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	
4,768	4,468	4,561		Supervision & Management General	4,616
3,691	3,844	3,693		Supervision & Management Special	3,870
542	521	525		Rents, Rates Taxes & Insurances	526
5,200	5,000	5,000		Contribution to Repairs Fund	5,000
0	570	27		Improvements / Service Enhancements	50
<b>14,201</b>	<b>14,403</b>	<b>13,806</b>		<b>MANAGEMENT &amp; MAINTENANCE</b>	<b>14,062</b>
13,110	13,231	12,480		Depreciation	13,539
50	52	74		Treasury Management Expenses	83
16	250	129		Provision for Bad/Doubtful Debts	100
<b>27,377</b>	<b>27,936</b>	<b>26,489</b>			<b>27,784</b>
(30,885)	(31,765)	(31,631)		<b>INCOME</b>	
(870)	(858)	(843)		Gross Rent of Dwellings	(32,177)
(1,980)	(1,574)	(1,614)		Non Dwellings Rent	(859)
(336)	(383)	(343)		Charges for Services & Facilities	(1,587)
				Contribution from General Fund	(356)
<b>(34,071)</b>	<b>(34,580)</b>	<b>(34,431)</b>			<b>(34,979)</b>
<b>(6,694)</b>	<b>(6,644)</b>	<b>(7,942)</b>		<b>NET COST OF SERVICES</b>	<b>(7,195)</b>

**HOUSING DIRECTORATE  
HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT SUMMARY**

<b>2013/14</b>		<b>2014/15</b>			<b>2015/16</b>
<b>Actual</b>	<b>Original</b>	<b>Probable</b>			<b>Original</b>
<b>£000's</b>	<b>Estimate</b>	<b>Outturn</b>			<b>Estimate</b>
	<b>£000's</b>	<b>£000's</b>			<b>£000's</b>
(6,694)	(6,644)	(7,942)	NET COST OF SERVICES		(7,195)
(375)	(402)	(395)	Interest on Receipts and Balances		(422)
5,526	5,532	5,529	Interest Payable on Loans		5,566
(5,349)	(6,186)	(4,958)	Transfer from MRR		(6,014)
(33)	(29)	(34)	Reversal of DLO depreciation		(34)
963	973	794	Pensions Interest Payable/Return on Assets		794
<u>(5,962)</u>	<u>(6,756)</u>	<u>(7,006)</u>	<b>NET OPERATING INCOME</b>		<u>(7,305)</u>
			APPROPRIATIONS		
4,200	5,700	5,200	Capital Exp. Charged to Revenue		4,900
(865)	(945)	(722)	FRS 17 Adjustment		(722)
3,180	3,180	3,180	Transfer to Self Financing Reserve		3,180
(84)	0	0	Transfer to Insurance Fund		0
(58)	(442)	360	Transfer to Enhancement Fund		(105)
(4)	0	0	Leave Accruals		0
<u>6,369</u>	<u>7,493</u>	<u>8,018</u>			<u>7,253</u>
<u>407</u>	<u>736</u>	<u>1,012</u>	<b>(SURPLUS)/DEFICIT FOR YEAR</b>		<u>(52)</u>
3,375	3,482	2,968	BALANCE BROUGHT FORWARD		1,956
407	736	1,012	(SURPLUS)/DEFICIT FOR YEAR		(52)
<u><b>2,968</b></u>	<u><b>2,746</b></u>	<u><b>1,956</b></u>	<b>BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD</b>		<u><b>2,008</b></u>

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## **Report to Housing Scrutiny Panel**

**Date of meeting: 9 February 2015**

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

**Subject: Housing Improvements and Service Enhancements Fund – 2015/16**

**Officer contact for further information:**

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

**Committee Secretary: Mark Jenkins**

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### **Recommendations:**

**(1) That, subject to the views of the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation to be provided at its forthcoming meeting, the following recommendations be made to the Cabinet:**

**(a) That the latest out-turn forecasts for each of the projects funded the Housing Improvement and Service Enhancement Fund in 2014/15, provided at Appendix 1, be noted;**

**(b) That the associated expenditure for any slippages on individual projects in 2014/15 be carried forward to complete the projects in 2015/16;**

**(c) That the following be noted:**

**(i) That the Scrutiny Panel has already recommended to the Cabinet that the cost of increasing the financial incentives for Council tenants downsizing their accommodation be met from the Housing Improvements and Service Enhancements Fund; and**

**(ii) That the Cabinet has already agreed that the Fund should meet the costs relating to the Housing Revenue Account of increasing the size of the new Corporate Fraud Team from April 2015, subject to the required General Fund Continuing Services Budget (CSB) bid being agreed;**

**(d) That the proposed list of housing improvements and service enhancements for 2015/16, and the associated recommendations for each project, set-out in Appendix 2, be approved;**

**(e) That the amount allocated from the Fund to the Major Capital Projects Reserve be increased in 2015/16 from £200,000 to £384,000 to fund future housing capital projects (either in 2015/16 or future years); and**

**(f) That, at its meeting in January 2016, the Scrutiny Panel responsible for scrutinising the Housing Service be asked to consider and recommend to the Cabinet the proposed use of the Housing Improvements and Service Enhancements Fund for 2016/17;**

**(2) That the Scrutiny Panel's report to the Cabinet be based on the content of this**

## **report to the Scrutiny Panel; and**

**(3) That the Cabinet be asked to record in the subsequent Cabinet Minutes all the Cabinet's decisions on the recommendations set out in bold at Appendix 2 (subject to the Scrutiny Panel's views on the proposed recommendations).**

### **Summary:**

When the Cabinet agreed the strategic approach for the Council's new 30-Year HRA Financial Plan, it asked the Housing Scrutiny Panel to consider and recommend to the Cabinet a proposed list of housing improvements and service enhancements each year, utilising the additional funding made available as a result of HRA self-financing.

For the past three years, the Housing Scrutiny Panel has formulated lists of housing improvements and service enhancements, which have been subsequently approved by the Cabinet. An out-turn report on the forecast expenditure and the progress made on the projects agreed for 2014/15 is provided at Appendix 1.

When the Cabinet considered and approved the list of projects for 2014/15, it also asked the Scrutiny Panel to consider and recommend further housing improvements and service enhancements to be undertaken in 2015/16, funded from the additional HRA resources available next year. Proposals for new projects to be undertaken next year, at an estimated cost of £216,000 are provided in Appendix 2, with a summary of the costs provided at Appendix 3.

It is also proposed that the amount allocated from the Fund to the Major Capital Projects Reserve in 2014/15 be increased from £200,000 to £384,000, in order to fund future housing capital projects.

### **Reasons for Proposed Decision:**

Anticipated additional resources of £216,000 are expected to be available within the HRA Budget 2015/16, to spend on additional housing improvements and service enhancements in 2015/16, in addition to increasing the funding held within the Major Capital Projects Reserve to £384,000.

### **Other Options for Action:**

- (a) To agree a different list of improvements and service enhancements;
- (b) To allocate funding differently between the proposed schemes; or
- (c) To allocate a different amount to the Major Capital Projects Reserve.

### **Background**

1. At its meeting in December 2011, the Cabinet approved the strategic approach to the new 30-Year HRA Financial Plan, in readiness for the introduction of self-financing for the HRA from April 2012. The approach agreed was to plan the repayment of the required loans to the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) - to be taken out to fund the CLG's required debt settlement - over a 30-year period. This was to enable the Council to not only maintain the Council's housing stock to a new Modern Home Standard and implement a new Council Housebuilding Programme, but to also fund additional housing improvements and service improvements over the 30-year life of the Plan.

2. For the past three years, the Cabinet has asked the Housing Scrutiny Panel to consider and recommend a proposed list of housing improvements and service enhancements to the Cabinet, utilising the additional funding, which the Scrutiny Panel last did in March 2014.

3. The lists of improvements have comprised a mix of capital and revenue projects, requiring both one-off expenditure over 1-2 years and ongoing annual expenditure, which have focused on proposals that would provide a direct and demonstrable benefit to the Council's tenants.

4. At the same time as agreeing the Scrutiny Panel's proposals for 2014/15, the Cabinet also asked the Housing Scrutiny Panel to consider and recommend to the Cabinet at this meeting the proposed use of the Housing Improvements and Service Enhancements Fund for 2015/16.

5. The purpose of this report to the Scrutiny Panel is therefore:

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

### **Housing Improvements and Service Improvements Fund**

6. The estimated amount available to the Housing Improvements and Service Improvements Fund each year is, in effect, a balancing figure for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) as a whole, over the 30-year period of the HRA Financial Plan. So, if net costs within the HRA over the 30 years are higher than previously forecast (or if income is lower), the amount available for new projects under the Housing Improvements and Service Improvements Budget each year can be reduced. Conversely, if net costs are lower (or if income is higher) the budget can be increased, in order to achieve the Council's prime strategic objectives for the HRA - which are to ensure that the PWLB loans can be repaid when they mature and that the HRA does not accrue balances (surpluses) that are higher than necessary, or falls into deficit.

7. Since housing-related income and expenditure is ring-fenced to the HRA, any annual HRA surpluses that are not required for any specific purpose therefore need to be spent, otherwise they simply result in increased HRA Balances – which is why the Housing Improvements and Service Improvements Fund was introduced from 2012/13.

8. The Fund operates in a similar way to the HRA's Housing Repairs Fund and the General Fund's District Development Fund (DDF) in that, each year, the HRA contributes an agreed amount to the Fund (based on the estimated surplus available through the HRA Financial Plan) and the Cabinet agrees the amount to be spent from the Fund on housing improvement and service enhancement projects in the following year. If there are any underspends on the Fund at the end of the year, they are carried forward into the following year; if there are any overspends (which would need to be funded from HRA Balances), the contribution from the HRA is reduced the following year by the total amount overspent. This approach gives greater flexibility, whilst still ensuring budgetary control.

### **Progress with the Housing Improvements and Service Enhancements Fund 2014/15 and anticipated out-turns**

9. The Cabinet agreed the Housing Scrutiny Panel's recommendation last year that 7 new housing improvements and service enhancements be undertaken in 2014/15, in addition to the completion of a further 7 projects extending / carried forward into 2014/15.

10. Appendix 1 provides a list of the agreed improvements/enhancements for 2014/15, together with the original budget and the latest forecast expenditure for each project. The following summarises the budget position for the overall 2014/15 Programme:

<b>Projects:</b>	
Original Budget	£1,017,000
Latest expenditure forecast	£755,000
<b>Major Capital Projects Reserve:</b>	
Original Budget	£200,000
Latest expenditure forecast	Nil

11. Generally, good progress has been made with the delivery of most of the projects during the year to date.

12. The Cabinet has previously agreed to establish a Major Capital Projects Reserve within the Fund, to enable resources to be accumulated and available when required for major capital housing projects, subject to the schemes having the approval of the Cabinet or Housing Portfolio Holder as appropriate. The Cabinet made this decision because, although the HRA Financial Plan makes provision for increased capital expenditure on individual properties within the Council's housing stock - in order to ensure that they meet the full, modern standard (a higher standard than the Decent Homes Standard) - no provision is made for major capital housing schemes within the Plan. The need for major capital schemes has occurred from time-to-time, and has included the major improvement scheme at Springfields, Waltham Abbey, small scale stock transfers of sheltered housing schemes to housing associations to enable conversion and improvement works to be undertaken and the conversion scheme at Marden Close and Faversham Hall, Chigwell Row which is currently on-site.

13. Having regard to the funding required for the proposed new improvements and service enhancements in 2015/16 (see next section), it is proposed that the amount allocated to the Major Capital Projects Reserve within the Fund be increased from £200,000 to £384,000 in 2015/16

#### **Availability of funding for new housing improvements and service enhancements – 2015/16**

14. The most recent review of the HRA Financial Plan by the Council's HRA business planning consultants, CIH Consultancy, which was reported to the Scrutiny Panel at its meeting in October 2014 identified that the HRA could afford to commit £700,000 per annum for new and committed improvements and service enhancements from April 2015.

15. The following table summarises the position for the Housing Improvements and Service Enhancements Fund for 2015/16:

Expected HRA contribution to Fund – 2015/16	£700,000		
Savings from the Fund's 2013/14 Out-turn	£387,000		
Anticipated savings/slippage from 2014/15	£462,000		
<b>Total resources available to Fund in 2015/16</b>		1,549,000	
Amount required due to committed costs of 2014/15 projects (ongoing and one-off)		(£949,000)	
<b>Remaining resources available for 2015/16</b>			£600,000
Amount proposed to be allocated to the Major Capital Projects Reserve in 2015/16			(£384,000)
<b>Available to fund new projects in 2015/16</b>			£216,000

## **Proposals for the use of the Housing Improvements and Service Enhancements Fund 2015/16**

16. It should be noted that the Scrutiny Panel has already recommended to the Cabinet that the financial incentives available to Council tenants wishing to downsize their accommodation should be increased as part of the proposed new Housing Allocations Scheme. The cost of this increase (estimated at around £51,000 per annum) would need to be met from the Housing Improvements and Service Enhancements Fund, if the Cabinet agrees this recommendation when it considers the Scrutiny Panel's recommendations for the new Housing Allocations Scheme in March 2015.

17. Furthermore, the Cabinet has already agreed that the Fund should meet the HRA's costs of increasing the size of the new Corporate Fraud Team from April 2015 (estimated at around £42,000 per annum), subject to the required General Fund Continuing Services Budget (CSB) bid being agreed.

18. After accounting for these two commitments, £123,000 is available to fund further new improvements/enhancements. Following consultation with the Communities Management Team and all the Housing Managers, the proposed new projects for 2015/16 listed at Appendix 2 are put forward for recommendation to the Cabinet. For each proposal, a description is provided, together with details of the one-off and/or ongoing annual funding required, and whether the expenditure is capital and/or revenue. At the end of each proposal, the formal recommendation(s) are provided in bold.

19. Appendix 3 provides a spreadsheet with each of the proposals listed, summarising the one-off and ongoing expenditure for each of the next three financial years.

20. It should be noted that, after utilising all of the resources available to the Fund in 2014/15, there will still be a further £445,000 and £574,000 available to spend on new projects in the following two years (2016/17 and 2017/18), based on current forecasts.

21. It is therefore proposed that a further recommendation be made to the Cabinet that, at its meeting in January 2016, the Scrutiny Panel responsible for scrutinising the Housing Service be asked to consider and recommend to the Cabinet the use of the Housing Improvements and Service Enhancements Fund for 2016/17.

### **Resource Implications:**

£216,000 available for new projects in 2015/16, after allocating £384,000 to the Major Capital Projects Reserve, included within the HRA Budget 2015/16.

### **Legal and Governance Implications:**

Localism Act 2012  
Local Government and Housing Act 1989  
Housing Act 1985

### **Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:**

None

### **Consultation Undertaken:**

The Tenants and Leaseholders Federation will be consulted on the proposals within this report at its next meeting. The Federation's comments will be included within the report to the subsequent report to the Cabinet.

**Background Papers:**

None.

**Risk Management:**

There are minimal risks identified for the proposed new projects for 2015/16.

## Due Regard Record

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

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

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The proposed enhancements to the rent and leaseholder payment systems will enable those groups of people experiencing financial hardship (often within the protected characteristic groups) to better budget for their rent payments, since their payment dates can be better aligned with their salary/benefit dates.

The introduction of direct debit facilities for leasehold payments will make it easier for leaseholders who have physical difficulty making their payments to meet their obligations.

The proposed all-day opening of the Limes Council Office will provide improved physical access to an increased range of Council services and officers.

The proposed extension of funding for the two CAB Debt Advisors will assist those groups of people experiencing financial hardship (again, often those within the protected characteristic groups) to deal with indebtedness.

**Housing Improvements and Service Enhancements Fund - 2014-15  
Programme Costs (One-off and Ongoing) - as at December 2014**

No.	Proposal	Responsible Officer	£000's						Cap. or Rev.	
			2014/15		2015/16		2016/17			
			One-off	Ongoing	One-off	Ongoing	One-off	Ongoing		
<b>Outstanding Projects from 2013/14</b>										
13/14 A	On-Line Rents System for Tenants	D. Clifton	Latest	0		15				C
			Original	15		0				
13/14 B	CAB Debt Advisors	R. Wilson	Latest	23						R
			Original	23						
13/14 C	Increase in furniture budget - sheltered housing	D. Pegler	Latest	10		10				C
			Original	0		0				
13/14 D	Repairs Key Deliverable - Product Warranty Capture	P. Pledger	Latest	10						R
			Original	10						
13/14 E	Repairs Key Deliverable - Smartphone Application	P. Pledger	Latest	7						R
			Original	7						
13/14 F	Repairs Key Deliverable - Web-based Reporting Facility	P. Pledger	Latest	14						R
			Original	14						
13/14 G	Repairs Key Deliverable - HQN Assessment	P. Pledger	Latest	10						R
			Original	10						
13/14 H	Marden Close & Faversham Hall	P. Pledger	Latest	351		484		21		C
			Original	508		0		0		
<b>TOTALS (Outstanding Projects from 2013/14)</b>			Latest	<b>425</b>		<b>509</b>		<b>21</b>		
			Original	<b>587</b>		<b>0</b>		<b>0</b>		
<b>New Projects for 2014/15</b>										
1	Front Door Fire Safety Replacement Programme for Leaseholders in Flat Block	H. Thorpe	Latest	125		100		100		C
			Original	125		100		100		
2	Oakwood Hill Estate Enhancement Scheme	P. Pledger	Latest	0		200				C
			Original	100		100				
3	Refurbishment of Communal Kitchens - Sheltered Scheme	H. Thorpe	Latest	70		70				C
			Original	70		70				
4	Provision of Electric Mobility Scooter Stores	H. Thorpe	Latest	50		50				C
			Original	50		50				
5	Extension of Mow and Grow Scheme	R. Wilson	Latest	20		20				R
			Original	20		20				
6	Provision of Wi-Fi at Norway House	R. Wallace	Latest	8						C
			Original	8						
7	Norway House Chalet Replacement Project - Feasibility Study	P. Pledger	Latest	7						C
			Original	7						
8	In-Year Housing Improvements and Enhancements Fund	A. Hall	Latest	50						C / R
			Original	50						
<b>TOTALS (Agreed Projects for 2013/14)</b>			Latest	<b>330</b>		<b>440</b>		<b>100</b>		
			Original	<b>430</b>		<b>340</b>		<b>100</b>		
Major Capital Project Reserve		A. Hall	Latest	0						C
			Original	200						
<b>GRAND TOTALS (Outstanding &amp; Agreed New Projects)</b>			Latest	<b>755</b>		<b>949</b>		<b>121</b>		
			Original	<b>1,217</b>		<b>340</b>		<b>100</b>		
Savings from 2013/14 Out-Turn						387				
Anticipated savings/slippage from 2014/15						462				
Amount expected to be available for HRA Budget for new Enhancements in year						700		700		
Total amount of budget available to spend in year						1,549		700		
Available to allocate to new enhancements in year (after previous year's commitments - i.e. Original Grand Totals above)						600		579		

**Proposed List of Housing Improvements and Service Enhancements**

**2015/16**

**(1) Provision of Daily Direct Debit Facility for Tenants and Leaseholders and Swipe Card Payment Facility for Leaseholders**

**One-off cost:** £3,000 (2015/16)  
**Annual cost:** £11,000 per annum

**Form of expenditure:** Capital

1. The Rent Payment Swipe Card Contract was due to expire in December 2014. To avoid a lengthy and costly procurement process, and to attract preferential group transaction rates, the Housing Portfolio Holder agreed that the Northern Housing Consortium (NHC) Framework Agreement for Payment Systems should be utilised for a new contract which, in the event, is provided by the same organisation as previously (Allpay). The NHC framework consists of 250+ social housing providers and, by now being a member, allows the Council to take advantage of the entire Allpay portfolio of payment products, including daily direct debits, at preferential group rates.

2. At present, the Council only offers 4 direct debit dates for tenants (1<sup>st</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> of the month). This has deterred some tenants from signing up to the payment method, as the deductions do not coincide with the day that they are likely to have the funds available in their accounts. In addition to this, the Government is proposing that, when Universal Credit (UC) is introduced, the payment (which will include Housing Benefit) will be made monthly, paid directly to the recipient, on a date specified by them – and will replace the current arrangement whereby the housing benefit is paid directly into tenant's rent account, on a fortnightly basis, on a set date. Therefore, it will become more important for the Council to have a payment method that matches tenants' UC credit award dates. With the introduction of the Allpay paperless method, deductions could be made on any day of the calendar month and match the date that either salary or UC is credited. It also has the potential to increase the numbers subscribing by direct debit, which could reduce rent arrears further.

3. The Council's existing rents direct debit process also prevents collection of former tenant arrears, since the software only allows direct debits to be set up on current rent accounts. The Allpay solution allows direct debit to be set up for any type of rent account or sub account and introduces another level of payment option when collecting former arrears for other types of debt (e.g. Housing Benefit overpayments, Court Costs). The new functionality would also give the Council a variety of payment collection frequencies to choose from (weekly, fortnight, 4-weekly, monthly, quarterly and annually), as opposed to the current same-date monthly option.

4. Council leaseholders do not currently have a swipe card or direct debit payment facility for the repayment of the estimated bills and are required to use standing order or cash payments, which are manually calculated and are very resource intensive. The Allpay software is an internet-based product, which allows instant set-up and manipulation of direct debit instructions, without a paper and postage based interface.

5. The existing direct debit process is very manually intensive and requires input from four individual officers to produce a separate claim file. As this operation is currently carried out four times a month, there is a significant likelihood that mistakes, such as a failure to



authorise a direct debit claim file (usually in the region of £300,000 at any one time) could occur at some point. Failure to authorise or process a claim file could result in reputational damage to the Council, as well as a risk that the Council's direct debit licence could be revoked. With the Allpay solution, only one operation per customer is required. Once the direct debit is first set up, the direct debit is handled by Allpay. This would completely eliminate the present risk of staff error when creating, submitting and authorising a direct debit claim file.

**Recommendations:**

**(a) That the Allpay paperless daily direct debit facility be introduced from April 2015 for Council tenants, to replace the present 4 dates per month cycle.**

**(b) That the Allpay swipe card payment facility and daily direct debits are introduced from April 2015 for Council leaseholders.**

## **(2) Epping Forest Citizens Advice Bureau Debt Advisors**

**One-off cost(s):** £37,800 (2015/16)  
(Note: £4,200 (10%) non-HRA contribution to be funded from the Local Government Grant Settlement)

**Form of expenditure:** Revenue

1. At its meeting on 4 February 2013 the Cabinet approved, in accordance with the Welfare Mitigation Action Plan, that a revenue grant - funded from the Housing Improvements and Service Enhancements Fund - be provided to the Epping Forest Citizen Advice Bureau (CAB) to fund the appointment of 2 temporary full-time Debt Advisors for a period of 18 months from 1 April 2013. The purpose of the posts is to provide debt advice through the three CAB offices in Epping, Loughton and Waltham Abbey to any Council tenants, private tenants and owner occupiers who fall into debt as a result of the Government's Welfare Reforms, particularly due to benefits and housing issues. From the Council's own point of view, the benefit is that the posts assist in keeping rent arrears under control and reduce the risk of homelessness despite the reforms.

2. As the service does not benefit solely Council tenants, a contribution of 10% has been made from the General Fund. It was agreed that, in order that no additional expenditure fell to the General Fund, this contribution should be funded from the Government Grant for preventing homelessness.

3. Although the funding would have ended in September 2014, as a result of breaks in service due to vacancies the service will continue, within the current budget, until 31 March 2015.

4. The Housing staff who make referrals to the service report that the two Debt Advisors have provided a good service to residents in the Epping Forest District. Indeed, it is noteworthy that although most council landlords and housing associations across the country have reported increases in their rent arrears during the first year of the welfare reform, this Council's rent arrears reduced over 2013/14 by 27% (£175,000). Similarly, the Council's Rent Collection Rate increased from 97.16% at the end of 2012/13 to 97.60% by the end of 2013/14. It is considered that part of this success was as a result of the work of the CAB debt advisers.

5. The CAB has also supplied the following information:

- 25% of all CAB clients are either disabled or have long-term health issues
- In the current year, the service provided at the Limes Centre, Chigwell has increased from one half day to two half days each week (including follow-up work, and supervision by senior CAB staff) to provide both a drop-in and appointments service
- The CAB Debt Advisors have dealt with 385 clients in person (during the 8 month period ending 30 November 2014)
- The CAB Debt Advisors have recorded 1,875 activities on behalf of both the 385 clients referred to above and other clients, these activities include phone calls, letters and emails
- 1,104 debt related issues have been addressed by the CAB Debt Advisors
- 73% of all cases dealt with by the CAB across the District concerned Debt, Benefits and housing

6. In view of the expected introduction of Universal Credit and Housing Benefit Direct, and the possibility of further cuts to welfare benefits, it appears that the Council's tenants will need further support in the future. It is therefore suggested that grant funding for the two CAB Debt Advisers continues for a further 12 months from 1 April 2015.

**Recommendations:**

- (a) That a revenue grant of £37,800 be provided to the Epping Forest Citizens Advice Bureau to fund the continuation of the two temporary full-time Debt Advisors for a further 12 months from 1 April 2015; and
- (b) That the non-HRA contribution of grant, amounting to £4,200, be funded from the grant received as part of the Local Government Grant Settlement 2015/16 specifically for homelessness prevention measures.

**(3) Expansion of Services and Opening Hours at the Limes Centre, Chigwell**

**One-off cost(s):**            £14,800    (2015/16)  
    £7,400     (2016/17)

**Form of expenditure:**    Revenue

1. Following the re-development of the Limes Farm Hall, Chigwell, the new Limes Centre was opened in February 2012. The Limes Centre is an important community facility on the Limes Farm Estate and currently accommodates the following services:

- Housing Management Estate Office (to be re-designated as the Local EFDC Council Office), which opens each morning between 9am and 12.30pm, providing a housing management service to both the Limes Farm Estate, and other parts of Chigwell and Buckhurst Hill
- Benefits and Council Tax advisors are available to give advice during normal office hours each Wednesday
- Debt Advice Service is provided by the Epping Forest Citizens Advice Bureau two mornings each week
- The "True Stars" Children's Centre operates from and within the facility, Monday to Friday from 9.30am to 5pm
- An NHS Health Clinic, which provides a baby clinic and a range of other services for the community
- A Youth Club provided by Essex Youth Service
- A Job Centre Plus drop-in Centre on Thursdays between 11am to 2pm

2. In addition to the above services, which provide a “multi-agency hub” for local people, the Limes Centre has a large main hall and smaller activities hall which are available for hire, for both regular bookings and one-off events, including evenings and weekends. Currently, these bookings include sports clubs such as Judo and Karate, a range of fitness and wellbeing sessions such as Tai Chi and Yoga and many children’s parties and large faith gatherings at weekends.

3. In order to make the best use of the Local EFDC Office facilities, it is proposed that an additional part-time (18 hours) Housing Officer is appointed, initially on an 18 month temporary contract, in order extend the services offered on a 12 month pilot at the Centre:

- To work predominantly at the Local EFDC Council Office, enabling the office to extend its opening hours to normal office hours Monday-Friday (closing one hour for lunch). This will be supported by staff from Community Services and Finance
- To enable the Local EFDC Council Office, along with other Council staff based there, to facilitate other services
- To explore the opportunity to expand the services provided at the Centre, including making payments for Council services, drop-in sessions for Planning enquiries and the relocation of the Epping Forest Citizen Advice Bureau to the Centre to provide a service to the south of the District
- To assist in marketing the Centre across the District as a general Council service facility

3. Following the 12 month pilot, it is proposed that a report be submitted to the Housing Portfolio Holder to consider a review of the success or otherwise of the additional services, and whether the additional part-time Housing Officer post should be made permanent.

**Recommendation:**

- (a) That an additional temporary part-time (18 hours) Housing Officer post be created for a period of 18 months, to enable the expansion of services referred to in the report at the Limes Centre, Chigwell for a pilot period of 12 months; and**
- (b) That the Housing Portfolio Holder undertakes a Review of the success of the Pilot following 12 months of operation, and considers whether the post should be made permanent.**

**(4) In-Year Housing Improvements and Enhancements Fund**

**One-off cost(s):** Nil  
**Annual cost:** £50,000  
**Form of expenditure:** Capital / Revenue

1. For the last three years, a small part of the Housing Improvements and Service Enhancements Fund has been set aside as an In-Year Fund for small additional projects of benefit to tenants that may be identified during the course of the year by members and officers. This has enabled the projects to be undertaken quickly, rather than having to wait until the commencement of the following financial year. Individual one-off projects costing in excess of £10,000 have to be formally authorised by Housing Portfolio Holder.

2. The Cabinet has previously agreed that an annual provision of £50,000 for the In-Year Fund should be included within the main Housing Improvement and Service Enhancements Fund – which has been included within the Fund Programme accordingly.

**Housing Improvements and Service Enhancements Fund - 2015-16  
Programme Costs (One-off and Ongoing)**

No.	Proposal	Responsible Officer	£000's						Cap. or Rev.	
			2015/16		2016/17		2017/18			
			One-off	Ongoing	One-off	Ongoing	One-off	Ongoing		
<b>Outstanding Projects from 2014/15</b>										
14/15 A	On-Line Rents System for Tenants	D. Clifton	Latest							C
			Original	15						
14/15 B	Front Door Fire Safety Replacement Programme for Leaseholders in Flat Block	H. Thorpe	Latest							C
			Original	100		100				
14/15 C	Oakwood Hill Estate Enhancement Scheme	P. Pledger	Latest							C
			Original	200						
14/15 D	Refurbishment of Communal Kitchens - Sheltered Schem	H. Thorpe	Latest							C
			Original	70						
14/15 E	Provision of Electric Mibility Scooter Stores	H. Thorpe	Latest							C
			Original	50						
14/15 F	Extension of Mow and Grow Scheme	R. Wilson	Latest							R
			Original	20						
14/15 G	Increase in furniture budget - sheltered housing	D. Pegler	Latest							C
			Original	10						
14/15 H	Marden Close & Faversham Hall	P. Pledger	Latest							C
			Original	484		21				
<b>TOTALS (Outstanding Projects from 2014/15)</b>			Latest	0		0		0		
			Original	949		121		0		
<b>New Projects for 2015/16</b>										
1	Additional Financial Incentives for Downsizing	R. Wallace	Latest							R
			Original		51		51		51	
2	Enhanced Corporate Fraud Team	B. Bassington	Latest							R
			Original		42		42		42	
3	Enhanced Rent and Leaseholder Payment Systems	D. Clifton	Latest							R
			Original		16		16		16	
4	All Day Opening - Limes Farm Office, Chigwell	R. Wilson	Latest							R
			Original	15		8				
6	1-Year Extension of CAB Debt Advisers	R. Wilson	Latest							R
			Original	42						
7	In-Year Housing Improvements and Enhancements Fund	A. Hall	Latest							C / R
			Original	50						
<b>TOTALS (Agreed Projects for 2015/16)</b>			Latest	0	0	0	0	0	0	
			Original	107	109	8	109	0	109	
Use for Major Capital Project Reserve		A. Hall	Latest							C
			Original	384		0		0		
<b>GRAND TOTALS (Outstanding &amp; Agreed New Projects)</b>			Latest	0		0		0		
			Original	1,549		238		109		
<b>Savings from 2014/15 Out-Turn</b>						0				
<b>Anticipated savings/slippage from 2015/16</b>						0				
<b>Amount expected to be available for HRA Budget for new Enhancements in year</b>						700		700		
<b>Total amount of budget available to spend in year</b>						700		700		
<b>Available to allocate to new enhancements in year (after previous year's commitments - i.e. Original Grand Totals above)</b>						<b>462</b>		<b>591</b>		

## **Report to Housing Scrutiny Panel**

**Date of meeting: 9<sup>th</sup> February 2015**

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

**Subject: New Housing Strategy Key Action Plan  
2015/16**

**Officer contact for further information:**

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

**Committee Secretary: Mark Jenkins**



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### **Decision:**

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

### **Reason for decision:**

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

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

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

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

### **Report:**

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

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

3. The Cabinet also agreed that progress with the Key Action Plans should be monitored on a 6-monthly basis by the Housing Scrutiny Panel, in accordance with its Terms of Reference, which it has done.
4. Although there is no legal or policy requirement, it was originally anticipated that the Housing Strategy would cover a three-year period, and would therefore be updated during 2012 to cover the following three years. However, much of the Housing Strategy relates to the provisions within the Local Plan, and a new Local Plan is currently under consideration by the Council.
5. Therefore, the Housing Portfolio Holder has previously agreed that the Housing Strategy should not be updated until the Local Plan Preferred Options (Draft Local Plan) has been published but that, in the meantime, an Annual Housing Strategy Key Action Plan should continue to be produced, with progress monitored by the Housing Scrutiny Panel, until the new Housing Strategy is formulated and adopted.
6. The last Key Action Plan was adopted in Summer 2013, and the last 6-Month Progress Report for the current Key Action Plan was considered by the Housing Scrutiny Panel in October 2014.
7. Accordingly, a proposed Housing Strategy Key Action Plan for the forthcoming year is attached as an Appendix, which the Scrutiny Panel is asked to consider and recommend its adoption (subject to any views of the Scrutiny Panel) to the Housing Portfolio Holder.
8. Progress with the Key Action Plan will continue to be monitored on a six-monthly basis by the Housing Scrutiny Panel (or its successor body) in the normal way, commencing July 2015.

**Resource Implications:**

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

**Legal and Governance Implications:**

The actions are covered by a number of statutes.

**Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:**

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

**Consultation Undertaken:**

None.

**Background Papers:**

None.

**Risk Management:**

The risk of adopting the Housing Strategy are minimal. The risks of individual actions will be managed in accordance with the Council's Risk Management Framework

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

# Due Regard Record

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

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

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

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

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**Housing Strategy Key Action Plan 2015-16**

No	Category	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Progress Report <i>(To be competed at 6-month intervals)</i>
1	General	Review the Housing Strategy 2009-2012 and produce an updated Housing Strategy for 2014-2017, following a consultation exercise on a Draft Housing Strategy	Director of Communities	Mar 2016	
2	Local Plan	Complete the gathering of information, including the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), to form the evidence on which key decisions will be taken as part of the Local Plan.	Asst. Director (Policy Planning & Economic Devt)	Under Review	
3	Local Plan	Agree on objectively assessed Housing and Employment Need for the Local Plan Period.	Asst. Director (Policy Planning & Economic Devt)	Under Review	
4	Local Plan	Complete a District-Wide Viability Assessment on viable levels of affordable housing provision within developments	Asst. Director (Policy Planning & Economic Devt)	Under Review	
5	Local Plan	Agree a Draft Local Plan (Preferred Options) and undertake the appropriate Sustainability Appraisal	Asst. Director (Policy Planning & Economic Devt)	Under Review	
6	Local Plan	Undertake a Consultation Exercise on the Preferred Options	Asst. Director (Policy Planning & Economic Devt)	Under Review	

7	Local Plan	Submit the Final Local Plan to the Planning Inspectorate for an Examination in Public	Asst. Director (Policy Planning & Economic Devt)	Under Review	
8	Housing Market	Consider subscribing to the Hometrack Service to provide ongoing housing market intelligence for planning and housing purposes	Director of Communities / Forward Planning Manager	March 2015	
9	Regeneration	Work in partnership with Essex County Council, Epping Town Council and other partners to commence a sustainable regeneration scheme for the St Johns Area of Epping, in accordance with the adopted Design and Development Brief, which includes an appropriate amount of market and affordable housing	Chief Executive	Dec 2015	
10	Affordable Housing Provision	Work with Moat Housing to commence the development of the Council-owned difficult-to-let garage site at Vere Road, Loughton to provide 15 new affordable rented flats and an additional 14 parking spaces for private development on the adjacent site of the former Sir Winston Churchill PH.	Director of Communities	Dec 2015	
11	Affordable Housing Provision	Work with housing associations and developers to complete the development of 107 new affordable homes for rent and shared ownership by September 2015 at the following non-Council owned sites:	Director of Communities	Sept 2015	

		<p>(a) Jennikings Nursery, Chigwell – 52 new homes</p> <p>(b) Manor Road Garden Centre, Chigwell – 17 new homes</p> <p>(c) St. Johns School – 38 new homes</p>			
12	Affordable Housing Provision	Seek planning permission for residential development at the Council's Pyrles Lane Nursery site, Loughton, including the provision of at least 40% affordable housing, by addressing the issues resulting in the previous planning permission refusal	Chief Executive	April 2015	
13	Affordable Housing Provision	Consider whether to undertake a Phase 3 of the Open Market Home Ownership Scheme with B3Living - to enable first-time buyers in the District to purchase a property of their choice from the open market through shared ownership, funded jointly by the Council, B3Living and the applicants	Director of Communities	April 2015	
14	Affordable Housing Provision	Appoint an affordable housing viability consultant, through a competitive exercise, for a 3-year period in order to provide specialist advice and undertake the validation of viability appraisals submitted by developers who assert that the Council's expected level of affordable housing provision on their site unviable and propose a financial contribution in lieu of the provision of on-site affordable housing	Director of Communities	April 2015	

15	Affordable Housing Provision	Consider the introduction of Supplementary Planning Guidance on the required approach by developers to the undertaking of viability assessments for developments involving affordable housing	Principal Planning Officer / Director of Communities	July 2015	
16	Council Housebuilding Programme	Complete the development of 23 new affordable homes for rent at Waltham Abbey, under Phase 1 of the Council's Housebuilding Programme	Asst. Director (Housing Property & Devt.)	Dec 2015	
17	Council Housebuilding Programme	Complete a major conversion scheme to convert 20 unpopular bedsits at Marden Close and a community hall at Faversham Hall, Marden Close, to provide 12 self-contained one-bedroomed rented flats for Housing Register applicants	Asst. Director (Property & Devt.)	Sept 2015	
18	Council Housebuilding Programme	Obtain planning permission for the development of new affordable homes for rent at Burton Road, Loughton, under Phase 2 of the Council's Housebuilding Programme	Asst. Director (Housing Property & Devt.)	Sept 2015	
19	Council Housebuilding Programme	Seek Development Partner status for the Council with the Homes and Communities Agency, to enable the Council to secure the £0.5 million funding obtained from the HCA for Phase 2 of the Council Housebuilding Programme	Asst. Director (Housing Property & Devt.)	June 2015	
20	Council Housebuilding Programme	Complete the remaining development and financial appraisals for the identified potential development sites and formulate a Pipeline Programme	Asst. Director (Housing Property & Devt.)	Mar 2016	

		of developments for Phases Years 3-6 of the Programme			
21	Council and Housing Association Accommodation	Implement the Council's revised Housing Allocations Scheme, including a revised Local Eligibility Criteria increasing the requirement for applicants to have lived within the District from 3 – 5 years and lowering the maximum combined income / assets threshold to £76,000.	Asst. Director (Housing Operations)	July 2015	
22	Council and Housing Association Accommodation	Update the existing District-wide Nominations Agreements with each of the Council's Preferred Housing Association Partners for new rented housing developments - to take account of the new Affordable Rents Framework - and formulate new District-wide Nominations Agreements for shared ownership properties with the same partners.	Director of Communities	June 2015	
23	Council and Housing Association Accommodation	Procure a provider for an updated Housing Register Hosting and Choice Based Lettings Agency Service, in partnership with five neighbouring local authorities	Asst. Director (Housing Operations)	Sept 2015	
24	Council and Housing Association Accommodation	Subscribe and contribute information to the new proposed Essex Veterans' Portal, in partnership with other Essex local authorities and Essex agencies, in support of the Community Covenant to assist former members of the Armed Forces.	Policy & Grants Officer	June 2015	

25	Council Housing	Implement the Council's revised Tenancy Policy, to extend the provision of flexible (fixed term) tenancies for 10 year periods (including an introductory tenancy period) to all Council properties (excluding sheltered properties).	Asst. Director (Housing Operations)	July 2015	
26	Council Housing	Bring together all the Council's fraud functions, including social housing fraud into one corporate team, to provide synergy, consistent working practices and shared intelligence	Chief Internal Auditor	April 2015	
27	Homelessness	Update the Council's Homelessness Strategy, to ensure that it is up to date and sets out the most appropriate approach to responding to homelessness over the next 3 years	Asst. Director (Housing Operations)	June 2015	
28	Homelessness	Consider the feasibility of replacing the existing mobile homes in the grounds of the Council's Homeless Persons' Hostel at Norway House, North Weald with new temporary accommodation for homeless families, that will be fit for purpose for the future	Asst. Director (Housing Property & Devt.)	Dec 2015	
29	Homelessness	Undertake improvements to the rooms at Norway House, North Weald, to improve the facilities and decor	Asst. Director (Housing Property & Devt.)	Mar 2016	
30	Supported Housing – Older and Other Vulnerable People	Work in partnership with Essex County Council to provide a supported housing scheme at Lindsay House, Epping.	Director of Communities	Mar 2017	

31	Supported Housing – Older and Other Vulnerable People	Include a requirement in the Draft Local Plan that an increased number of homes within new housing developments in the District should meet the Lifetime Homes Standard than presently required	Asst. Director (Policy Planning & Economic Development)	Under Review	
32	Empty Homes	Bring at least 40 long-term empty properties back into use by Council intervention within any 12-month period, including the continued use of the PLACE Scheme	Private Housing Manager (Technical)	March 2016	
33	Rural Housing	Continue to work with Hastoe Housing Association and Parish Councils to investigate the development potential for rural housing schemes in villages, through the Council's Rural Planning Exceptions Policy	Director of Communities	Mar 2016	
34	Decent Homes – Private Sector	Introduce new licence conditions for existing holiday park homes sites in the District, following consultation with site owners and statutory agencies	Private Housing Manager (Technical)	Sept 2015	
35	Decent Homes – Private Sector	Consider and adopt a corporate protocol for dealing with unsuitable living conditions within agricultural and nursery accommodation, from a housing, planning, legal and economic development perspective	Private Housing Manager (Technical)	Mar 2016	
36	CARE Agency	Prepare for the retendering of the County Council funding for home improvement agencies within Essex, to ensure the continued viability of the Council's in-house Caring and Repairing in Epping Forest (CARE) Agency	Private Housing Manager (Grants and CARE)	July 2015	







## SCRUTINY



**Report to: Housing Scrutiny Panel**

**Date of meeting: 9 February 2015**

**Portfolio:** Housing (Councilor D. Stallan)

**Subject:** Key Performance Indicators 2014/15 - Quarter 2 Performance

**Officer contact for further information:** B. Copson (01992 564042)

**Democratic Services Officer:** A. Hendry (01992 564246)  
M. Jenkins (01992 564607)

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

**That the Scrutiny Panel review performance in relation to the key performance indicators within its areas of responsibility, for the second quarter of the year.**

### **Executive Summary:**

1. Pursuant to the Local Government Act 1999, the Council is required to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions and services are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
2. As part of the duty to secure continuous improvement, a range of Key Performance Indicators (KPI) relevant to the Council's services and key objectives, are adopted each year. Performance against the majority of KPIs is monitored on a quarterly basis, and has previously been a focus of inspection in external assessments and judgements of the overall progress of the authority.

### **Reasons for Proposed Decision:**

3. The KPIs provide an opportunity for the Council to focus attention on how specific areas for improvement will be addressed, and how opportunities will be exploited and better outcomes delivered.
4. A number of KPIs are used as performance measures for the Council's key objectives for each year. It is important that relevant performance management processes are in place to review and monitor performance against the key objectives, to ensure their continued achievability and relevance, and to identify proposals for appropriate corrective action in areas of slippage or under performance.

### **Other Options for Action:**

5. No other options are appropriate in this respect. Failure to monitor and review KPI performance and to consider corrective action where necessary could have negative implications for judgements made about the Council's progress, and might mean that opportunities for improvement are lost.

## Report:

6. A range of thirty-six Key Performance Indicators (KPI) for 2014/15 was adopted by the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee in March 2014. The KPIs are important to the improvement of the Council's services and the achievement of its key objectives, and comprise a combination of some former statutory indicators and locally determined performance measures. The aim of the KPIs is to direct improvement effort towards services and the national priorities and local challenges arising from the social, economic and environmental context of the district, that are the focus of the key objectives.
7. Progress in respect of each of the KPIs is reviewed by the relevant Portfolio Holder, Management Board, and overview and scrutiny at the conclusion of each quarter. In order to enhance the value of the on-going review of KPI performance throughout each year, no indicators are subject to scrutiny or performance reporting at year-end only.
8. Improvement plans are produced for all of the KPIs each year, setting out actions to be implemented in order to achieve target performance, and to reflect changes in service delivery. In view of the corporate importance attached to the KPIs, the improvement plans are agreed by Management Board and are also subject to ongoing review between the relevant service director and Portfolio Holder over the course of the year.
9. As part of the overview and scrutiny review undertaken in 2013/14, changes have been made to arrangements for the quarterly review of KPI performance. From this municipal year, the existing scrutiny panels (Finance and Performance Management, Housing, Planning Services, Safer, Greener, Cleaner) are now each responsible for the review of quarterly performance against specific KPIs within their areas of responsibility, rather than all indicators being considered by the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel as previously. Therefore this report includes in detail only those indicators which fall within the areas of responsibility of the Housing Scrutiny Panel.

## Key Performance Indicators 2014/15 - Quarter 2 Performance

10. The overall position with regard to the achievement of target performance for **all** of the KPIs at the end of the second quarter (1 July to 30 September 2014) of the year, was as follows:
  - (a) 25 (69%) indicators achieved the cumulative second - quarter target; and
  - (b) 11 (30%) indicators did not achieve the cumulative second-quarter target, although 2 (5%) of these KPIs performed within the agreed tolerance for the indicator.
  - (c) 30 (83%) are currently anticipated to achieve the cumulative year-end target.
11. Ten (10) of the Key Performance Indicators fall within the Housing Scrutiny Panel areas of responsibility. The overall position with regard to the achievement of target performance at the end of the second quarter of the year for these ten indicators, was as follows:
  - (a) 10 (100%) indicators achieved the cumulative second quarter target, and
  - (b) 10 (100%) are currently anticipated to achieve the cumulative year-end target.
12. A headline second-quarter performance summary in respect of each of the KPIs falling within the Housing Scrutiny Panel areas of responsibility for 2014/15, is attached as Appendix 1 to this agenda together with details of the specific six-month performance for each indicator.

13. The 'amber' performance status used in KPI reports identifies indicators that have missed the agreed target for the quarter, but where performance is within an agreed tolerance or range. The KPI tolerances were agreed by Management Board when targets for the KPIs were set in February 2014, or were subsequently determined by the appropriate service directors.
14. The Scrutiny Panel is requested to review six-month performance in relation to the KPIs for 2014/15 within its areas of responsibility.

#### **Resource Implications:**

Resource requirements for actions to achieve specific KPI performance for 2014/15 will have been identified by the responsible service director/chief officer and reflected in the budget for the year.

#### **Legal and Governance Implications:**

There are no legal or governance implications arising from the recommendations of this report. Relevant implications arising from actions to achieve specific KPI performance for 2014/15 will have been identified by the responsible service director/chief officer.

#### **Safer, Cleaner, Greener Implications:**

There are no implications arising from the recommendations of this report in respect of the Council's commitment to the Climate Local Agreement, the corporate Safer, Cleaner, Greener initiative, or any crime and disorder issues within the district. Relevant implications arising from actions to achieve specific KPI performance for 2014/15 will have been identified by the responsible service director/chief officer.

#### **Consultation Undertaken:**

The performance information and targets set out in this report have been submitted by each appropriate service director and have been reviewed by Management Board. The individual KPI improvement plans for 2014/15 will be agreed by the Board.

#### **Background Papers:**

Second-quarter KPI submissions held by the Performance Improvement Unit. KPI calculations and supporting documentation held by respective service directorates

#### **Impact Assessments:**




















##### ***Risk Management***

There are no risk management issues arising from the recommendations of this report. Relevant issues arising from actions to achieve specific KPI performance for 2014/15 will have been identified by the responsible service director/chief officer.

##### ***Equality:***

There are no equality implications arising from the recommendations of this report. Relevant implications arising from actions to achieve specific KPI performance for 2014/15 will have been identified by the responsible service director/chief officer.

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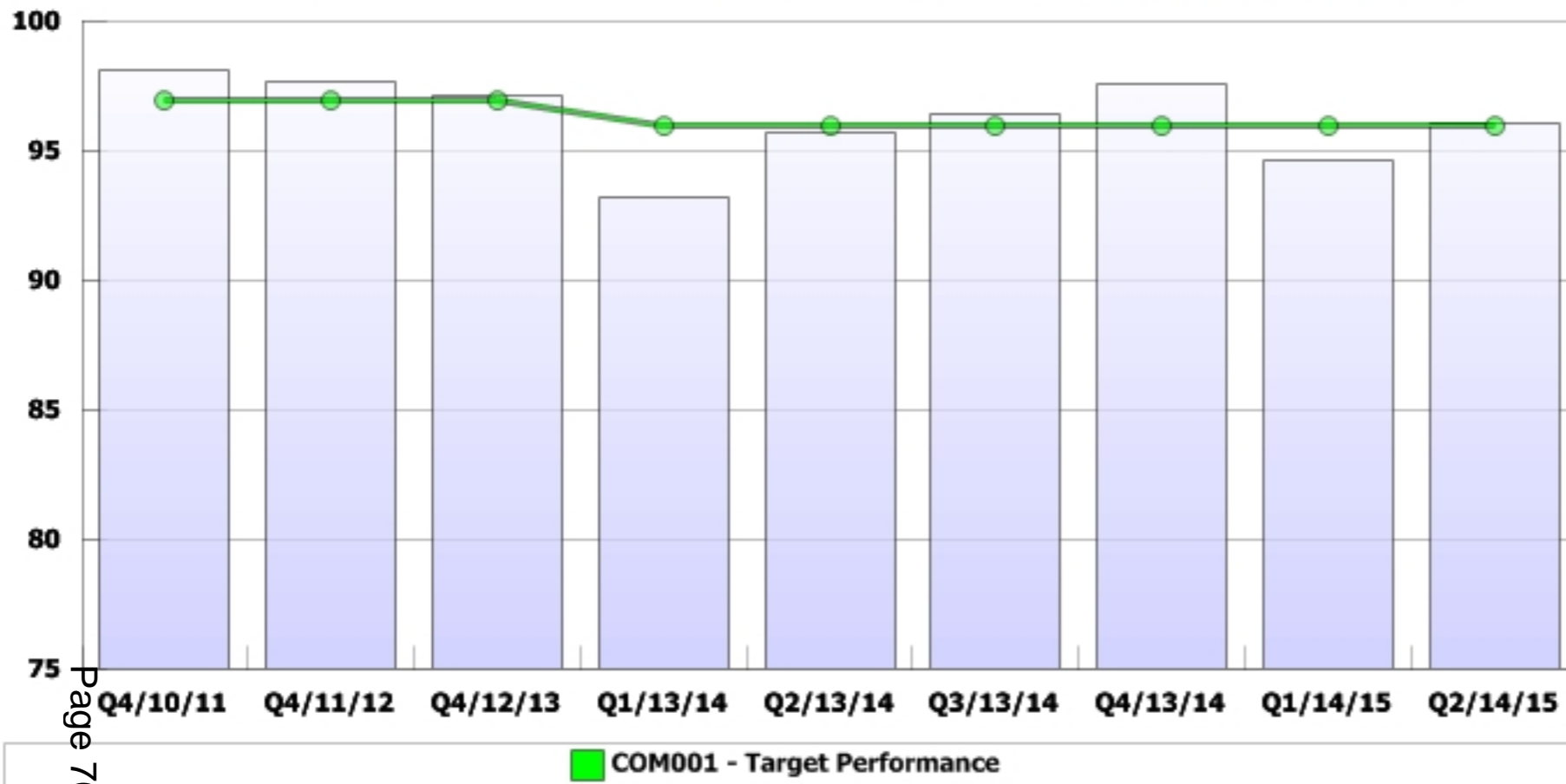
Quarterly Indicators		Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4		Is year-end target likely to be achieved?
		Tgt	Actual	Tgt	Actual	Tgt	Actual	Tgt	Actual	
<b>Housing Scrutiny Panel</b>										
COM001	(Housing rent) (%)	96.00%	94.66%		96.00%	96.09%		96.00%	96.00%	Yes
COM002	(Void re-lets) (days)	37.0	39.0		37.0	34.0		37.0	37.0	Yes
COM003	(Tenant satisfaction) (%)	98.00%	99.00%		98.00%	100.00%		98.00%	98.00%	Yes
COM004	(Temp. accommodation) (no.)	65	51		65	47		65	65	Yes
COM005	(Non-decent homes) (%)	0.00%	0.00%		0.00%	0.00%		0.00%	0.00%	Yes
COM006	(Modern Homes Std) (%)	825	1,244		1,650	2,204		2,475	3,300	Yes
COM007	(Emergency repairs) (%)	99%	99%		99%	99%		99%	99%	Yes
COM008	(Responsive repairs) (days)	7.0	7.7		7.0	7.0		7.0	7.0	Yes
COM009	(Emergency repairs) (%)	98%	99%		98%	98%		98%	98%	Yes
COM010	(Calls to Careline) (%)	97.5%	99.7%		97.5%	99.7%		97.5%	97.5%	Yes

# COM001 What percentage of the rent due from our council home tenants was paid?

**Additional Information: This indicator is a measure of a local authority's rent collection and arrears recovery service**

For enquiries regarding this indicator contact the Performance Improvement Unit by email on [performance@eppingforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:performance@eppingforestdc.gov.uk) or by telephone on 01992 564472

## Current and previous quarters performance



Quarter	Target	Actual	Status
Q2/14/15	96.00%	96.09%	✓
Q1/14/15	96.00%	94.66%	✗
Q4/13/14	96.00%	97.60%	✓
Q3/13/14	96.00%	96.45%	✓
Q2/13/14	96.00%	95.77%	✗

**Annual Target:** 2014/15 - 96.00%  
2013/14 - 96.00%

**Indicator of good performance:**  
A higher percentage is good

↑ is the direction of improvement

Is it likely that the target will be met at the end of the year?

Yes

### Comment on current performance (including context):

(Q2 2014/15) - Target met.

As in previous years, it has proved difficult to measure performance on a quarterly basis due to the complicated calculation. This is because at the end of each quarter rent paid by direct debit is not always able to be included, especially now there are so many payment dates available to customers. Furthermore, amounts paid by tenants at the cash desk by cheque may not have reached their accounts.

### Corrective action proposed (if required):

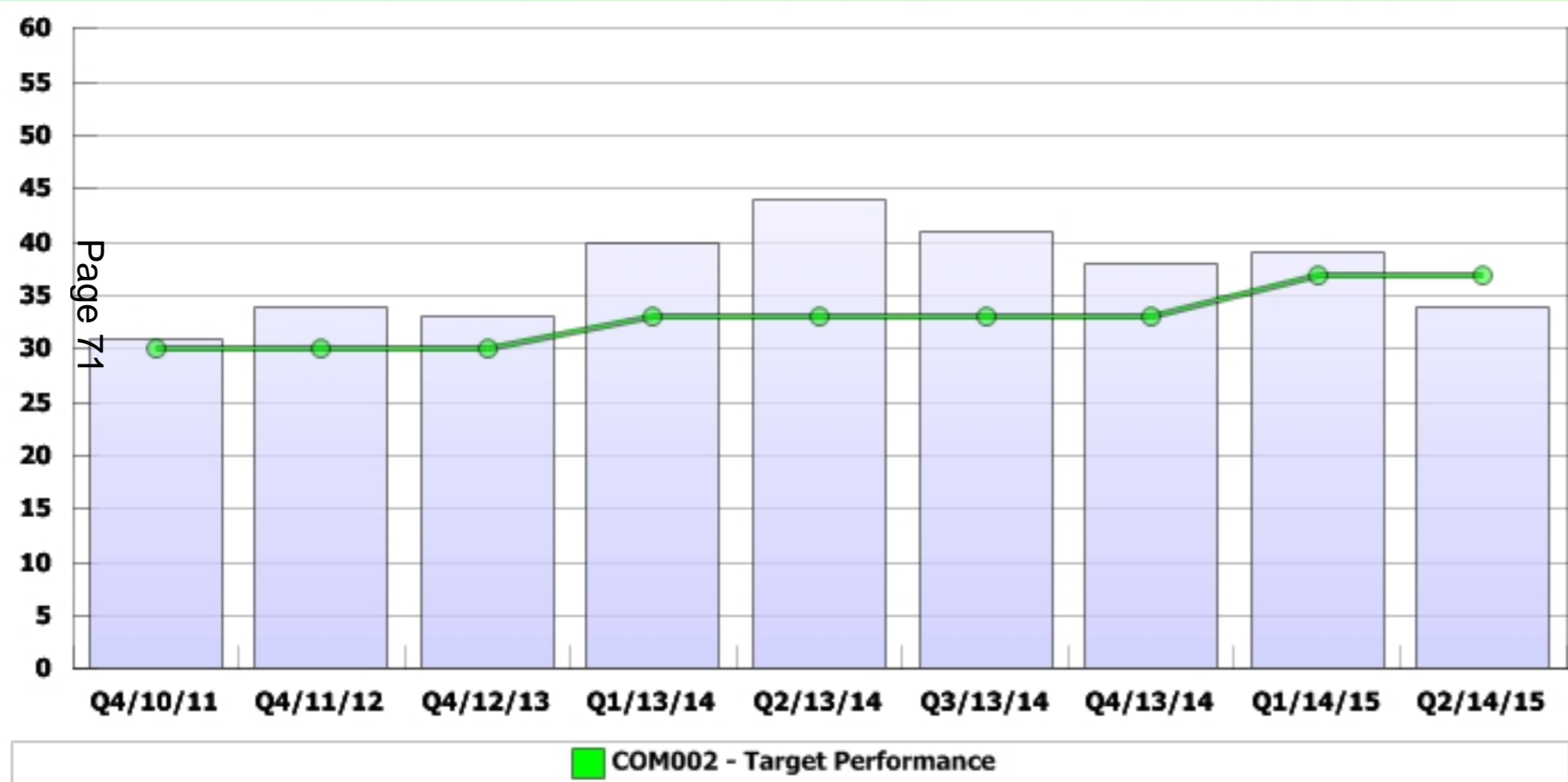
(Q2 2014/15) - A project is underway, in conjunction with Finance and Audit, to carry out monthly reconciliations of the rent accounts. One of the purposes of this project is to improve the performance figure on a quarterly basis.

**COM002 On average, how many days did it take us to re-let a Council property?**

**Additional Information:** The calculation excludes those properties which are 'difficult to let' (offered to and refused by at least two applicants) or 'major works' (works over 6 weeks AND over £1500 in cost terms). In addition it also excludes 'properties let through mutual exchanges', 'very sheltered accommodation' and 'properties the council intends to sell or demolish'.

For enquiries regarding this indicator contact the Performance Improvement Unit by email on performance@eppingforestdc.gov.uk or by telephone on 01992 564472

**Current and previous quarters performance**



Quarter	Target	Actual	Status
Q2/14/15	37.0	34.0	✓
Q1/14/15	37.0	39.0	✗
Q4/13/14	33.0	38.0	✗
Q3/13/14	33.0	41.0	✗
Q2/13/14	33.0	44.0	✗

**Annual 2014/15 - 37 days**  
**Target: 2013/14 - 33 days**

**Indicator of good performance:**  
**A lower number of days is good**

↓ is the direction of improvement

**Is it likely that the target will be met at the end of the year?**  
 Yes



**Comment on current performance (including context):**

(Q2 2014/15) - Both the Allocations and Voids teams have recently set up new systems to ensure the better monitoring of vacancies. The Allocations team have tightened up the whole offer process and the Voids team have changed the sequence of void work, ensuring in both cases that delays are kept to a minimum.

NOTE: Figure for Q4 - 2013/14 amended from 37 to 38 days as a result of Audit check. All other figures are correct.

**Corrective action proposed (if required):**

(Q2 2014/15) - The following corrective actions are being considered as part of the ongoing process of improving relet times:

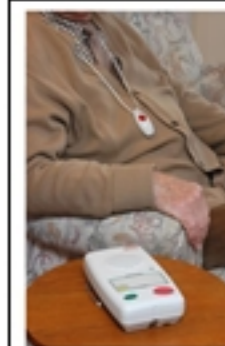
- Possible re-introduction of pre-inspections prior to tenants transferring. Permissions will be withheld where properties are in a poor state of repair. This will avoid undertaking extensive works following vacation thereby extending the void period.
- Reducing bidding cycles from fortnightly to weekly to reduce the period between the keys being returned to Housing Options and the property being let.
- Introducing multiple viewings for general needs difficult to let properties which should reduce the time between offers.

# COM003 How satisfied were our tenants with the standard of the repairs service they received?

**Additional Information:** This indicator is a measure of housing management performance, as it is incumbent upon the Council as landlord to ensure the upkeep of its dwellings and that repairs are completed on time and to the satisfaction of tenants

For enquiries regarding this indicator contact the Performance Improvement Unit by email on performance@eppingforestdc.gov.uk or by telephone on 01992 564472

## Current and previous quarters performance



Is it likely that the target will be met at the end of the year?

Yes

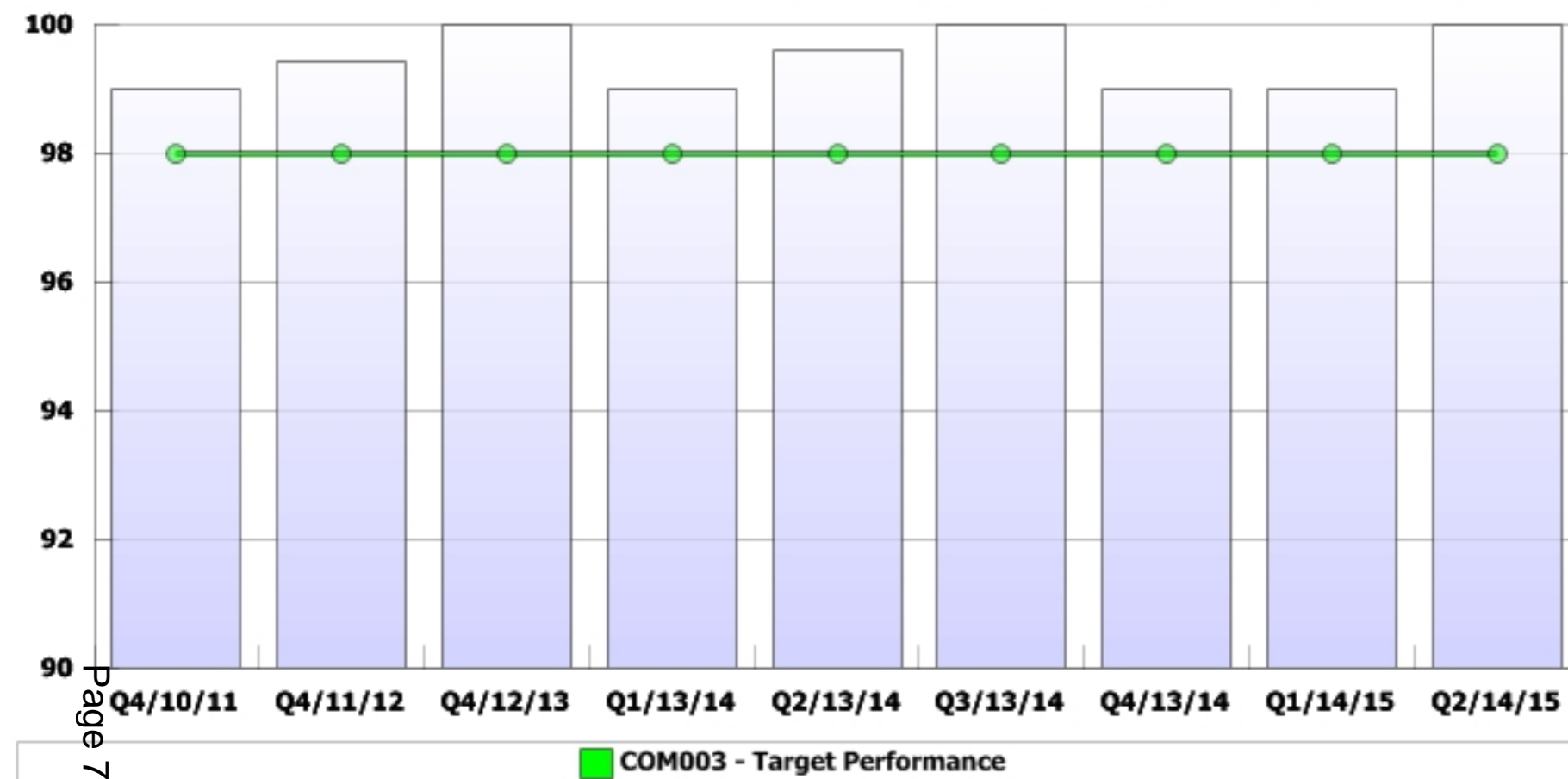
Quarter	Target	Actual
Q2/14/15	98.00%	100.00%
Q1/14/15	98.00%	99.00%
Q4/13/14	98.00%	99.00%
Q3/13/14	98.00%	100.00%
Q2/13/14	98.00%	99.61%



Annual 2014/15 - 98.00%  
Target: 2013/14 - 98.00%

Indicator of good performance:  
A higher percentage is good

↑ is the direction of improvement



### Comment on current performance (including context):

(Q2 2014/15) - The performance continues to achieve the target set. Of the 718 response there was 1 unsatisfactory response relating to an emergency. The customer was however satisfied with the quality of the repair and politeness of the operative.

### Corrective action proposed (if required):

Area for corrective action proposed (if required).

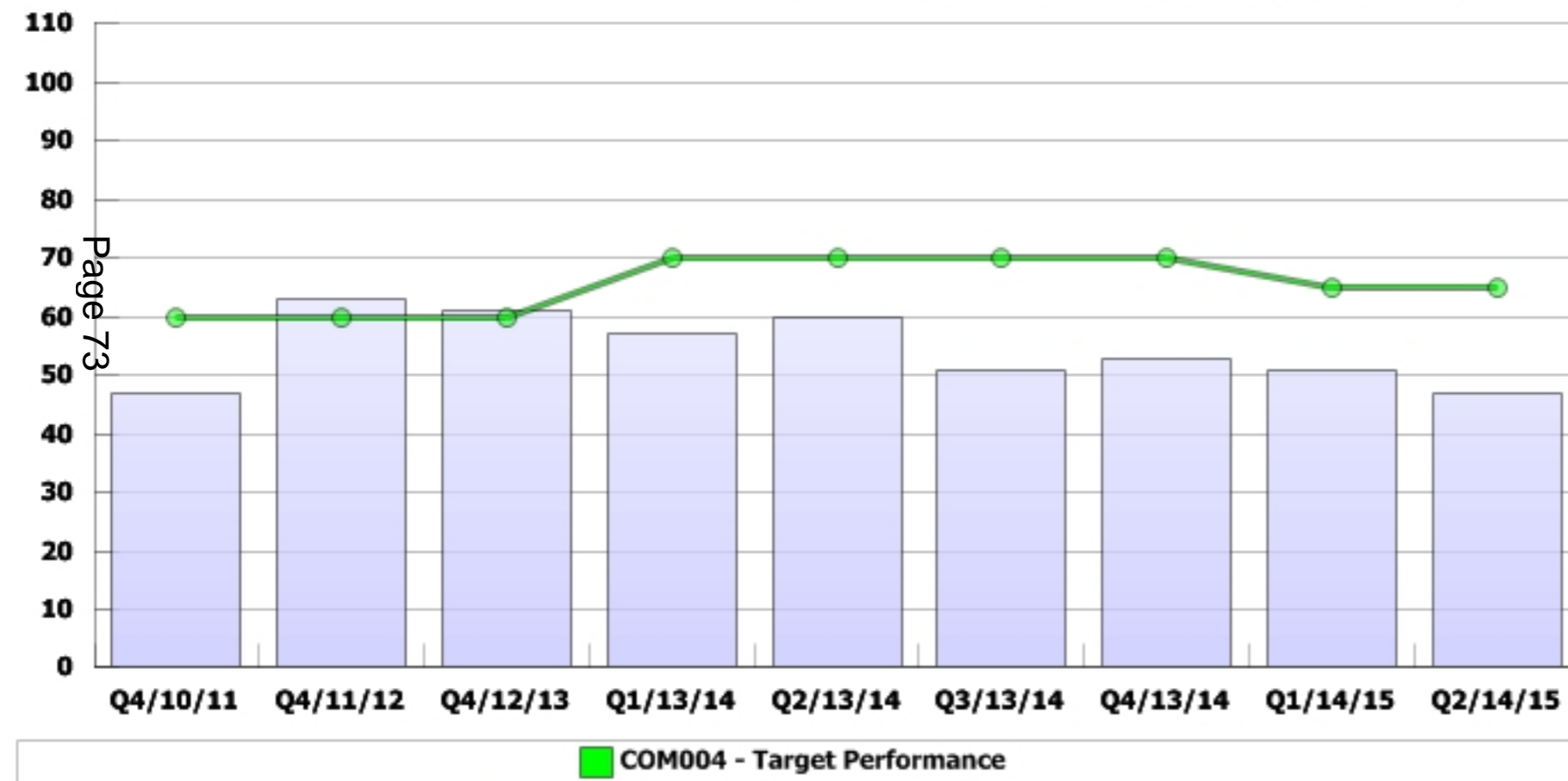


# COM004 How many households were housed in temporary accommodation?

**Additional Information:** This indicator monitors progress towards reducing the number of households in temporary accommodation provided under homelessness legislation. Annual performance is judged on the average of all four quarters performances.

For enquiries regarding this indicator contact the Performance Improvement Unit by email on performance@eppingforestdc.gov.uk or by telephone on 01992 564472

## Current and previous quarters performance



Quarter	Target	Actual
Q2/14/15	65	47
Q1/14/15	65	51
Q4/13/14	70	53
Q3/13/14	70	51
Q2/13/14	70	60



**Annual 2014/15 - 65**  
**Target: 2013/14 - 70**

**Indicator of good performance:**  
**A lower number is good**

**↓ is the direction of improvement**

**Is it likely that the target will be met at the end of the year?**

Yes

### Comment on current performance (including context):

(Q2 2014/15) - The target has been achieved.

### Corrective action proposed (if required):

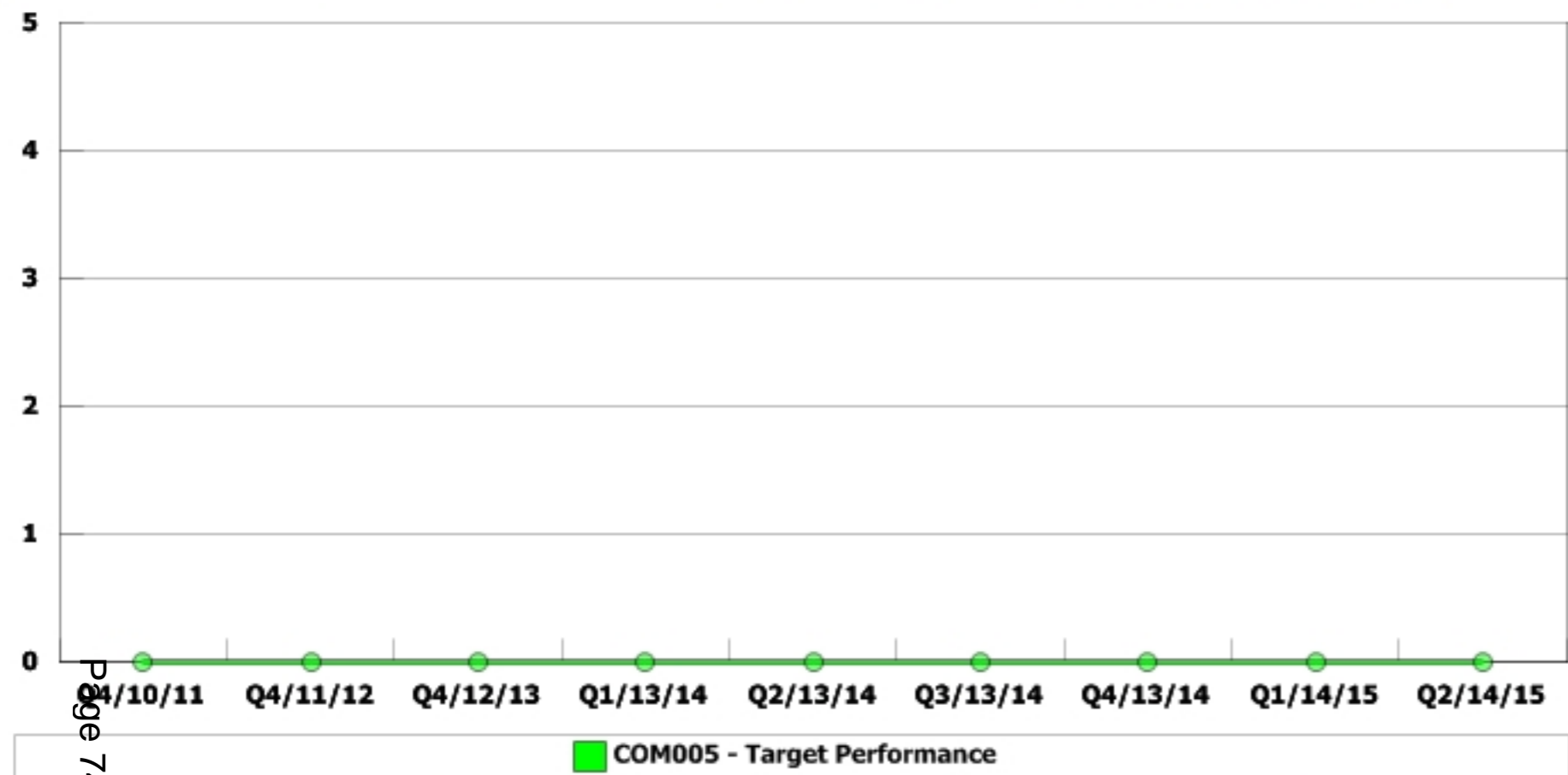
Empty box for corrective action proposed.

**COM005 What percentage of our council homes were not in a decent condition?**

**Additional Information:** This indicator measures the number of non-decent council homes and the proportion this represents of the total council housing stock, in order to demonstrate progress towards making all council housing decent.

For enquiries regarding this indicator contact the Performance Improvement Unit by email on performance@eppingforestdc.gov.uk or by telephone on 01992 564472

**Current and previous quarters performance**



Quarter	Target	Actual
Q2/14/15	0.00%	0.00%
Q1/14/15	0.00%	0.00%
Q4/13/14	0.00%	0.00%
Q3/13/14	0.00%	0.00%
Q2/13/14	0.00%	0.00%

Annual 2014/15 - 0.00%  
 Target: 2013/14 - 0.00%  
 Indicator of good performance:  
 A lower percentage is good  
 ↓ is the direction of improvement

Is it likely that the target will be met at the end of the year?  
 Yes

**Comment on current performance (including context):**

(Q2 2014/15) - Potential building element failures have been identified from Stock Condition Survey Address List and appropriate Capital and Revenue works programmes have commenced to prevent these properties falling into Non-Decent category.

During 2013-14 over 998 Stock Condition Surveys were completed and during 2014-15 the same number of surveys are planned to ensure no properties fall into the Non-Decent category.

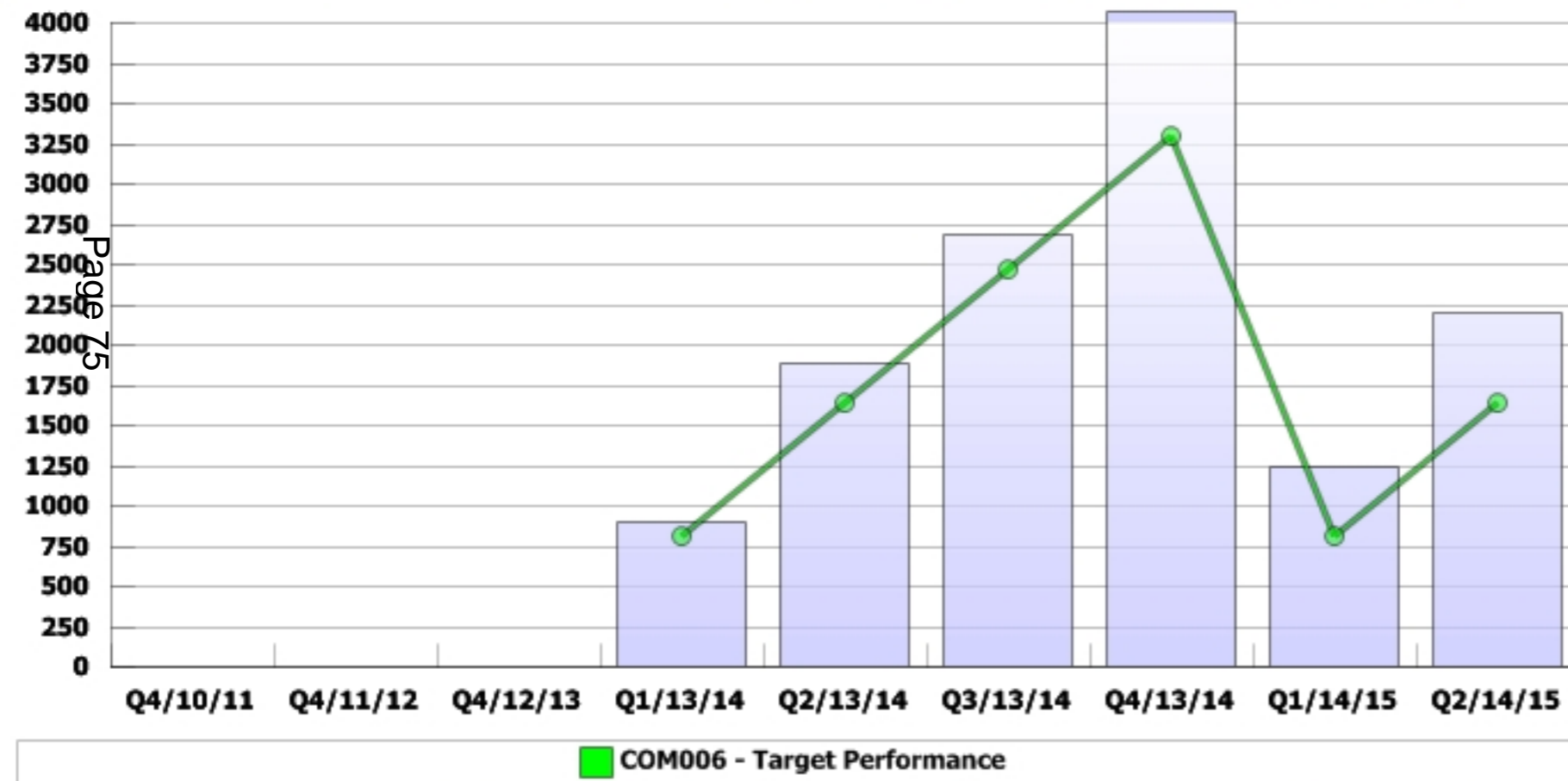
**Corrective action proposed (if required):**

**COM006 How many of the key building components required to achieve the Modern Homes Standard were renewed?**

**Additional Information:** We are not currently at the Modern Homes Standard. If we were, we would still anticipate having to replace in excess of 2750 components per year to maintain that standard. Therefore, in order to address the backlog over time we will aim to replace in excess of this annual requirement each year, until we reach the Modern Homes Standard across our housing stock.

For enquiries regarding this indicator contact the Performance Improvement Unit by email on performance@eppingforestdc.gov.uk or by telephone on 01992 564472

**Current and previous quarters performance**



Quarter	Target	Actual
Q2/14/15	1,650	2,204
Q1/14/15	825	1,244
Q4/13/14	3,300	4,076
Q3/13/14	2,475	2,689
Q2/13/14	1,650	1,898

Is it likely that the target will be met at the end of the year?

Yes

↑ is the direction of improvement

Annual Target: 2014/15 - 3,300  
 2013/14 - 3,300  
 Indicator of good performance: A higher percentage is good

**Comment on current performance (including context):**

(Q2 - 2014/15) - Target achieved - Potential building element failures have been identified from Stock Condition Survey Address List and appropriate Capital and Revenue works programmes have commenced to prevent these properties falling into the Non-Decent category.

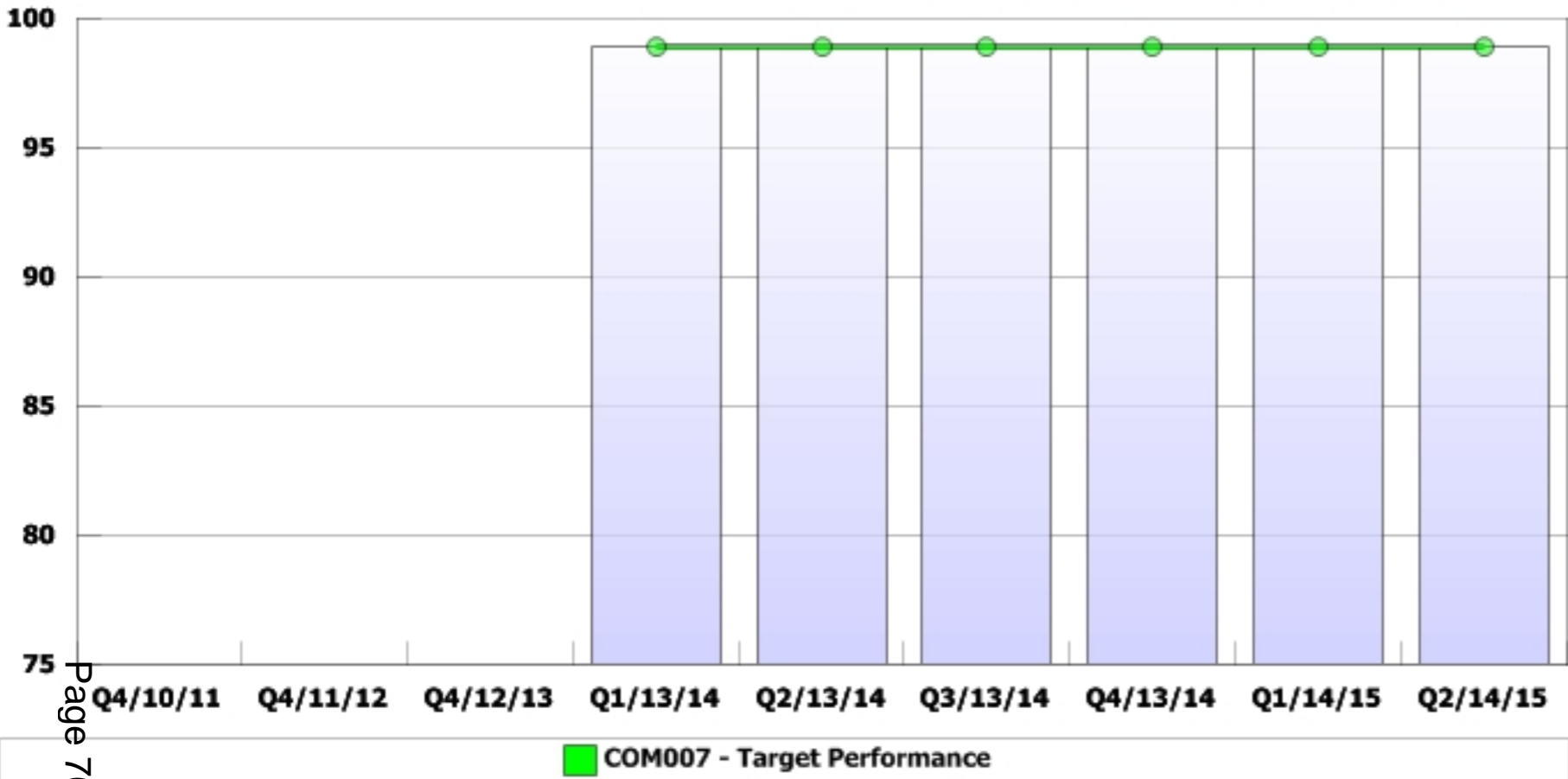
**Corrective action proposed (if required):**

**COM007 What percentage of all emergency repairs are attended to within 4 working hours?**

**Additional Information:**

For enquiries regarding this indicator contact the Performance Improvement Unit by email on performance@eppingforestdc.gov.uk or by telephone on 01992 564472

**Current and previous quarters performance**



Quarter	Target	Actual
Q2/14/15	99%	99%
Q1/14/15	99%	99%
Q4/13/14	99%	99%
Q3/13/14	99%	99%
Q2/13/14	99%	99%

**Annual Target: 2014/15 - 99%**  
**Target: 2013/14 - 99%**  
**Indicator of good performance: A higher percentage is good**  
 ↑ is the direction of improvement

Is it likely that the target will be met at the end of the year?  
 Yes

**Comment on current performance (including context):**

(Q2 2014/15) - Performance in line with target.

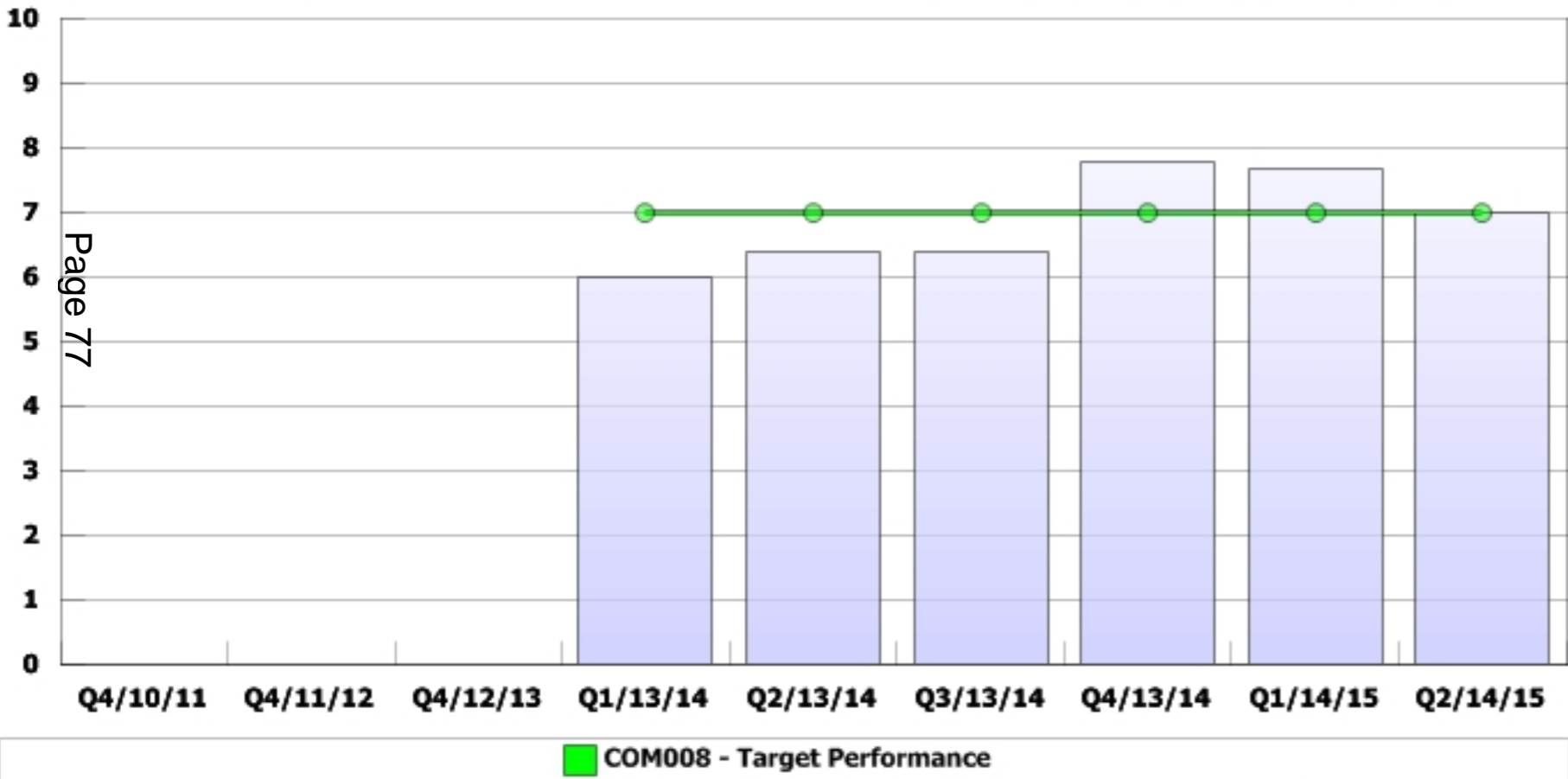
**Corrective action proposed (if required):**

**COM008 What is the average overall time to complete responsive repairs?**

**Additional Information:**

For enquiries regarding this indicator contact the Performance Improvement Unit by email on performance@eppingforestdc.gov.uk or by telephone on 01992 564472

**Current and previous quarters performance**



Quarter	Target	Actual	Status
Q2/14/15	7.0	7.0	✓
Q1/14/15	7.0	7.7	✗
Q4/13/14	7.0	7.8	✗
Q3/13/14	7.0	6.4	✓
Q2/13/14	7.0	6.4	✓

**Annual 2014/15 - 7 working days**  
**Target: 2013/14 - 7 working days**  
**Indicator of good performance: A lower number of days is good**  
 ↓ is the direction of improvement

**Is it likely that the target will be met at the end of the year?**  
 Yes



**Comment on current performance (including context):**

(Q2 2014/15) - The use of agency staff to fill long term vacancies has allowed a swifter turn over of work. We have been able to bring forward appointments and therefore reduce overall waiting period.

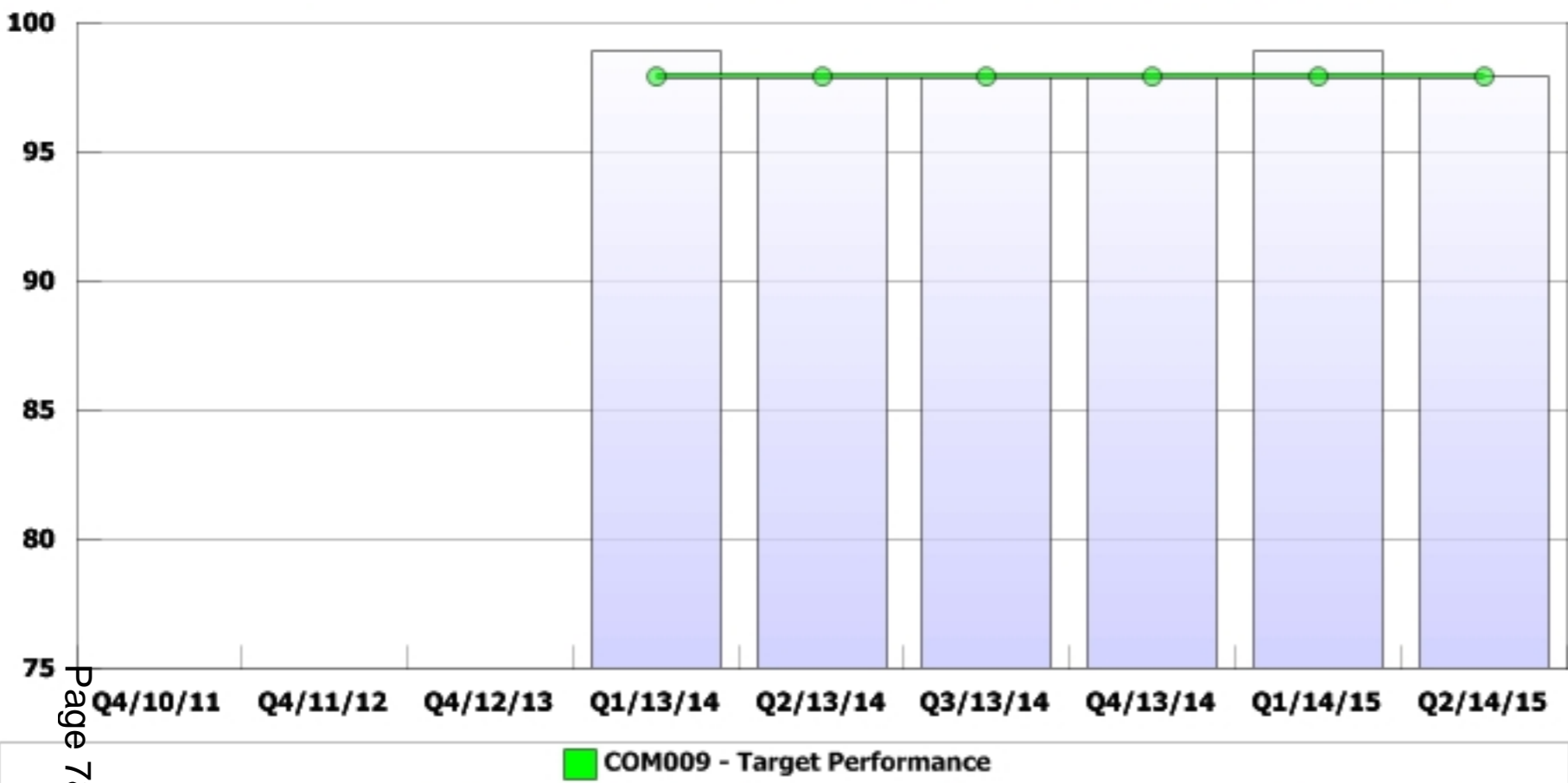
**Corrective action proposed (if required):**

**COM009 What percentage of appointments for repairs are both made and kept?**

**Additional Information:**

For enquiries regarding this indicator contact the Performance Improvement Unit by email on performance@eppingforestdc.gov.uk or by telephone on 01992 564472

**Current and previous quarters performance**



Quarter	Target	Actual
Q2/14/15	98%	98%
Q1/14/15	98%	99%
Q4/13/14	98%	98%
Q3/13/14	98%	98%
Q2/13/14	98%	98%

Annual Target: 2014/15 - 98%  
 Target: 2013/14 - 98%

Indicator of good performance:  
 A higher percentage is good

↑ is the direction of improvement

Is it likely that the target will be met at the end of the year?

Yes

**Comment on current performance (including context):**

(Q2 2014/15) - Performance in line with target.

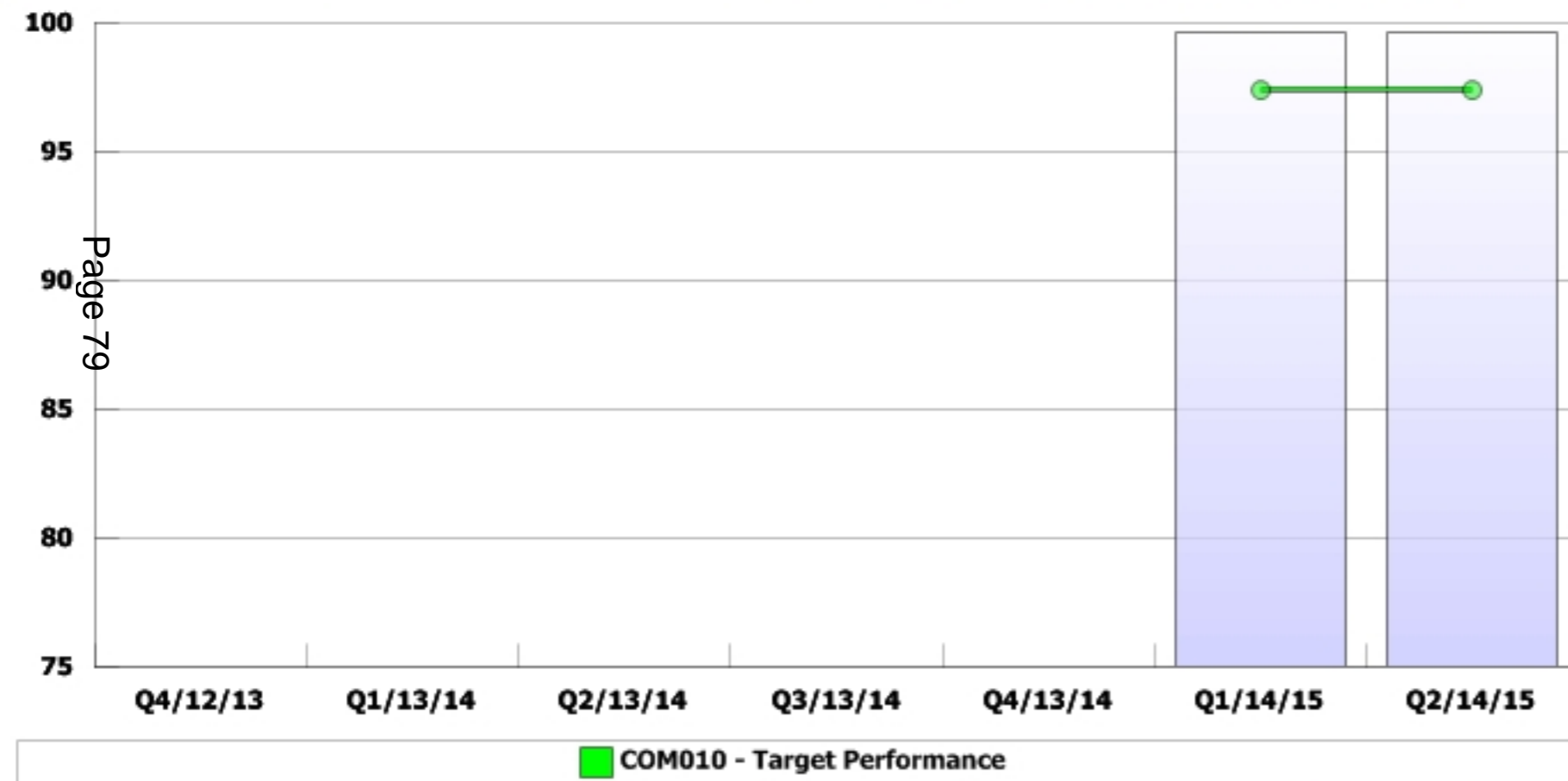
**Corrective action proposed (if required):**

**COM010 What percentage of calls to the council's Careline service are answered within 60 seconds?**

**Additional Information:**

For enquiries regarding this indicator contact the Performance Improvement Unit by email on performance@eppingforestdc.gov.uk or by telephone on 01992 564472

**Current and previous quarters performance**



Quarter	Target	Actual
Q2/14/15	97.5%	99.7%
Q1/14/15	97.5%	99.7%
Q4/13/14		0.0%
Q3/13/14		0.0%
Q2/13/14		0.0%



**Annual Target:** 2014/15 - 97.50%  
 2013/14 - N/A  
**Indicator of good performance:**  
 A higher percentage is good

↑ is the direction of improvement



**Is it likely that the target will be met at the end of the year?**

Yes

**Comment on current performance (including context):**

(Q2 2014/15) - The target has been achieved.

**Corrective action proposed (if required):**

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